

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF TURKISH STUDIES**

**MASTER THESIS**

**FRAMING THE KEMALIST REVOLUTION**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
PROF. HALIL BERKTAY**

**ISTANBUL, 2023**

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**FRAMING THE KEMALIST REVOLUTION**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the master degree of in Turkish  
Studies**

**by**

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**ISTANBUL, 2023**

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis, and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Master's degree in Turkish Studies

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## ÖZ

### KEMALİST DEVRİMİ ÇERÇEVELEMEK

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Aralık 2023, 101 Sayfa

Kemalist Devrim, Türkiye'nin çağdaş tarihinde önemli bir dönüm noktasıdır. Bu devrim, bugün dünyanın tanıdığı Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ni kurdu. Daha da önemlisi, laik değerlerin hâkim olduğu, aynı zamanda çağdaş siyasi sistemlerin iç içe geçmiş bir karışımı olan, kurumların ve bireylerin siyasi davranışlarını belirleyen bir sistem kurdu; Türkiye tarihine hâkim olan Kemalist Devrim mirasını koruyan, laik yaklaşıma dayalı güçlü bir vesayet rejimini yakın zamana kadar getirdi. Bu tezin amacı, Kemalist Devrimin geniş bir devrimler yelpazesi içinde nerede durduğunun daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamaktır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, Kemalist Devrimin kendine has özellikleri ile Fransız, Rus ve İran devrimleri gibi diğer bazı devrimlerle kesiştiği noktalara eğilmektedir. Tez, Kemalist Devrim hakkında Batı tarih yazımındaki güncel tartışmaları da gündeme getirmektedir. Çalışma giriş, üç ana bölüm ve bir sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Tezin ilk bölümü tarihsel bir olgu olarak devrime, tanımlarına ve devrimi açıklamaya ve analiz etmeye çalışan en önemli teorilere genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, Kemalist Devrimin özelliklerini Fransız, Rus ve İran devrimleriyle karşılaştırarak anlamaya yönelik bir okumayı hedeflemektedir. Son olarak üçüncü bölümde, Kemalist devrim hakkındaki Batı literatürü ve araştırmaları incelenerek çağdaş tartışmalar gözden geçirilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Devrim, Kemalist Devrim, Kemalizm.

## ABSTRACT

### FRAMING THE KEMALIST REVOLUTION

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The Kemalist Revolution represents a major turning point in Turkey's contemporary history. This revolution established the Turkish Republic that the world knows today, and more importantly, it established a system that is an intertwined mixture of contemporary political systems dominated by secular values, in light of which the political behaviour of institutions and individuals is determined. It produced a constitution that stipulates a strong guardianship system based on secular values, which has kept the legacy of the Kemalist Revolution dominant in the history of Turkey until today. The goal of this thesis is to achieve a better understanding of where the Kemalist Revolution stands against a broader background of revolutions in history. Hence, it attempts to explore this revolution, including its unique characteristics as well as its points of intersection with some other revolutions such as the French, Russian, and Iranian revolutions. Hence this thesis will also address the current debate in Western historiography about the Kemalist Revolution. The study is divided into an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter of my thesis provides a general overview of revolution as a historical phenomenon, its definitions, and the most important theories that have attempted to explain and analyse revolution. The second chapter is an attempt to understand the peculiar characteristics of the Kemalist Revolution by comparing it to the French, Russian, and Iranian revolutions. Finally, the third chapter deals with the Western scholarly literature and contemporary research on the Kemalist Revolution, where I review recent or current debates about the Kemalist Revolution.

**Keywords:** Revolution, Kemalism, Kemalist Revolution.

## DEDICATION

*For the soul of my grandparents...*

Husn Mohammed Al-Tamimi

Abdülmelik Seif Al-Yousefi



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful to my parents (Maisa and Yaseen), who have always supported my dreams and aspirations. And countless thanks to my siblings (Rawa and Asem) for the compassion and patience they showed me in the process of writing this thesis.

I also want to extend my dedication to my extended family in Yemen and abroad for their support and kind words. Especially to my aunt Howida, who was my supportive mentor throughout my writing journey. And to my good friends (Sara, Mariah, and Mahad).

Special thanks and gratitude go to my thesis supervisor and advisor, Professor Halil Berkday. I want to thank him for his consistent help and support, encouragement and generosity.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Similar to many world revolutions, the Kemalist Revolution represents a decisive point in Turkey's contemporary history, signifying a clear break with the old order and the beginning of a new era. The impact of Western influence was readily apparent in this transformation, which culminated in the formation of the new Turkish Republic, distinct from the Ottoman imperial epoch. The aforementioned shift was certainly facilitated by the endeavours of the pre-Republican Ottoman Empire, which sought inspiration from Western progress and incorporated concepts of modernity. Ironically, the establishment of the Turkish Republic can also be attributed to an armed conflict with the Western powers, primarily led by Great Britain waging what might today be called a proxy war through Greece. This war catalysed Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the transformative leader and founder of the Republic, to gain national legitimacy by safeguarding the country and the state from foreign occupation.

It is imperative to emphasise the necessity of acquiring comprehensive knowledge regarding the personality and contextual circumstances surrounding historical figures such as Mustafa Kemal. Understanding the impact of these circumstances on the formation of intellectual convictions is crucial, as individuals are shaped by the environment in which they exist, including the influence of political and military leaders. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk lived during a tumultuous era characterized by conflicts and instability, mainly due to the weakened state of the Ottoman Empire and its consecutive military defeats. However, he was also born into a period marked by societal transformation and a growing inclination towards Westernization and modernization within the Ottoman Empire. This period witnessed the fruition of state-led initiatives aimed at modernization, which commenced during the reign of Sultan Selim III and continued under Sultan Mahmud II.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey: A Short History*, 2nd ed. (England: The Eothen Press, 1988), 69–70.

This thesis focuses on the Kemalist revolution and its place against a background of worldwide revolutions. Despite its occurrence in a non-Western country, the revolution's significant impact on the geopolitical landscape cannot be overlooked, considering Turkey's central location and influential position in the world. This thesis aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter by predominantly drawing upon the works of Western historians and other scholars. It should be noted that this study does not intend to reiterate the entirety of the existing literature on the topic, particularly with specific reference to Turkey. It draws upon the valuable insights of major names in the field like Bernard Lewis, Feroz Ahmad, and Erik J. Zürcher, but it cannot hope to repeat all their extensive research on the history of the Kemalist revolution. Instead, it proposes to complement this literature with another body of scholarship on revolution in general.

The significance of examining the works of Western historians on the Kemalist Revolution arises basically from their advanced comparative and theoretical approaches. But it also partly stems from their access to diverse sources, particularly the extensive Western archives. These archives are a product of the engagement of Western embassies in Istanbul, documenting the events and occurrences within Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire. They also provide insights into the activities of diplomatic missions and the information generated through the substantial involvement of Western governments in Ottoman affairs and the conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and these nations.

In the formulation of this thesis, the analytical approach was employed due to its efficacy in deconstructing the fundamental components of the revolution, subsequently conducting a comprehensive examination of these parts, and ultimately deriving conclusive insights. The subject matter discussed in this thesis is closely intertwined with the field of historical science, upon which I heavily depended. The primary objective of this study was to explore the process of scientific inquiry and the construction of historical narratives about global revolutions, with a particular emphasis on the Kemalist Revolution. In this discourse, I aim to recollect the insights of a prominent scholar, E.H. Carr, a British historian, about the examination and comprehension of historical occurrences. Carr underscores the notion that history constitutes a dynamic exchange between the past and the present, refuting the notion

that it solely pertains to the past. Carr contends that historical writing encompasses a dynamic interplay between the past and the present, suggesting that the scope of historiography goes beyond mere examination of previous events.<sup>2</sup>

The thesis will primarily examine the controversies surrounding the Kemalist Revolution in Western literature, aiming to enhance comprehension of this historical event. The significance of the Kemalist revolution in Western scholarship is heightened by the fact that the term "Kemalist" was initially introduced in Western literature and discourse, ascribed to its leader, Mustafa Kemal, to denote the transformative revolution spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk between 1919 and 1923. This appellation, which pertains to the patronymic of the revolutionary figurehead, can be traced back to Atatürk's middle name, "Kemal," which, as per prevailing narratives, is said to have been given to him by his mathematics instructor during his formative years in his birthplace of Salonika.

There are two contrasting ways of depicting Early Republican history or the Kemalist Revolution, also impacting on the importance of Mustafa Kemal, notably during his administration from 1923 to 1938, which is known as the Atatürk Era. Gavin D. Brockett argues that the first of these approaches is based on research undertaken by Turkish historians who try to establish that this time constituted a decisive break from the past, leading to the creation of a completely new Turkish nation-state. Conversely, the second approach (and a judgement shared by Brockett) is a feature of the work of foreign historians, which stresses the continued tie between present-day Turkey and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> This is part of what I am trying to shine a light on through this thesis, that is, stressing the scientific contributions of Western historians to arrive at the accurate classification of the Kemalist Revolution in the framework of world revolutions.

As already indicated, this thesis does not involve primary research, based on (Turkish or other) primary sources, into the empirical factuality of the Kemalist Revolution. It does propose a significant re-reading and discussion of the secondary literature. In this

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Hallett, *What Is History?* (New York, Vintage, 1967), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Gavin D. Brockett, "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38"; *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998), 44.

regard, Bernard Lewis' book *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961) stands out as particularly significant. The significance of this book lies in the author's extensive engagement with the documentation and observation of historical developments within the Ottoman Empire. The Tanzimat era, particularly during its pivotal periods, holds significant relevance in understanding the historical trajectory that culminated in the Kemalist Revolution. Bernard Lewis's book draws heavily upon 19th century Ottoman chronicles, establishing his writings as a major point of reference for subsequent literature. In this way, he is able to offer a thorough examination of the process of Westernisation in Turkey. It elucidates the transition from an Islamic empire to a contemporary Turkish nation-state while also delving into the Western influences that shaped political reform and revolution. Moreover, the book provides insights into the subsequent establishment and advancement of the republic. Due to this rationale, he was additionally regarded as a crucial source for comprehending the Western discourse around the Kemalist revolution and its leader Mustafa Kemal. This becomes the cornerstone of the relative continuity narrative (or the modernization/Westernisation narrative) of the Kemalist Revolution, followed by Feroz Ahmad's, Erik J. Zürcher's and other scholars' empirically grounded studies. Along with them, this thesis encompasses bodies of academic literature belonging not just to History but also the other Social Sciences because it falls within the multidisciplinary field of the Turkish Studies Program. Hence, sources from political science, sociology, and psychology have also been consulted.

The present study comprises three main chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter, I aim to provide a concise overview of the main components of this thesis. It encompasses an examination of the phenomenon of revolution, its historical context, various definitions, and theoretical frameworks. Moreover, it poses key questions on the subject matter: What is revolution? What are the conditions that lead to one? Can we predict a revolution? How may this complex phenomenon be explained theoretically? This chapter overviews the most relevant theories of revolution, sorts of characteristics, and hypotheses put forth by prominent researchers who have made significant contributions to the examination of revolution within diverse domains of the social sciences, encompassing sociology, psychology, and political science.

The second chapter introduces inquiries about the primary classifications and typologies of revolution. The objective is to contextualise the Kemalist Revolution by drawing comparisons with some significant revolutions that coincided with it, namely the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Iranian Revolution. One of the main inquiries posed in the chapter pertains to the classification of the French Revolution as a bourgeois revolution. Is the Russian Revolution to be characterised as a communist revolution, and is the Iranian Revolution to be identified as a cultural revolution? Regarding the primary inquiry, the focal point lies in the intersection between the Kemalist Revolution and the three revolutions regarding vision, leadership, ideology, and implementation of change. This is to be followed by a comprehensive exposition of the primary viewpoints held by Western historians on these revolutions, as well as the ensuing scholarly discourse and deliberation among historians and theorists specialising in the study of revolutions.

The third chapter of this study examines the historical trajectory of the Kemalist Revolution, aiming to comprehend its origins in line with the perspectives of Western sources that inform this thesis. Consequently, it also becomes necessary to present a segment of the leader's biography and his role within the Kemalist Revolution. One of the primary questions raised in this chapter is: Was the Kemalist Revolution predominantly characterised as a revolution or a military coup? What were the factors that contributed to the occurrence of this change? Was the action considered radical or not? What are the defining attributes of the Kemalist Revolution? What is the inherent character of leadership in this revolution? Can the phenomenon be characterised based on its class dynamics? In alternative terms, may it be characterised by a certain social class?? To what extent did the personality of Mustafa Kemal influence the course and outcome of the revolution? In which geographical location did the Kemalist Revolution take place? Is this revolution to be primarily characterised as "a national liberation revolution" or a "unification movement?" Was it a European or a non-European revolution? This becomes a fundamental question impinging on the character and identity of Modern Turkey.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVOLUTIONS: DEFINITIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

This chapter provides an introduction to the phenomenon and concept of revolution, including its definitions, historical development, and most relevant theories. There are difficulties involved in framing revolutions and defining their often-unique causes in a general way. Is there (can there be) a single theoretical framework that fits all revolutions, or a comprehensive definition that encompasses the characteristics, methods, and goals of revolutions? The present chapter probes this by addressing the following: general terms conflated with revolution; the past historiography of the concept of revolution; a theoretical framework for revolution; and a specific, systematic theory about what causes revolution.

Revolution is commonly seen as a substantial and widespread public movement that seeks to fundamentally alter the current political regime or status quo. In addition, contrary to evolution, revolution is regarded as a form or process of rapid change that is very likely to be destructive. In the course of the revolution, the use of violence becomes essential to the process of change.

In any given political development, the unique combination of continuity and change might support modifications that maintain the existing state of affairs while achieving the intended transformation, or it can prompt adjustments in the regime's framework to meet the demands of the transition. Generally, protest movements that are less prone to violence than a full-scale revolution are employed to achieve certain objectives of change. Protest movements should not be confused with revolution; instead, they should be regarded as alternative manifestations of political opposition.

Revolution is a concept that refers to systemic change not only in political structures and regimes but can extend to include cultural, economic, and social aspects. The

primary objective of a revolution is frequently perceived as an endeavour to topple a governing system, and in the event of its failure, it is commonly referred to as a rebellion.<sup>4</sup> Revolutionary movements are sometimes instigated by political, economic, or social issues, together with a strong aspiration to transform the existing system in pursuit of complete freedom, dignity, and a dignified standard of living that the populace yearns for. When a society experiences significant political failure, obstruction of progress, and widespread corruption, social justice is inevitably compromised, leading to a decline in living conditions. As a result, a substantial portion of the population becomes unable to tolerate the burdens imposed upon them, which fuels the momentum and garners widespread support for a revolution.

Change can be initiated by administrators, the privileged, or the media, either through top-down action or by mobilizing the people from below. They can also raise awareness and spread their ideologies through various channels such as the media, seminars, or other methods. The ability to bring about change is not exclusive to the masses, despite its idealization in the French Revolution and Marxism. The dissemination of a particular political, intellectual, or ideological framework can enable the general public to become aware of and focus on a crucial issue, perhaps resulting in the formation and coordination of opposition movements that ultimately ignite a revolution.

## **2.1. The Origins of the Term**

"Revolution" was originally a scientific term; it derives from the Late Latin word *revolūtiō*, which means "the act of revolving."<sup>5</sup> In late medieval astronomy, the term was first used to describe how celestial bodies orbit and rotate around the sun, a revolutionary discovery in and of itself. Hannah Arendt writes in her 1963 book *On Revolution* that the term, though ancient, has changed and evolved to acquire a new meaning, and was first used in a political context during the Great English Revolution of 1688 to refer to the "act of return and restoration," the restoration of government, after the power of Parliament had been restored (as against the threat posed by James

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<sup>4</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolutions: A very short introduction* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 33-34.

<sup>5</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (England: Penguin, 1965), 36.

II) with Mary II and William III taking the throne in 1688.<sup>6</sup> Then, after the French Revolution in 1789, this term became identical to the meaning of radical, abrupt, or complete change. According to Arendt, it also came to mean "a forcible overthrow of rulers and the substitution of one form of government with another."<sup>7</sup>

Michael Halliday, a British linguist, explains that the meaning of the word 'revolution' differs from one language to another, and therefore, he stresses the need for a full study of its etymologies in the major language groups. Among the meanings of revolution, Halliday gave in different languages:

In Greek 'epanastasis' (revolution), in Arabic 'inqilab' (to rotate) and 'thawra' (revolution), in classical Hebrew, 'mered' (rebellion), 'hitkomemut' (uprising), 'meri' (revolt) and 'keshet' (plot), in Chinese 'geming' (change of life, fate or destiny) and the Latin verb 'revol-vere' (to return).<sup>8</sup>

Here, it's crucial to clarify a few of the broader words that are sometimes used in a way that can be confused with the word revolution or conflated with it. The terms are: revolt, uprising, insurrection, rebellion, overthrow, palace coup, and coup d'état.

## 2.2. General Terms Conflated with Revolution

Social protest arises all the time, revolt, uprisings, and, insurrections, insurgencies are all forms of violent opposition, and they aim to challenge or overthrow the authority; hence, the goal is not the change the socio-political structure of the state.<sup>9</sup> It is important not to confuse these terms that display an act of violent opposition with the term revolution. In other words, an overthrow of the ruler can be caused by a revolt, but a change of the entire régime can only be done by a revolution. It is only considered a revolution when it leads to complete or partial irreversible changes in the political system of the country.

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<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> George Lawson, "Halliday's Revenge: Revolutions and International Relations"; *International Affairs*, 87, no. 5 (2011), 1072.

<sup>9</sup> Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 33.

### 2.2.1. Revolt

The first term *revolt* is defined as “a protest in a group, often violently against a person or people in power.”<sup>10</sup> Anger among a group of individuals in a society can spark a revolt, which can be either peaceful and entail nonviolent resistance or violent and involve guerrilla warfare. Revolts can also be either individual or communal.<sup>11</sup> The rebels might be angry with how things are going. They are essentially representing the dominant societal values; in other words, intending to end corruption, and to point out the flows in the system. But in this way they still have faith in the institutions and how things work. As a result, they are unable to launch an attack on the institutionalized structures that are both the source and the result of these values. This viewpoint is also better understood through Chalmers Johnson’s definition of revolt as “an act of social surgery; it is intended one cut out one or more members who are offending against the maintain a particular social structure.”<sup>12</sup> A revolt seeks to alter the dynamics inside a system while maintaining its overall structure, whereas a revolution seeks to completely transform the whole social order. In essence, a revolution includes an initial act of destruction, which a revolt strives to avoid at any cost.<sup>13</sup>

Mark N. Hagopian pursues another line of argument in *The Phenomenon of Revolution*, using the criteria pointed out by the French philosopher and sociologist Jacques Ellul, who argues that distinguishing revolt from a revolution by quantitative measures is trivial. These criteria which often fail to distinguish between revolution and revolt and put the former at a disadvantage are taken from Ellul’s book *The Autopsy of Revolution* (1969, 1971), and they are as follows: Success-failure dichotomy, level of violence, geographical extent, and socio-economical results. In other words, a revolt is not a failed revolution, nor it is always less violent or localized or associated with being less socio-economical. At first glance it might seem that a revolution is an accelerated revolt, meaning that if a revolution fails it stays at the level of a revolt, or as Jack Goldstone puts it, a failed revolution is a rebellion.<sup>14</sup> Both

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<sup>10</sup> Victoria Bull and Duncan Robert, eds. *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 647.

<sup>11</sup> *Longman Dictionary*, accessed on January 23, 2023. <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/revolt>.

<sup>12</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), 136, quoted from Mark N. Hagopian, *The Phenomenon of Revolution* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Hagopian, loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 33-34.

revolution and revolution can fail -- and be referred to as “abortive” or “failed” -- if they fail to meet their immediate objectives.

Due to the impotence of the quantitative measurements, Ellul argues that qualitative measurements are more precise in distinguishing between revolt and revolution. These include: mass participation, the role of ideology, and finally a charismatic leadership and organization. The potential repercussions of revolution entail the full elimination and reconstruction of a country's socio-political system, whereas the stakes of revolt involve purifying the existing system while maintaining its structure. Ellul writes, “A revolution is always constructive...” while “...revolt is a titanic earth-rending upheaval in the face of an unknowable future.”<sup>15</sup> To sum up, a revolt is more spontaneous, and simpler in its leadership, organization, and structure, and it is not clear where it is leading to as it does not carry any sort of doctrine, program, ideology or theory.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.2.2. Uprising**

An *uprising* is generally defined as a brief, limited, localized, usually unarmed or primitively armed popular rebellion and it is often immediately ineffective, they are frequently crushed by force or when their demands are met.<sup>17</sup> The Oxford Dictionary defines it as “a situation in which a group of people starts to fight against the people in power in their country.”<sup>18</sup> Uprisings are more common in agrarian societies, localized rebellions and revolts don't bring about widespread change, and the change that can occur from a successful uprising is not systematic. Although it is a form of rebellion it can be the first flame for a revolution.

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<sup>15</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Autopsy of Revolution* (translated by Patricia Wolf; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 7.

<sup>16</sup> This debate is persuasively presented by Hagopian, *The Phenomenon of Revolution*, 3-44.

<sup>17</sup> Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 33-34.

<sup>18</sup> Bull and Robert, eds. *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*, 828.

### 2.2.3. Insurrection/Insurgency

It is important to clarify the difference between these two terms. *Insurrection* is “violent action against the rules of a country or the government.”<sup>19</sup> Insurrections involve military training and organization; they involve the use of military weapons and tactics by the rebels.<sup>20</sup> More precisely, it is “a full-on attack or complete takeover, generally from within a position, as in a coup d’etat.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, an is more spontaneous. In popular culture it can be taken literally: “the surging as in a skirmish, but generally referring to political movements, not military battles -- although it can be applied to troops gradually infiltrating a region.”<sup>22</sup> The term has been used variously to describe revolutionary movements, civil wars, anti-colonial struggles, and terrorist agitation.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to insurgency, insurrection cannot go unnoticed.

### 2.2.4. Rebellion

Roger Scruton, English philosopher and writer, defines the term *rebellion* as a “violent opposition by a substantial body of persons against the state, in the attempt to overthrow it.”<sup>24</sup> Jack Goldstone also gives another very similar definition: “A rebellion is any act by a group or individual that refuses to recognize, or seeks to overturn, the authority of the existing government.”<sup>25</sup> Falling short of systematic change leads to general strikes and other forms of civil disobedience against the state are examples of rebellion, which lead to a change in the administration rather than the regime's overall structure.

As a result of injustice, rebellion in all its forms -- uprisings, revolts, and insurrections -- is a way for people to vent their anger and disgust at the government and those in positions of power. Even though the population might lack the organization and/or the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 410.

<sup>20</sup> Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 44.

<sup>21</sup> Quora. “What Is the Difference between Insurgency and Insurrection?”  
n.d.<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-insurgency-and-insurrection>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Iain Mclean and Alistair Mcmillan, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics* (UK: Political Studies Association, 2005), 263.

<sup>24</sup> Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 3rd edition (New York, 2007), 583.

<sup>25</sup> Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 33-34.

visionary leadership to start fundamental change as in revolution, they may still seek to change the régime's leaders, enact new laws, do away with taxes, address the problem of famine, terminate military privileges, or reject certain mandates or policies.

However, some scholars continue to maintain that rebellions do not lead to socio-political changes. The American sociologist Theda Skocpol, a student of Barrington Moore, is one of them. She argues that even when a rebellion (that includes the uprising of subordinate classes) is successful, it does not result in structural change.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.2.5. Coup

In the field of modern political science, *coup* or *coup d'état* is a French term that appeared first in the nineteenth century to refer to the sudden and arbitrary measures that a king would issue to resort to or preserve certain interests of the kingdom. A *coup* is generally defined as “a sudden and great change of government, carried out violently or illegally by the ruling... a violent and immediate seizure of state power.”<sup>27</sup> It is frequently carried out by an individual or a group of the army; a military authority, which might include senior commanders or officers from the middle ranks, may frequently undertake it. Over the course of the past four centuries, the meaning and outlook of a coup has changed. In dynastic states, they were what we know as a *palace coup*, which takes place when, as a result of fictionalisation and conspiracies at the very top, the ruler is forced to abdicate the throne or is assassinated and a rival rises to power. But as dynastic states have largely passed away, and parliamentary democracy is opposed and interrupted by other forms and forces of anti-democracy, in modern times we have come to know of them mostly as military coups.

Historians and social scientists insist on the structural change brought about by a revolution, and not by any other forms of political violence. It is important to note that a coup differs from a revolution in that it does not aim to change the socio-political structure; it changes the government but does not implement changes in the structure

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<sup>26</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 4.

<sup>27</sup> This definition of coup d'état is from the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, accessed on May 3rd, 2022),  
URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coup-d-etat>.

of the régime itself -- and then if it does, it is referred to as a revolutionary coup. This is a hybrid term trying to combine the form of a coup with the (alleged) content of a revolution. It can perhaps be seen as an apology for a coup on the grounds that it espouses or aspires to a revolutionary transformation.

But ultimately, the difference is seen to rest in the *extent* and the *intensity* of the change resulting from the actions of the opponents of the régime. At the end of the day, a revolution is to be distinguished from a coup as the change imposed by revolution is regarded as more fundamental. Emphatically, it is not simply a change of the political leadership. Crane Brinton writes that “a coup is simply the replacement of one elite by another.”<sup>28</sup> Brinton refers to the French and Russian revolutions as examples of revolutions, which were followed by social, political, and economic transformations, whereas a coup does not destroy the economic and political foundation of the aristocracy.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, examples of hierarchical interventions in politics are the Young Turks Revolution of 1908, also referred to as a revolution from above (to be discussed below), as well as the Turkish military coups of 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. But perhaps this juxtaposition already says something about the overlap between coup and revolution in the specific case of Turkey.

#### **2.2.6. Reform**

*Reform* is frequently defined as "the amendment, or altering for the better, of some faulty state of things, especially of a corrupt or oppressive political institution or practice; the removal of some abuse or wrong." According to what is called “the theory of the natural history of revolutions,” it is possible that late-introduced reforms are a precursor to a rebellion or a revolution, even though these reforms themselves do not result in immediate major changes that affect both the state and society.<sup>30</sup>

Reforms lack the element of violence that revolution entails, despite the fact that they somewhat alter the system (while perhaps preserving its structural integrity). Once

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<sup>28</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1952), 3-4.

<sup>29</sup> Brinton, loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions”; *Annual Review of Sociology*, 8 (1982), 187.

more, revolution is said to be markedly distinct from reform, too, in that it causes substantial alterations to state and social structures and has far-reaching effects on fundamental concepts and structural systems. On the other hand, reforms can be considered of a nature similar to a revolution in terms of the change they bring about (from above), but they avoid speed and sudden change and their effects are usually slow to be achieved, because they are not based on violent tactics as is the case in a revolution. Instead, the primary role of these reforms is to bring about change at the lowest cost possible and hence to avoid violence, and these reforms are usually a long-term process.

Reforms can also refer to another concept of restoration. The concept of returning things to their original state, that is, before they were corrupted and changed, especially by institutions, is an ideological excuse or discourse. The Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther in 1517 is one of the most prominent examples that applies to this context. Martin Luther's actions have been described as among the earliest significant reforms in modern history. This allowed new forms of doctrine, belief, liturgy, and church celebrations to emerge. On the day, goal of this reform was to free Christians from the burdens of the papacy, and to make the Latin Bible available to the general public in German and other vernacular languages. In retrospect, its vast unintended consequence appears to have been to open the door to religious freedom in Europe.

Indeed, given these long-term results of the religious reform movement, which ultimately led to a complete rupture with the Catholic Church (because it vehemently resisted attempts to reform), it may also be said to have assumed the characteristics of a revolution. Let us consider another example. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, 19th century Tanzimat reforms, which were primarily bureaucratic in nature, were crucial to the transformation that affected the military, administrative, financial and even political spheres of statehood. Its purpose was to modernize in order to keep up with the changes occupying Europe, especially in the military and hence also in education.

### **2.3. The Past Historiography of the Concept of Revolution**

According to Goldstone, revolution is one of the most complex phenomena in the social sciences, and he argues that it is nearly as ancient as history itself. The concept

of “overthrowing” existing governments and kingdoms, and “altering” the essence of the system, is not new, but rather dates back to ancient times, such as the Pharaonic Era, which witnessed rebellions of regional rulers and the usurpation of power from Pepi II (who lived in the 22nd century BC). Moreover, the Ancient Greek interest in political ideas resulted in their leading Classical thinkers discussing the causes of revolutions. Thus, Plato and Aristotle attributed the causes of revolutions to the multiplicity of administrations or city-states (sing. *polis*, pl. *poleis*) in Greece, where each had and administered its own set of laws, as well as to social injustice or inequality, which, in their view, is the origin of revolutions. As to remedies, they drew different conclusions. The noblest societies, according to Plato, were governed by aristocracies founded on virtue and merit; however, when the aristocracy prioritizes wealth over virtue, it degenerates into an ineffectual oligarchy, torn apart by rivals and decimated by the populace. The aristocracy was frequently overthrown by populist leaders who later seized power before establishing a dictatorship that was itself also swiftly toppled.<sup>31</sup>

### **2.3.1. Revolution in Greek Philosophy**

Aristotle devoted the entire fifth part of his book *Politics* to the study of revolution and the reasons why revolution breaks out, as well as the systems on which revolutions are based. He believes revolutions to be due to a main cause: inequality. “Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution, but an inequality in which there is no proportion.”<sup>32</sup> When citizens experience inequality, they ignite the fuse of revolution, just as the tyranny of rulers is a major cause of igniting revolutions against them. “Inferiors revolt so that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior, such is the state of mind which creates revolutions.”<sup>33</sup> When we look more closely, Aristotle may be seen to have distinguished between three causes of social revolution: First and foremost, the psychological preparedness of the revolutionaries, since their planning and revolutionary character drive them to carry out the revolution regardless of the outcomes. The second factor is greed for wealth or power, and it may often be the

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<sup>31</sup> These patterns are persuasively set forth in Goldstone, *Revolutions*, 78-80.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle: Introduction and translation*. Vol. 1. (trans. Benjamin Jowett; Clarendon Press, 1885; Original work ca. 350 BC). Book V. ixxxviii.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

factor that pushes people to follow the path of chaos to achieve their goals. The third factor, according to Aristotle, is insult and neglect, which generate anger in the hearts of individuals. On the whole, inequality remains the main reason in Aristotle's view. Therefore, the main purpose of all revolutions is to achieve equality, and wherever there is no equality, there will be revolutions aimed at establishing justice. Although Aristotle distinguished between good and bad systems, he believed that all systems are subject to revolution if the principle of equality is violated.

### **2.3.2. Revolution in the Enlightenment**

Today, revolution is not a rigid and coarse concept, nor is it merely an expression of wrath; rather, it is regarded at least in part as the result of accumulated knowledge and consciousness. This reflects the contributions of Europe's Enlightenment period, where philosophers and intellectuals worked on political theories of governance, human rights, and people's sovereignty, upon which many modern revolutionary activities were founded and inspired.

The theory of the social contract has particular significance within the realm of political philosophy throughout the 17th and 18th centuries in Western Europe. This is generally defined as “an actual or hypothetical compact, or agreement, between the ruled or between the ruled and their rulers, defining the rights and duties of each.”<sup>34</sup> At the time, political theorists like Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu or Rousseau initiated inquiries into the fundamental grounds upon why people ought to comply with their rulers. The roots of this theory go back to the Middle Ages, when a prevailing theory known as “the divine right of kings” provided a long-standing explanation. This theory posited that the appointment of all monarchs is attributable to God. Consequently, individuals are expected to comply with the rules of these monarchs, as disobedience may result in eternal damnation. Opposing “the divine right of kings” is what Scottish philosopher David G. Ritchie refers to as the awakening of the spirit of rationalism and criticism, whereby institutions make “individual right” the measurement and standard of their value, and the idea of mutual respect gains in dominance, whereby

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<sup>34</sup> “Social contract”; Encyclopedia Britannica, September 7, 2023.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-contract>.

people should only be obliged to follow the directives of kings as long as their circumstances remain favourable. It was this orientation that eventually led into social contract theory.<sup>35</sup>

One of the elements of social contract theory is the idea of “the state of nature,” which is known in political theory as “the real or hypothetical condition of human beings before or without political association”<sup>36</sup> (i.e. before the state or state-organized society). Leading philosophers in this sphere have been Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, all of whom had differing perspectives on this condition or state of nature; nevertheless, they all connected it with the absence of political sovereignty. The danger of the absence of authority leads to chaos; therefore, the formulation of a social contract theory is regarded as crucial. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), in his book *Leviathan* (1651), describes the natural state as a “war of every man against every man”<sup>37</sup>, thereby viewing men as barbaric and brutal. Therefore, submitting to the Leviathan, meaning the political state, takes people out of the natural state and allows them into “civil society” as a form of survival. This transfer of power is solely with the condition of the re-production of the state subjects and their natural rights by state law.

John Locke (1632-1704) was another English political philosopher whose ideas about politics and the purpose of the state also had a significant impact on the Age of Enlightenment, and was one of its most influential thinkers albeit in a way opposed to Hobbes. Locke published his ideas on the state of nature in his *Two Treatises on Government* (1690). According to Locke, all humans are born equal and enjoy the natural rights that God has endowed them with, including the right to life, the right to liberty, and property rights. The revolutionary element in the argument of John Locke is that he thinks that these rights are not granted by the monarch, the authority, or the government; that humans are indeed capable of living peacefully in the state of nature;

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<sup>35</sup> David G. Ritchie, “Contributions to the History of the Social Contract Theory”; *Political Science Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1891), 656–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2139203>.

<sup>36</sup> A. Munro, “State of nature”; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 7, 2023; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/state-of-nature-political-theory>.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Or, The Matter, Form, And Power of A Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical And Civil* (Printed For Andrew Crooke, At the Green Dragon in St. Pauls Church-Yard, London, 1651), 63.

and that they only agree to move to civil society to have not an absolute but an impartial power that can solve any disputes and prevent them from accelerating. In other words, the king has no right to revoke natural rights; rather, the government has a duty to preserve the natural rights of individuals under the law.

In time, other European philosophers, such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, came to be more influenced by John Locke's ideas. The ideas of the French philosopher Voltaire were expressed in many of his literary works, such as the 1759 novel *Candide*, in which he criticized the monarchy, the French state, and the Christian church. He advocated free speech and the separation of Church and State; his positions and ideas were revolutionary, and would later inspire the French people and the French Revolution. A bit earlier, the French philosopher Montesquieu in *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) had set the groundwork for what would become a constitutional principle in modern democratic systems, namely the separation of powers. Subsequently, the Genevan philosopher and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) also argued that government must be divided into the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and that there must be a degree of balance between these authorities to ensure that none is more powerful than the others. His influential book on *The Social Contract* (1762) came to serve as a model for composing constitutions for constitutional monarchies and modern democratic systems. In contrast to Hobbes, and more in line with Locke, Rousseau posited that men could coexist peacefully in a state of nature, and the state of brutality which Hobbes describes is a precedent to socialization. This is better explained in his famous quote: “Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains.”<sup>38</sup> Rousseau argues that humans possess natural goodness, in taking care of oneself or the other, and that the state of inequality is unnatural since it arises from corrupt institutions and social systems.

So in the year 1762, Rousseau may be said to have produced a significant theory regarding moral and political rules, and to have developed the concept of “the general will,” which ultimately provides a framework for what can be described as a written agreement expressed by a Constitution, between society and the holders of power, to

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<sup>38</sup> The British Library. “British Library,” n.d. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-social-contract-by-jean-jacques-rousseau>.

cooperate for mutual benefit, and most importantly, it enables the people to defend their rights. Additionally, it ensures the succession of the (benevolent, well-meaning) ruler's government. The individual in question designates the evolution of "the general will" as the point at which people transition from their natural condition to become members of civil society. In this context, the coexistence of freedom and authority is not inherently contradictory, since individuals who adhere to the law may be seen as exercising self-obedience. Ultimately, these concepts catalysed the French Revolution, and one of its outcomes was the development of French Law that gradually came to symbolise the collective will of the people.

This thinker's revolutionary contribution was to establish the principle of equal representation instead of absolute monarchy. While Rousseau did not explicitly use the word revolution, his assertion of the inherent benevolence of individuals suggests that they possess a legitimate entitlement to utilise power that is oriented towards public welfare. Rousseau offers a critique of the concept of the governance of the strongest, asserting that the notion of strength does not inherently establish what is morally just. Instead, he posits that our obligation to comply lies only with legitimate authorities. According to Rousseau, the power enforced by terror does not produce morality. This is because if the notion of "right" is only determined by the strongest entity, its significance becomes devoid of meaning. Rousseau advocates for individuals to prioritise adherence to legal authority rather than just the strongest one. This implies that power can only be considered legitimate if it aligns with the common will. Consequently, the legitimacy of power diminishes when it neglects to align with the collective desires of the populace and instead prioritises its interests as an autonomous political body.

### **2.3.3. A Summary up to This Point**

Revolutions often arise due to political, economic, or social catalysts, alongside the aspiration to transform the prevailing system in pursuit of an envisioned paradigm of liberty, dignity, and contentment that resonates with the populace. When a society experiences a significant degree of political failure, obstruction of progress, and pervasive corruption, alongside the absence of social justice and a decline in living conditions -- to the extent that a substantial portion of the population can no longer

endure (or comes to believe that it can no longer endure) the associated hardships, revolution begins to gather momentum and garner support. Moreover, change, a pivotal objective of revolutions, may be instigated by the collective consciousness of society, the influential elites, and the media, leading to its manifestation as a consequence of a gradual accumulation of knowledge (or consciousness, or belief) about prevailing issues and difficulties, rather than being prompted only by the direct impact of these problems on the general public.

Conversely, a revolution is deemed successful (rather than unsuccessful, or incomplete) when its objective extends beyond mere leadership-change or governmental alteration, encompassing comprehensive political, legal, and societal change across all spheres of existence. This enables a noticeable distinction between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary life. Crucial become the alterations that impact the fundamental nature of political systems and their transition, such as the shift from a monarchy to a republic -- irrespective of whether the mechanisms of the revolution were enacted through a mass uprising or initiated by those in power.

This component is evident in the Kemalist Revolution, whose leader and companions were unquestionably influenced by the political and ideological models produced by the revolutions that the surrounding area witnessed at various times during the Modern Era. Turkey's own development was through a series of reform edicts and revolutionary change from above; this included the Edict of Gülhane of 1839, the Imperial Reform edict of 1856, the introduction of the Constitution in 1876, and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, all of which preceded the Kemalist Revolution.

Lastly, the comprehensiveness of a revolution is determined by the degree of change it brings about in reality, and a revolution is one whose objective is not limited to changing the head of the régime or the government, but instead introduces radical political, legal, and social changes in all aspects of life, resulting in a significant change from the pre-revolutionary state of affairs. Then, this is frequently reflected in the changes that affect the essence of régimes and their transformation, for example, from a monarchy to a republic, regardless of whether the revolution was carried out by means of a popular revolution or by means of a coup d'état.

## 2.4. A Theoretical Framework for Revolution

Similar to definitions of revolution, historians and other social scientists have been working on a theory which can be applicable to all revolutions. However, so far there is no single theoretical framework. According to Michael D. Richards, researching and comprehending change, or more precisely the process of change, can also be accomplished by examining revolutions. Richards adds that revolutions extend beyond the acquisition and consolidation of power; consequently, one cannot claim to understand a revolution without scrutinizing its life course.<sup>39</sup> And due to the complexity of revolution, a literature with a great deal of complexity and branching has developed to match the ever-changing phenomenon.

Numerous theories and extensive research are conducted to analyse revolutions, fathom their origins, and explain their causes.<sup>40</sup> This process can take years to completely comprehend. It addresses their origins, instruments, phases, progression, and outcomes of world revolutions. There are various approaches to studying revolutions in history, psychology, economics, and political science, as well as various major perspectives on revolutions and extra-academic, directly political and ideological theories that have attempted to explain why revolutions occur. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were among the first to develop a more complex and comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon of revolution in the middle of the 19th century. Here, I will briefly discuss some of these theories and concepts.<sup>41</sup>

Sociologist Jack Goldstone has published an article titled “The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions,” which I have already cited.<sup>42</sup> In this article Goldstone examines the historical and theoretical evolution of revolution studies. He reviews the work of three generations of scholars of revolution and social change from various social science fields of this century -- as a continuation of an earlier four thousand years of writings and observations on revolution by Plato, Aristotle,

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<sup>39</sup> Michael D. Richards, *Revolutions in World History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>41</sup> Here, I don't intend to overview all theories of revolution, however, I will overview the most important ones and the ones which can help with my three chosen revolutions: the French, the Russian and the Iranian in a comparative approach that may help in understanding the Kemalist revolution.

<sup>42</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions”; *Annual Review of Sociology* 8 (1982):187.

Machiavelli, De Tocqueville, Marx and others. These classifications by Goldstone go as follows.

#### **2.4.1. A First Generation of Modern Scholarship**

In the first half of the 20th century, up to the 1940s, a group of scholars examined the pattern of events in revolutions. They enumerated the major phases of the revolutionary process and described the resultant social changes. What they evolved is known as the Natural Theory of Revolutions. It examines and concentrates on Western revolutions, namely the English Revolution of 1641-1648, the American Revolution of 1775-1783, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. This first generation is distinguished by the work of Gustave Le Bon (1913), Charles A. Ellwood (1905), Pitirim A. Sorokin (1925), Lyford Edwards (1927), Emil Lederer (1936), George Pettee (1938), and Crane Brinton (1938). They primarily examined the morphological aspects of revolutions, or the “natural history” development (in stages) of revolutionary occurrences. A classic example is the French Revolution and its stages, which became a standard in the study of revolution. It is this “model” that was developed into the theory known as “the natural history of revolution.” This has turned out to be fertile ground, while at the same time one critique of the first generation's studies has been that they lacked the theoretical profundity required to fathom the phenomenon in terms of causes and effects, and are regarded as more descriptive than explanatory.

#### **2.4.2. A Second Generation of Modern Scholarship**

According to Goldstone, from 1940 to 1975 there has been a second generation of theorists, namely: James Davies (1962), Ted Gurr (1970), Chalmers Johnson (1966), Smelser (1972), Samuel Huntington (1962), and Charles Tilly (1975). Their work has aimed to fill the gap left by the first generation, which lacked a theoretical framework. Hence the second generation is said to have focused on constructing an explanatory framework for the revolutionary phenomenon by investigating the causes, motivations, and paths of revolutions. Their study has relied extensively on prominent psychological theories such as cognitive psychology and frustration-aggression theory, as well as sociological theories like structural-functionalist theory, plus political

science theories such as the pluralist theory of interest group rivalry. In the field of psychology, cognitive psychology presents the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis, attributing the psychological causes of revolution to factors linked to the feelings of frustration and deprivation. In the field of sociology, Structural-Functionalist Theory explains revolution from a functional structural perspective. In political science, there is also the Pluralist Theory of Interest Group Competition. But in turn, despite their significance and complexity, these theories, too, have been criticized by Goldstone's third generation.<sup>43</sup>

### **2.4.3. A Third Generation of Modern Scholarship**

Again, according to Goldstone, the third generation has itself provided analyses and critiques of the second generation's theories. Moreover, this generation's dissertations and other publications have been distinguished by their reliance on historical foundations and more empirical analysis, as they have examined a greater number of revolutions in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.<sup>44</sup> The work of Harry Eckstein (1965), Barrington Moore (1966), Anthony Oberschall (1969), Edward Muller (1972), Barbra Salert (1976), Theda Skocpol (1979), Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1978), Jeffrey Paige (1975), Ellen Trimberger (1978), and Goldstone himself, distinguishes this third generation of scholars, who consider the causes of revolutions to be structural<sup>45</sup>, meaning that a change does not simply occur as a result of any short-run instability, but that structural prerequisites must to be present before any societal pressures or changes may occur.<sup>46</sup>

So this generation may be said to have directed their attention to analytical foundations that were previously disregarded by the second generation. Crucially, the analytical approach of the third generation has focused on conceptualizing the state as an independent actor rather than a mere battleground for the interplay of many social and political factors; it has also tried to account for the role of external political and economic pressures on local economic and social structures in bringing about (or not)

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<sup>43</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, "Review of Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation"; by S. N. Eisenstadt, Jeffrey M. Paige, Theda Skocpol, and Kay Ellen Trimberger, *World Politics* 32, no. 3 (1980), 450.

<sup>44</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 448.

significant social changes in the society under study. And finally, they have regarded the military institution as exhibiting varying levels of coherence, while also facing institutional barriers that impede its utilisation by governing régimes in addressing domestic crises.<sup>47</sup>

#### **2.4.4. A Fourth Generation of Modern Scholarship**

Again, for Goldstone and others who have taken up those ideas, the fourth generation of theories, which emerged in the late-1980s and early-1990s, is seen to have focused more on elements such as ideology, religion, and social structure.<sup>48</sup> In other words, they have acknowledged the influence of other perspectives on revolution so as to cover ideas, culture, values or beliefs that motivate actors to act. The fourth generation has also attempted to build on previous efforts by devising techniques to comprehend the revolutionary phenomenon. For instance, they enhanced previous research on the significance of social structure in the revolutionary event, but did not reduce social structure to class divisions because they also highlighted the role of culture and ideology in explanation-seeking theoretical and analytical frameworks.

In my analysis of the French, Russian, Iranian, and Kemalist revolutions, I will bring into play the following four major theories: The Natural Theory of the History of Revolutions, Marxist Theory, Frustration-Aggression Theory, and Structural Theory. These alternatives may serve to broaden the options and better explain revolutions, aspects of their interdependence, and similarities with or differences from the Kemalist Revolution.

#### **2.4.5. A Simple Common Ground**

The “natural theory” of revolutions dates back to the twenties of the last century, and it provides an explanation of how revolutions are formed in terms of their paths and stages. The first attempts by historians and sociologists to bring a natural-history theory to bear on the major Western revolutions had to do with the English Revolution

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 426-437.

<sup>48</sup> John Foran, “Theories of Revolution Revisited: Toward a Fourth Generation?”; *Sociological Theory* 11, no. 1 (1993), 1-6.

(1640), the French Revolution (1789), and the Russian Revolution (1917). Among the most prominent of these scholars have been Lyford Paterson Edwards, who with his book *Natural History of the Revolution* (1927) may be said to have created the whole genre and approach, followed by Crane Brinton with his *Anatomy of Revolution* (1938), and George Sawyer Beatty with *The Process of Revolution* (also 1938). Based on this theory, revolutions usually begin with the educated elite, intellectuals who pose criticism to the regime, through which they demand major reforms. These criticisms spread rapidly and attracted supporters from the general public, while there also arise supporters on the other side, that is to say on the side of the régime. Some members of the ruling class and the beneficiary elite around it deliberately downplay the seriousness of popular discontent, including pivotal incidents that are based on popular resentment. As a result, the régime does not appreciate taking the necessary actions at the right time. At some point, other groups within the elite try to convince the government to implement new reforms. But it does not respond until it is too late, due to the influence of a corrupt inner circle, which keeps the head of the régime reassured that the situation is under control -- until the situation does get out of control. Defenders of the status quo are often part of the power-holders and the privileged elite, military and civilian bureaucrats, and some intellectuals. Even though they see the state weakening and the situation getting worse every day, they resist taking any action; they may opt for, as I mentioned earlier, new reforms that may take longer to bear fruit. The revolution may not seem organized at the beginning at the level of leadership, popular action, and political identity. But it does become more and more cohesive, and better and better organized, in the face of such apathy or ineptitude. Meanwhile, these elite groups in power continue to believe that revolution as sudden change brings ambiguous results, in contrast to reforms that are in the nature of development, and do not involve great risks to the state and society.

## **2.5. Specific Systematic Theories About What Causes Revolution**

### **2.5.1. Marxist Theory**

After more than a century and a half, the Marxist theory of revolution continues to be the most influential. The Marxist idea of revolution has had a significant impact on both the realm of politics and the academic sphere. Numerous historians and social

scientists have found themselves confronted with the task of either embracing, assimilating, adapting, or refuting and challenging the Marxist theory of revolution as they strive to offer a comprehensive account of the circumstances and mechanisms underlying revolution. Their primary aim is to provide an interpretation of why and how a revolution happens. Their ultimate objective is to find the root of the cause of revolution.

In Marxist theory, society is characterised by the presence of social classes that often exist in a state of tension, displaying hegemonic and antagonistic dynamics towards one another. The upper class or classes have significant power and influence, while the lower classes experience relative disadvantage and limited access to resources. Their economy represents a marginalised segment of society. The symptoms in question are inherently antagonistic since they constitute a danger of not only overthrowing the existing order but also of acquiring power to establish a new system. The term "violent overthrow" refers to the forceful removal of one social class by another. Theoretically, a Marxist revolution entails the working class rising against the bourgeois, who represent the capitalist system -- a revolution of the working class. The new revolutionary ideas are coming from the new social classes.

In 1843-44, Karl Marx wrote his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, which he never published. Nevertheless, in this text, Marx already proclaimed his intention to confront the oppressive circumstances that prevailed in Germany, creating a philosophical argument for revolution. Over the next four years, through his friendship and growing collaboration with Friedrich Engels, he learned more about economics, and came to identify the new working class, created by the Industrial Revolution, as the profoundly oppressed yet potentially very strong class that would be the socio-historical agent of this new, initially philosophically grounded, socialist revolution. Over the years, he and Engels also developed a huge theoretical apparatus, with legs in philosophy, history and economics, to justify and argue for the inevitability of this proletarian socialist revolution.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Robin Blackburn, "Marxism: Theory of Proletarian Revolution"; *New Left Review*, June 1, 1976.

Within this framework, Marxism emphasizes that revolution universally results from class conflict.<sup>50</sup> In turn, classes were identified by their position in the prevailing mode of production. In his time, the three primary social strata consisted of the bourgeoisie/capitalists, the workers/proletariat, and the big landowners. From 1848 to the end of his life, Marx's theory predicted the outbreak of revolution in the most highly industrialized countries, namely Britain or Germany, because they also had the greatest working-class populations as “grave-diggers of the bourgeoisie.” This did not occur. First, revolution never happened in these most developed capitalist economies and societies. Second, instead it broke out in Russia, China, Cuba, and many other “backward” countries on the underdeveloped periphery of world capitalism. Similarly, while Marx’s view of a political revolution was to be initiated by the proletariat or the working class, in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 this was minimal, while the majority of the revolutionary masses came from the peasantry. In other words, Marx's prediction of a proletarian class revolution may be said to have never actually occurred.

Nevertheless, this theory continued to exercise growing political and also academic influence from the second half of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century. It has comprised concepts and ideas that were developed during the social structure-altering and capitalism-critiquing class struggles of the 19th century that had a significant impact on many events. It has changed and evolved in time, to a large extent in order to “explain” its failures, and this has also involved the changing meaning and function of “socialism,” which has evolved into a statist mode of accelerated national developmentalism under the rule of a communist party. So this idea of a communist-led revolution remains fundamental to Marxist revolutionism. To that end, violence is considered necessary for the making and the maintaining of the revolution under a régime that is described as “the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

### **2.5.2. The Structuralist Theory of Revolution**

The decades of the 1950s and 60s saw the development of broader ideas at a time when revolutions in the Middle East and Africa were breaking out, and the sphere of Soviet socialism (or the Socialist Bloc, so-called) was also expanding, all of which led to an

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<sup>50</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (trans. Samuel Moore in cooperation with Frederick Engels, 1888; Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 5.

increase in the body of published work. This second generation of American social scientists in the 1960s tried to explain why and when revolutions arise, using either social psychological or structural-functional approaches to collective behaviour.<sup>51</sup> The structural-functional theories in question are one of the most significant approaches to deal with studying and explaining revolution. The authors of these theories view societies as “systems” whose smooth operation depends on maintaining an equilibrium in the overall flow of demands and resources between the system and its environment, as well as between the various subsystems (including polity, economy, status, and culture) that make up the social system. Based on a tradition of sociological analysis established by Talcott Parsons and his school, whenever a disturbance significantly disrupts the equilibrium of demand and resource flows, society is then said to be in a condition of “disequilibrium” or “dysfunction” in which it is unstable or prone to revolution.<sup>52</sup>

Additionally, the structural theorists have also attempted to examine political violence and the effect of modernization on societies, as well as the question of whether or not there was a correlation between modernization and the reason why it often involved the use of violence. Neil Smelser's Structural-Strain Theory (1963) is typical in this regard. Smelser argues that social movements and other forms of collective behaviour are manifested only under certain circumstances. One of the variables that might contribute to societal discontent is known as “structural strain,” which pertains to issues that give rise to feelings of anger and frustration among individuals.

The first methods based on psychological theories were developed by Davies (1962) and expanded by Gurr (1968, 1970). These theories tried to build upon the idea that “misery breeds revolt,” and highlighted the exact sorts of deprivation that were most likely to result in revolutionary action.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Snyder and Tilly (1973) presented a third approach to revolution focusing on collective violence. According to their argument, popular discontent will continue to be ineffectual, and will not result

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<sup>51</sup> John Foran, *Taking Power: On the Origins of the Third World Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.

<sup>52</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “Review of Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation” (on S. N. Eisenstadt, Jeffrey M. Paige, Theda Skocpol, and Kay Ellen Trimberger), *World Politics* 32, no. 3 (1980), 428.

<sup>53</sup> Goldstone, “The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions”, 193.

in revolution, as long as it lacks the appropriate organization and resources.<sup>54</sup> Samuel Huntington went further and stated that deprivation is not limited to material factors but may encompass the denial of other rights, such as political participation. Where there is relative prosperity along both dimensions, the chance of a revolution breaking out is rare; however, according to this theory, it is during this disequilibrium, and the disability of societal institutions in meeting the needs of the people, that revolutions break out. Even though these theories attempt to explain the factors that contribute to political violence, they are unable to list clear conditions that pave the way for the collapse of state institutions within their nations.

The research of Theda Skocpol, a leading scholar of structural theories, has led to the expansion of the field of empirical studies of revolutions, and has significantly contributed to the revision of traditional approaches by adopting a new approach based on causal pluralism, which depends on combining the influence of state factors, class struggle, and the international context in pushing towards the revolution.<sup>55</sup>

In this perspective, Theda Skocpol's seminal work on *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) has focused on structural aspects of understanding the revolutionary process. Skocpol's approach advocates a methodology that is founded on three pillars: First, investigate the external factors and processes. Secondly, the analysis should include reference to international structures and global historical developments. Thirdly, it is vital to examine the state as a relatively autonomous organization (that is, as an administrative and coercive machinery that is independent of particular interests) in order to get a deeper comprehension of the factors that lead (have led) to revolutionary upheaval and its outcomes. This is an advancement over previous structuralist theories in the social sciences regarding the role of the state, which is now coming to be regarded as not merely an arena to be competed over, but an autonomous actor on its own.

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<sup>54</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>55</sup> However, despite the theoretical and methodological value of the social-structuralist approach, fourth generation theorists have nevertheless built their perceptions on a critique of social structuralism and its shortcomings. This has opened the door for the development of new research tools that have been postulated as more useful in analysing revolutionary phenomena.

According to Skocpol's theory, revolutions do not only originate from the internal tensions of a society, but are also formed by the necessities that exist or arise within the framework of international politics. In turn, the status of individual states within the global network continues to be one of the primary determinants of how they are differentiated from one another. To understand this or that revolution, one must understand the international and world-historical contexts.<sup>56</sup> Therefore it is essential, when researching revolutions, to identify the factors that influence the formation and internal processes of the particular state and society.<sup>57</sup>

### **2.5.3. The Idea of “Revolution From Above”**

Revolution is frequently associated with a popular uprising or other forms of action from below. This leads to a certain perception, a way of seeing. The French Revolution has had a crucial role to play in this regard. With the Days of 1789, the Parisian *sansculottes*, the barricades, and the Storming of the Bastille, it has created enduring images and legends of a revolution from below. A mental-intellectual consequence is that whenever people start thinking of or debating revolutions, they begin to imagine revolution in the shape of some new edition of the French Revolution.

However, that may not be the only way systemic change takes place. Ellen Trimberger, in her 1978 book *Revolution from Above*, has sought a comprehensive and objective model for “revolution from above,” as seen in Japan with the Meiji Restoration, in Turkey in 1923, with Egypt's military coup in 1952, and Peru in 1975. She argues that it is typically led by military bureaucrats, and is to be distinguished, at least in theory, from the so-called “bourgeois” mass revolution, or the so-called “proletarian” (socialist) mass revolution. In the process, she presents the Kemalist Revolution as having been both a national revolution and a revolution from above. Regarding the theory of revolution, I will concentrate more on this as it provides a theoretical background that helps in understanding Turkey's Kemalist Revolution.

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<sup>56</sup> Gregory Young, “Theda Skocpol: States and Social Revolutions,” Pressbooks, June 4, 2021.

<sup>57</sup> Theda Skocpol, *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 12.

A revolution from above, as the name indicates, is conducted by the elites of a given society; however, it may simultaneously involve the mobilization of large numbers of people. Revolutionary leaders frequently possess exceptional abilities and authoritarian instruments that enable them to accomplish the revolution's objectives (or historical content) swiftly and efficiently. This was what Trimberger was aiming to explain for Turkey, Japan, Egypt, and Peru. She identifies five *characteristics* of a revolution from above (this is somewhat distinct from her five *conditions of possibility* for a revolution from above). First is a highly bureaucratized civil and military administration.<sup>58</sup> In addition, these highly bureaucratized civilian or military leaders acquire political power and initiate economic, social, and political transformations. Second, a revolution from above is characterized by a lack of mass participation, particularly at the onset of change; it is minimal or non-existent. Third, revolutions from the top are rarely accompanied by violence, or at least large-scale violence, including carnage, executions, widespread migration, or outbursts of national passion. This is because the leadership or administration wields all authority, and any form of opposition is immediately suppressed. Fourth, change is brought about methodically and progressively, free from the influence of extremist ideas, in what Trimberger refers to as a step-by-step process, during which the core of bureaucratic institutions is completely centralized and unified. Fifth, a revolution from above attempts to destroy the political and economic fabric of the previous upper class, i.e. "the aristocracy" or a functionally similar kind of traditional class, which is frequently opposed to change, and this destruction may include fundamental social and economic reforms. According to Trimberger, it is the substantial change that this kind of revolution brings about, that distinguishes it from a coup d'état. And at this point in comes the Kemalist Revolution, resulting in what appeared to be a quasi-revolutionary régime, because while the political system was comprehensively transformed, the process of class destruction did not include the entire economic system but rather a small part of it, especially in the agricultural sector, where the traditional classes largely survived.<sup>59</sup>

In any case, according to Trimberger (and here we pass to her conditions of possibility), a revolution from above requires the availability of several factors:

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<sup>58</sup> Ellen K. Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military bureaucrats and development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru* (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1978), 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

- i. The availability of a distinctive type of elite structure, or bureaucratic independence (for civilian and military officials) from the landlord and merchant classes, which more generally makes them independent of economic power. According to Trimberger, in the case of the Kemalist Revolution, there was a chance to initiate and control change from above because the bureaucracy was independent of the classes which controlled the means of production.<sup>60</sup>
- ii. These civilian bureaucrats and military officers undergo specific training to become professionals that operate within a hierarchical structure, so that initially they may be detached from wider political matters. But historical circumstances may cast them in such bigger roles. According to Trimberger, in both late-19th century Japan and Ottoman Turkey, the politicization of the military was connected to the decline of conventional military roles, and their accumulating failure in wars and battles against Western nations. The military adopted nation-building as an alternative means to achieve national salvation or liberation.<sup>61</sup>
- iii. Such autonomous bureaucrats and military personnel may then align themselves with a national ideology, and engage in revolutionary actions against conservative domestic forces. As a minimum, the national ideology in question advocates for the cessation of national decline caused by foreign powers. Trimberger's viewpoint suggests that the autonomous military administrators in question only instigate change from a higher position, capitalizing on the inconsistencies in the orientations and mandates of the international powers. Here, Trimberger notes that in the Kemalist Revolution, this establishment evolved as a result of the successive political defeats of the Ottoman army in front of the Western forces, and for this reason, the role of the army changed as it took on the responsibility of leading the national liberation.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Loc. cit.

- iv. Beyond this, autonomous military bureaucrats can stage a genuinely successful revolution from above only when contradictions in the international constellation of power can be exploited to increase national autonomy. And according to Trimberger, the capacity of military commanders in Japan to adopt a radical approach relied on the reluctance of Western nations to react to their defiance because during the mid-19th century, the imperial powers exhibited a strong inclination towards China, while simultaneously refraining from employing significant military force against Japan. Similarly, Western nations, following the arduous aftermath of World War I, were not adequately equipped to reassemble their troops in order to crush the Kemalists and secure Turkish allegiance.<sup>63</sup>
- v. To orchestrate a revolution from above, dissident military bureaucrats in decentralized states must have a regional power base distinct from the central government -- as in the case of Tokugawa Japan and Ottoman Turkey.<sup>64</sup> And according to Trimberger, in the case of the Ottoman Empire, throughout the 19th century the ethnic and national diversity of the empire helped prevent a revolution from above, which did not occur until after the demise of the empire.

However, after all these sophisticated analyses of the conditions of possibility of revolutions from above, Trimberger concludes that despite their attempts to usher in modernity, they have generally yielded limited results because catching up with the Western economies requires transferring large agricultural surpluses into capitalist investment. It is this massive “expropriation” of agriculture that, for example in the case of the Kemalist Revolution, appears to have proved socially, ideologically and politically too difficult. Otherwise, the Kemalist Revolution, had great opportunities to achieve the merits of a full-fledged revolution. The army and the bureaucratic class represented a solidarity body with traditions of service, which was formed as a result of the educational reform that these members of the bureaucracy and army received under the Ottoman Empire -- in other words, in a non-colonial context. This class had no economic connections to the property-owners within the new authority that emerged after the revolution, allowing it to reconfigure the pattern of resource

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>64</sup> Loc. cit.

distribution and exploitation in response to the external military and economic pressures that imperilled the state. According to Trimberger's hypothesis, the new governing class did have opportunities to implement radical economic reforms, but stopped short of doing so.

At this point, I am going to switch from presenting alternative theories to alternative practices of revolution in the modern era.

## 2.6. Contemporary Definitions of Revolution in the Scholarly Literature

Revolution was and will remain a volatile concept that make it difficult for the researcher to reach a specific and comprehensive, all-fitting definition.<sup>65</sup> Instead, several definitions and points of view have emerged due to the uniqueness of each revolution, its ideology, and its components.

According to Hegelian idealism, revolution is “an idea that is equated with irresistible change – a manifestation of the world spirit in an unceasing quest for its fulfilment.”<sup>66</sup> In his book *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements*, Jeff Goodwin, an American sociologist, proposes an extremely broad definition including “any instance of relatively rapid and significant change.” In other words, together with political revolutions, non-political examples of rapid and radical change -- like the Industrial Revolution, the feminist revolution, the computer revolution, etc -- are all examples of revolutions.<sup>67</sup> With regard to mass participation as an element of a revolution, Goodwin offers two close and overlapping formulas. The first one defines revolution, now understood as political revolution, to be “any instances in which a state or political régime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional, and/or violent fashion.”<sup>68</sup> His second definition does not entail only mass mobilization and régime change, but also more explicitly requires a revolution to lead to a rapid and fundamental transformation.

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<sup>65</sup> Fatiha Tamzarti, “The concept of revolution”; *Political Encyclopedia* (May 2020), accessed in September 2022.

<sup>66</sup> Raymond Tanter and Manus Midlarsky, “A Theory of Revolution”; *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 11, no. 3 (September 1967), 264.

<sup>67</sup> Jeff, Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945–1991* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

Samuel Huntington, in his book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, insists that a revolution must be a rapid, fundamental, and often violent change in the prevailing values and myths in society and its political institutions, social structure, leadership, government, activity, and policies.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Goldstone defines revolution as “an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine authorities.”<sup>70</sup> From this, it is clear that in all these definitions, the common element is the rapid and fundamental change idea.

Some scholars distinguish between political and social revolutions based on the extent to which change takes place. Ted Gurr, a political scientist, has a book titled *Why Men Rebel*, where he defines revolution as “fundamental socio-political change accomplished through violence.”<sup>71</sup> Similar to Gurr, in *States and Social Revolutions* Theda Skocpol regards the English revolutions of 1640-48 and 1688-9 as examples of political revolutions which resulted in establishing parliament, but did not lead to a social transformation.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, examples of social revolution are seen in France, Russia, Mexico, China, Vietnam, and Cuba. Skocpol defines a social revolution as “rapid and fundamental transformations in society’s state and class structure, accompanied in part by class uprisings from below.”<sup>73</sup> Skocpol argues that although social revolutions are rare, their influence is huge and goes beyond national space to have an international impact.

In another book titled *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Crane Brinton notes that the term continues to confuse semanticists, not only because of its varied public usage but also because it is a term that carries “an emotional connotation.”<sup>74</sup> Brinton argues that revolutions are agents of change, and change might be for the better or the worse; frequently, moreover, it is hard to predict the exact time when this change will take place. Brinton likens revolutions to thunderstorms: Revolutions may be “as inevitable

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<sup>69</sup> Samuel P Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 4-264.

<sup>70</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “Toward a fourth generation of revolutionary theory”; *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001), 142.

<sup>71</sup> Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1970), 4.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 294.

<sup>73</sup> Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York, Vintage Books, 1965, 3rd edition), 4-6.

as thunderstorms, and often as useful as a storm in a parched countryside.”<sup>75</sup> At the same time, they are inherently unpredictable. In Jack Goldstone's analysis, too, a revolution resembles an earthquake in terms of its unpredictability. Although social scientists may be able to identify the accelerating tension and pressures in a given society, how and just when a revolution will break out remains impossible to foresee with any degree of precision. Therefore, a revolution can be both inevitable and unpredictable. Brinton further explains that a revolution does to the state what a fever does to the body -- because, just like a fever, a revolution eliminates corrupt individuals as well as harmful and counterproductive institutions. In other words, revolution is indeed destructive of the old order, and this destruction is necessary for the process of change; but it is also, according to Brinton, something to be avoided at all costs because, despite the positive results a revolution might bring, “nobody wants to have a fever.”<sup>76</sup>

We have already touched upon the element of mass participation. A revolution is often taken to involve the masses in revolt against the state. However, the concept of revolution is not restricted to mass participation. We have seen how Ellen Kay Trimberger makes room for the concept and possibility of “revolutions from above.” This notion refers to revolutions led by the highest military and civilian bureaucrats of the old régime. Trimberger defines this type of revolution as “an extralegal takeover of the central state apparatus which eliminates the political and economic power of the dominant social group of the old régime.”<sup>77</sup> With this concept Trimberger makes a clear distinction between what she still holds to be a revolution and what many would regard as a coup. While revolutions demolish the dominant social group, allowing for comprehensive change to occur including a country’s economic, social, religious, and cultural structures, a coup does not destroy the economic and political foundations of the aristocracy.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Trimberger, *Revolution from Above*, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Loc. cit.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF REVOLUTION**

Following upon a general theoretical understanding of revolution as developed in the previous chapter, the present Chapter II will now provide a comparative analysis of three most consequential revolutions in history: (in chronological order) the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the Iranian Revolution, all by way of preparing a comparative background for the Kemalist Revolution. The selection of these three revolutions has been predicated on ideology and vision, for while the Kemalist Revolution shared a similar vision with some revolutions, others diverged or even contradicted it entirely. The purpose of this comparison is to illustrate and comprehend the attributes of the Kemalist Revolution, including both its similarities and differences. It is important to prioritise vision and ideology, the manner in which the revolution transpires, and the leadership of the revolution, when conducting a comparative analysis. Other modern revolutions, such as the Chinese Revolution developing over 1927-1949, the Fascist revolution in Italy in 1922, and the Nazi revolution in Germany in 1933, have also been significant. But in terms of hostility to parliamentary democracy, whether from the Right or the Left, plus nationalist platforms on that basis, it can perhaps be argued that they do not add that much to the comparison between the Russian Revolution and the Kemalist Revolution.

This chapter's explorations will demonstrate the difficulty of framing revolutions and defining their often-unique characteristics because revolutions differ among themselves in a way that makes it difficult to rely on a single classificatory paradigm. As discussed in the first chapter, there are many theories which are concerned with explaining why and when a revolution breaks out. These theories also address the historical, economic, social, political or psychological reasons which lead to revolution. However, there is no well-established, consistent, and agreed-upon classification of the types of revolutions that the world has witnessed during past

centuries.<sup>79</sup> Instead, the political literature is replete with several classifications that attempt to frame revolutions within certain patterns, for example as democratic or bourgeois or national or socialist or communist or anti-imperialist revolutions.<sup>80</sup> Figuring heavily in this has been the Soviet school of Marxism, which divides modern revolutions into three or four types: bourgeois revolution, bourgeois-democratic revolution, popular bourgeois revolution, and proletarian or communist revolution.<sup>81</sup> Somewhat similarly, though much more flexibly and with less jargon, Barrington Moore Jr., who may be regarded as a Western academic neo-Marxist, claims that all modernizing societies have been through one of three types of revolution. The first is the “bourgeois” revolution, which led to the establishment of democratic régimes. The second is a “revolution from above,” a revolution led by the traditional elite that led to fascist régimes such as the ones in Germany and Japan. The third is a “peasant revolution,” not led by a revolutionary bourgeoisie but based on a revolutionary peasantry, that paved the path for communist modernization.<sup>82</sup> Yet another typology is offered by Goldstone. Revolutions that lead to economic, political, and social change are the so-called “great revolutions.” As sub-categories, there are “social revolutions” as well as revolutions that cause a change only in political institutions. Last but not least, there are “elite revolutions” or “revolutions from above” for which Goldstone takes his cue from Trimberger. As previously set out, these are carried out by parties in the ruling elite, and involve little, controlled, or no mass participation.<sup>83</sup>

Goldstone further argues that revolutions rarely occur in the absence of leaders or a controlling vision, or without ideological objectives. What can be demonstrated, however, is that the majority of revolutions claim the support of “all the people,” even though, at least at the outset of the revolution, a majority of people may not have been entirely aware of what was happening or what might occur. Extreme emotions such as wrath, dread, hostility, and uncertainty spread among individuals, polarizing societies

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<sup>79</sup> Eduard E. Shults, “On Classification of Revolutions: An Attempt at a New Approach”; *Social Evolution and History* 18, no. 2 (2019), 246.

<sup>80</sup> A new initiative in this regard, which I have discovered only when concluding this thesis, and which therefore I haven’t had time to properly assimilate, but which I have nevertheless found very stimulating, is: Leonid Grinin; Anton Grinin & Andrey Korotayev, “A. 20th Century revolutions: characteristics, types, and waves”; *Humanities and Social Sciences Communication* 9, 124 (2022), 3.

<sup>81</sup> Shults, “On Classification of Revolutions,” 246.

<sup>82</sup> Jonathan M. Wiener, “The Barrington Moore Thesis and Its Critics”; *Theory and Society* 2, no. 3 (1975), 301.

<sup>83</sup> Goldstone, “Toward a fourth generation of revolutionary theory,” 143.

and leaving little space for reason, rationality, or the rule of law. As in the past, revolutions endeavour, through their leadership, to elucidate their agenda and benefit from public opinion to influence platforms such as newspapers. Or, modern communications are extensively used to mobilize the masses and obtain their support, and this especially pertains to revolutions that originate from below, i.e. revolutions in which there is significant mass participation. For Goldstone, revolutions that originate from above may not rely on the people, as was the case with the Kemalist Revolution, although some of them, such as the Chinese Revolution, consciously mobilized the people through its large peasant class. However, this type of revolution is frequently successful in gaining popular support because it begins to implement policies aimed at achieving the objective of uniting the people and preserving the nation's unity while refusing to capitulate to foreign demands and pressures.

### **3.1. Three Models: The French, Russian, and Iranian Revolutions**

I will need to present some case studies of some revolutions which I see as having had profound political and geopolitical effects on the history of the contemporary world, and which also reflect theoretical examples that will be useful in framing the Kemalist Revolution. These are the French, Russian, and Iranian revolutions.

#### **3.1.1. A "Bourgeois" Revolution? The 1789 French Revolution**

The French Revolution of 1789 is the first revolution covered in this chapter. It is one of the most significant events in modern history, as it altered the political concepts and geopolitical landscape of Europe. It precipitated the fall of the old régime<sup>84</sup>, the absolute monarchy in France; it contributed to the fall of other absolute monarchy régimes in Europe; most significantly, it led to the abolition of the feudal system. In Marxist theory, the French Revolution represents the prototypical bourgeois revolution.<sup>85</sup> It is part of an overall framework where every phenomenon has to have

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<sup>84</sup> William Doyle (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancien Régime* (2011; online edition, Oxford Academic, 18 Sept. 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199291205.001.0001>. “The political Ancien Régime in these terms meant a state in which the sovereign ruled unconstrained by representative institutions and was responsible for his actions only to God.”

<sup>85</sup> Pamela M. Pilbeam, “The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914”; *Themes in Comparative History book Series (TCH)*, (1990), 210. “In Marxist theory, the bourgeoisie referred to the state and the development of a capitalist, entrepreneurial economy.”

a class character. In that context, a bourgeois revolution is a term or concept used to designate a social revolution that attempts to remove a feudal system or its remnants, establish the rule of the bourgeoisie, and construct a bourgeois (capitalist) state. This notion has been so influential since the middle of the 19th century, that it has become difficult to see, study and discuss the French Revolution outside it.

This is a big interpretation. In history as it actually happened, various factors led to the breakout of the revolution in 1789, and they date back to centuries earlier.<sup>86</sup> Starting with the class system, which did play an enormous role, numerous intellectual, social, political and economic factors, including the reforms of Louis XVI, all contributed to the onset of the French Revolution. In the sphere of ideas, Rousseau is one example, whose work on the Social Contract introduced the ideas that provided the seeds of the revolution. Rousseau noted the glaring class disparity between the popular masses and those in power, and the economic deprivation which affected the lower classes of France, where hunger was a constant fear during the lean harvest years. The financial and military expenses incurred by the French monarchy's involvement in the American War of Independence significantly reduced the monetary resources of King Louis XVI's administration, leading to an increased burden of taxation on the Third Estate.<sup>87</sup> The French economy began to deteriorate in 1785 as a result of the damage caused by drought and the decline in agricultural productivity, which resulted in rising prices and widespread famine. Due to their limited resources, many peasants were compelled to live in precarious conditions, and industry as a whole also experienced a severe crisis. The 1786 Franco-English Treaty, which opened French markets to English industrial goods, contributed to this crisis, triggering Louis XVI's decision to impose new taxes to address the financial issue. However, this decision was rejected by the Third Estate, and the French Revolution commenced. The economic crisis evolved into a political crisis. This is the basis of what Theda Skocpol writes about social revolutions being a product of socio-economic and political conditions. Skocpol

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<sup>86</sup> Jeremy Popkin, *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 101.

<sup>87</sup> The Estates General was divided into three estates, each of which was given one vote (suffrage). The first estate (the clergy) and the second estate (the nobility) each constituted around one per cent of the French population, while the third estate (the rest) made up the vast majority of people, but was still given only one vote.

defines social revolutions as “fundamental changes to the state and class structure of society” that are accompanied and partially carried out by class-based upheavals.<sup>88</sup>

### **3.1.1.1. The Phases of the French Revolution**

The revolution lasted ten years, from 1789 to 1799, when Napoleon Bonaparte, who had risen to become the military leader of the revolution, ended it with a coup against his fellow leaders whereby he declared himself First Consul. A few years later he also declared himself Emperor, and as the Wars of the French Revolution were transformed and extended into the Napoleonic Wars, he came to rule over a French empire that covered most of Europe. He finally suffered defeat over 1812-1815, and after twenty-six years of upheaval (1789-1815), the Congress of Vienna set about trying to “restore” Europe.

Of these twenty-six years, only the first ten are recognized by most historians as the Revolution. During these ten years of 1789-1799, the French Revolution went through four main phases or stages. The first phase, 1789-1892, is known as the Liberal Phase. It was under what was initially a constitutional monarchy in practice (1789-1791), and then formally became a constitutional monarchy (1791-92). The most important achievements of this phase are the establishment of the National Assembly on June 17, 1789, by the Third Estate, followed by the insurgency and victory that resulted in the fall of the Bastille prison on July 14, 1789, in an event later known as the Storming of the Bastille. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen was published on August 26, 1789, and the nation’s first constitution was drafted on the 3rd September 1791.

Starting with this constitution, the second phase (1792-1795) is referred to as the Radical Phase. The constitutional monarchy was already obsolete when it was finally declared in 1791. The progressive radicalization of the lower classes escalated into mass action, resulting in the storming of the Tuileries Palace, and the promulgation of the First Republic on 21 September 1792. It went hand in hand with a wave of executions, during and after which the formation of the National Convention, and the

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<sup>88</sup> Theda Skocpol, “A critical review of Barrington Moore’s Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy”; *Politics and Society* 4, no. 1 (1973), 1-34.

ascendancy of the Jacobins led by Maximilien Robespierre, marked the beginning of the 1792-94 Reign of Terror.<sup>89</sup> This period also witnessed the execution of the king and queen, and perhaps even more significantly, the creation of a new and special instrument of revolutionary authority called the Committee of Public Safety, which was able to exercise unlimited and hence arbitrary power. But eventually fatigue and anxiety overcame revolutionary fervour. People got tired of excessive and unending revolutionary activity, as well as uncertainty about whether they themselves might be the next to be accused of counter-revolution. Finally, the moderates got together and overthrew Robespierre and his supporters on 27th July 1794 in an event that has come to be known as the Thermidorian Reaction.

This led into a transitional third phase that lasted only a year (1794-1795), after which a new system of government by a committee of five known as the Directory became the ultimate expression of the fourth phase desire to return to law and order, and ruled France for another four years (1795-1799); it was a régime of conservative Republicans reacting against the excessive use and rule of violence. During this phase, in the Marxist interpretation the bourgeoisie is said to have maintained the system of the Republic while drawing up a new constitution in its favour, and seeking the help of the army to establish security and protect its interests. In these ways it sought to re-establish a strong political system. However, this also prepared the way for Napoleon Bonaparte's military coup in 1799.

### **3.1.1.2. The Influence of the French Revolution**

The influence of the French Revolution extended beyond the borders of France to nearly the entire world. This influence persisted for centuries afterwards, and continued to create or sustain a whole vocabulary and string of concepts. Its ideas spread throughout Europe, and became a source of inspiration for the Revolutionary Spring of 1848 in Europe as well as other, comparable waves beyond Europe.<sup>90</sup> The

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<sup>89</sup> Robespierre was a member of the Third Estate, a French lawyer and statesman, and later the leader of the Committee of Public Safety, an inspirational and intellectual figure of the French Revolution. With his radical ideas about "the law of [the survival of] the revolution [being] above all other laws," i.e. an initial notion of revolutionary dictatorship, he is generally agreed to have had a particular influence on Mustafa Kemal.

<sup>90</sup> Eric Anceau, "Political Europe: 1848, the European People's Spring"; Sorbonne University (accessed August 8, 2022), URL: <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/political-europe/1848->

ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity; the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen; the establishment of a First Republic (and a truly democratic republic), became an inspiring model for modern revolutions. Its principles became a reference point for many future political systems. In his enormously influential book *The Age of Revolution*, the British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote:

France provided the vocabulary and the issues of liberal and radical-democratic politics for most of the world... if the economy of the nineteenth-century world was formed mainly under the influence of the British industrial revolution, its politics, and ideology were mainly formed by the French.<sup>91</sup>

But it went beyond fashioning current, contemporary politics to shaping mentalities, academic frameworks, ways of looking (and seeing). Many, indeed most concrete, tangible phenomena of the French Revolution -- such as the leadership-and-masses dialectic, radicalization, Jacobinism, revolutionary dictatorship, terror, violence, exhaustion, conservative reaction or Thermidorian reaction -- were developed and generalized into theoretical building blocks for thinking about revolutions in general. This was not just academic, but also extended to revolutionism and anti-revolutionism -- to making or opposing revolutions in political life.

Insofar as the French political paradigm generated by the French Revolution inspired the leader of the Kemalist Revolution, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), including his entire generation, his colleagues and companions, and eventually his followers, it should be fairly clear that what transpired in Turkey over 1919-1922, and then from 1923 into the 1930s, cannot possibly be imagined without the impact of the French Revolution. Like the rest of the Late Ottoman elite, Mustafa Kemal belonged to Francophone generations. He read and spoke French, and was hugely influenced by French culture. In both the French and Ottoman cases, there was a decrepit *ancien régime* that was regarded as an obstacle to progress, which therefore had to be terminated. It is precisely from this perspective that the value and political impact of the French Revolution in

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european-people%E2%80%99s-spring/1848-european-people%E2%80%99s-spring. “‘The European People’s Spring’ is ‘A revolutionary wave [that] shook the conservative order that had presided over the fate of Europe since the fall of Napoleon and the Congress in Vienna in 1815.’”

<sup>91</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 53.

the Kemalist Revolution is derived: because it abolished hereditary rule and a social system based on privilege vs deprivation; on the way, it broke sharply with the prevalent social, political, and even religious pattern (which also meant that from France to Turkey, mistakes with regard to religion would be repeated). According to Mustafa Kemal, the Kemalist Revolution instituted the principle of national sovereignty, founded on freedom, equality, and justice. This was arguably the most significant influence of the French Revolution on the Kemalist Revolution.<sup>92</sup>

So the Kemalists viewed the French Revolution through the lens of the change it wrought in Europe, and the system it brought forth in the form of a republic and a nation-state. Hence to them France represented modernity, and served as a compass for attaining modernity. But the history of the French Revolution is full of significant events (and interpretations) that are not necessarily consistent in terms of the revolution's impact and legitimacy. Similar conflicts and contradictions have also come to mark the Kemalist Revolution.

### **3.1.1.3. Different Interpretations of the French Revolution**

Along with the internal inconsistencies, or twists and turns, of the French Revolution, its historiography has also evolved to be full of different interpretations. Such contrary opinions have been there from the start. Thomas Paine, a contemporary English-American politician, philosopher and theorist, showed great enthusiasm for the revolution, and more generally for the idea of breaking with the past. Paine was a man of the Enlightenment, and an advocate for individual rights and freedoms, for moving away from the unlimited (and unjustifiable) power of kings or other unelected rulers. He saw the need for government to be based on universal principles that can be reached by reason rather than personal whims, institutional trends, and tradition. In contrast, the Irish-English political thinker Edmund Burke reacted against the revolution to evolve from a relatively liberal-democratic outlook into one of the pioneers of liberal-conservative thought. Burke maintained that talking about the French Revolution, and more specifically about change, requires recognition that getting rid of the past in a

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<sup>92</sup> Bernard Lewis, "The impact of the French Revolution on Turkey"; *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale. Journal of World History. Cuadernos de Historia Mundial* 1, no. 1 (1953), 105.

radical way leads to the loss of important elements of stability in ways that may not have been intended. Instead, Burke acknowledged the importance of cautious, incremental change, promoting a gradualistic, reforming approach.<sup>93</sup>

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), a French nobleman, historian, and social and political critic, wrote his *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (1856) as the first significant study of the French Revolution. Tocqueville defended the French Revolution despite its apparent hostility to the clergy, arguing that it did not seek to eliminate religious faith, but rather all forms of the old régime, of which the Church was a significant symbol. Also, in his opinion, the revolution did not intend to create an enduring state of anarchy; instead, it should primarily be understood as a movement for political and social reform. Tocqueville believed in the values of freedom, social change, justice, and equality throughout his life, but in his later years, he concluded that ultimately the French Revolution did not make that much of a difference in French society because it ended up replacing feudal oppression and anarchy with over-centralization. Tocqueville admitted that during his study of the old French society from all angles, he could never completely put modern (post-revolutionary) society out of his mind, but insisted that he did want to discover not only the differences between the two but also the similarities. In the end, he insisted that the French Revolution constituted radical transformation on all levels. Not only in France but everywhere, what existed before the French Revolution differed from what came to exist after it. The change encompassed the monarchical régimes that still existed, for national sovereignty was established in both monarchical and republican régimes. Freedom, justice, equality, and human rights were firmly established, resulting in international treaties, covenants, and laws relating to these values.

As already indicated, the Marxist interpretation has viewed the French Revolution as a successful example of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It was a conflict between the nobility and the bourgeoisie; tensions arose between these two classes, with the bourgeoisie ultimately triumphing over the nobility. This theory was adopted by the historian Albert Soboul, who viewed the French Revolution as a classic example

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<sup>93</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Hackett Publishing, 1987), 36.

of the bourgeois revolution.<sup>94</sup> Although this interpretation prevailed for a long time, it always had its critics and alternatives. Thus Alfred Cobban, a political conservative, wrote *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* to criticize the theory and reject the notion that the French Revolution reflected a class struggle between the nobility and the bourgeoisie as viewed by Marxism. Cobban claimed that the cause of the revolution was ultimately the conflict between the “poor rural communities” and the “urban communities” that were attempting to control them. Cobban criticized Soboul’s view that the peasants were simply an extension of the bourgeoisie (“the rural bourgeoisie,” as Soboul called them); he regarded it as an endeavour to interpret historical circumstances in accordance with Marxist theory.<sup>95</sup> Cobban himself claimed that once we begin to investigate the social background of the revolution, it becomes clear how little we know about the actual pattern of French society in the 18th century and its influence on the revolution.”<sup>96</sup>

### **3.1.2. A “Proletarian” Revolution? The Russian Revolution of 1917**

The Bolshevik or October Revolution is arguably the most influential revolution of the 20th century; together with the French Revolution, it is also one of the most studied and analysed revolutions.

Once more, there is a long background. From the 18th century onward, Russia had experienced periods of instability and revolutionary attempts, ones that succeeded and others that failed. The Decembrist insurrection of 1825 is believed to be the first revolutionary attempt in the modern history of Russia.<sup>97</sup> Over the 19th century, political violence was never absent. In the early-20th century, the years up to World War I witnessed one of the bloodiest events in the country: 22nd January 1905, subsequently known as Bloody Sunday, when thousands of peaceful demonstrators against the Tsar were fired upon, and perhaps around 200 killed, by the Imperial Guard, triggering the active escalation of the 1905 Revolution. This forced the

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<sup>94</sup> Albert Soboul, *The French Revolution, 1787-1799: From the storming of the Bastille to Napoleon* (New York: Random House, 1975), 3.

<sup>95</sup> Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 109.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 162.

<sup>97</sup> David R. Marples, *Lenin’s Revolution: Russia, 1917-1921* (England: Pearson Education, 2000), 3.

autocratic Nicholas II, under pressure from the revolutionaries, to convert the régime into a semi-constitutional monarchy by establishing the State Duma, which had a legislature elected by the people, together with many other reform promises.<sup>98</sup> Although eventually suppressed, this Russian Revolution of 1905 also showed that working people's local councils called "soviets" were both the nascent form of a new, revolutionary authority, and the machinery of armed insurrection.

Although the 1905 Revolution did not succeed in overthrowing the Tsarist regime, it prepared the ground in various ways for a revolution (or two revolutions) that followed thirteen years later.<sup>99</sup> In between, Russian modernization further changed the social structure of major cities like Moscow or St Petersburg, introducing a large and impoverished working class while also helping erode patriarchal ideology. This process was further deepened by the defeats as well as the extreme economic hardship caused by World War I over 1914-1917, which also did away with a lot of the Tsar's personal charisma.<sup>100</sup> The accumulating tensions and frustrations first broke out in the February Revolution in 1917 (which took place in March by the new calendar).<sup>101</sup> The revolution began as a movement on 23rd February (8th March), when thousands of women marched to mark Women's Day and protest against bread shortages in the streets of the Vyborgsky district of St Petersburg (or Petrograd, which was the city's name in 1914-1924). On the same day a strike was declared as the food rationing system was initiated; workers joined street protests; the Tsar was increasingly isolated, and was forced to abdicate in just ten days.<sup>102</sup> The February Revolution was remarkably swift and bloodless, and it brought a Provisional Government to power.

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<sup>98</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>99</sup> Vilhelm Knorin, a Soviet politician, publicist, and historian, presented the official Soviet emphasis on continuity in the following words: "It was the hegemony of the proletariat that determined the success of the revolution... the First Revolution, that of 1905, had prepared the way for the swift success of the Second Revolution." See Vilhelm Knorin et al, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course* (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1939), 176.

<sup>100</sup> Stephen A. Smith, *The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>101</sup> According to the Julian calendar which Russia used until 1918, the revolution took place in February.

<sup>102</sup> Marples, *Lenin's Revolution*, 27-28.

### **3.1.2.1. The October or Bolshevik Revolution**

Of the series of revolutionary episodes that Russia experienced, the October or Bolshevik Revolution was actually the third one, and the ideology, tactics and strategy of the Bolsheviks was a synthesis of the unsuccessful socialist experiments that came before it. The failure of the first revolutionary surge in 1905 may be said to have helped the maturation of their political philosophy. The concept of directly empowering the soviets, for instance, was one of the lessons they learned from the first revolution, which was plagued by a leadership vacuum among the revolting workers.

By Fall 1917, there was no such leadership vacuum, for the Bolsheviks were now a tightly organized and disciplined party, under Lenin totally committed to making revolution as the only way out (so they believed), battle-hardened by years in clandestinity under Tsarist repression, tactically flexible and ready for virtually everything. They realized that peace was the key question. With the February Revolution, Russian workers and peasants (who made up the army, and also bore the greatest economic hardship) had pinned their hopes for peace on the Provisional Government, which however failed to deliver because of its treaty obligations to England and France, its Western allies. The Bolsheviks made maximum use of the resulting popular disillusionment. Although still small in Spring 1917, with their slogans like “Peace, Land, Bread” and “All Power to the Soviets” they were able to attract especially the Moscow and St Petersburg industrial working classes (plus large numbers of army units) over to their side, thereby increasingly isolating and paralyzing the government, against which they were able to launch a successful urban uprising in late-October (early-November), and then also able to hold onto power through a long and bloody Civil War, resulting in the creation of a “first socialist country” called the Soviet Union.

This is a thumbnail sketch of what actually happened. What have been the theoretical implications? Despite their (seeming) ideological differences, I have chosen to compare the Bolshevik with the Kemalist Revolution. Here I will highlight the main characteristics of the Bolshevik Revolution, and points on which it overlaps with or diverges from the Kemalist Revolution.

Firstly, although the Bolshevik Revolution was a communist revolution in terms of its professed ideology and leadership, I would argue that the goal of the Bolsheviks was similar to the Kemalists. This is because both revolutions' primary goal was really to catch up with the modern world. Both countries were burdened by the consequences of late-introduced modernization processes. These reforms were regarded as not having achieved enough. So both the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists acquired a mission to develop a backward nation into a cutting-edge industrial state that could exist independently of the rest of the world. The Bolshevik leaders were concerned that Russia's reliance on the outside world might turn it into a colony or semi-colony of the advanced industrial nations. They wished to free Russia from this dependence and to make the country safe from attack by one or more capitalist governments. The same and bigger fear faced the Kemalists when the Ottoman Empire had to sign the Mudros Armistice of 1918 with Great Britain. These catching-up anxieties fuelled both revolutions. Ultimately, both the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists broke with the past; they ended their respective old régimes: the Ottoman and the Romanov monarchies.

### **3.1.2.2. The "Inevitability" of the Revolution**

The 1917 October (November) revolution has sparked a great deal of controversy particularly among Western historians, the majority of whom adopted a hostile view towards this revolution during the Cold War, when the Soviet camp was aligned against the United States. On the opposite side, the official record of the October Revolution was forged in the 1920s and 30s, and lasted for seven decades. This official narrative was strict and it represented the work of the Soviet historians. The Soviet-Marxist view was taught in state schools and universities, and the basic view was that the Bolshevik Revolution was inevitable; it bore out Karl Marx's "scientific" forecast on the coming communist, working class revolution.<sup>103</sup>

There are some major problems with this hurried, simplistic conclusion. First, was it really a proletarian revolution? In sheer socio-economic terms, Russia did not meet Marx's prophecy. Marx had looked to Britain, France or Germany for the outbreak of a communist revolution --because these were the most highly industrialized capitalist

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<sup>103</sup> Edward Acton, ed. *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914–1921* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5.

countries at the time, and therefore had the largest, most numerous, most highly organized working classes. As for Russia, despite being the fifth industrial economy in the world, it was still mostly a backward agrarian country with a huge impoverished peasantry, left landless or semi-landless as part of the modernization crisis caused by the Tsarist régime<sup>104</sup>, that eventually made up the majority of the forces of revolution. It was these underlying realities that were reflected in the Bolsheviks' already-mentioned slogan of "Peace, Land, and Bread."<sup>105</sup>

Secondly, in another way, too, the Bolshevik Revolution was not the fulfilment of Marxist analyses about the necessary and inevitable of capitalist development: it was unthinkable without the World War. It was the war that plunged the country into a profound crisis, war that discredited the Tsar and the whole regime, war that armed the revolution by putting guns into workers' and peasants' hands, and war that pushed them over to the side of the Bolsheviks.

So in the end, what did the Bolshevik Revolution really show? It can be argued that it demonstrated something about the role of ideas, the force of ideology: A certain theory does not have to be "true" or correct"; if enough people believe in it, and if therefore they create and unite around a tightly disciplined party, they can still seize a major historical opportunity to make revolution. This approach shifts the emphasis from objective to subjective elements, as in fact argued by a group of American and European historians who have taken the argument to such an extreme as to regard the October Revolution as a *coup d'état* by the Bolsheviks (who are represented as a tiny and unpopular party), thereby further enhancing the role played by Lenin. This is what Richard Pipes, for example, writes in *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*: "The events that led to the overthrow of the Provisional Government were not spontaneous but carefully plotted and staged by a tightly organized conspiracy." He adds: "October was a classic coup d'état, the capture of governmental authority by a

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<sup>104</sup> Smith, *The Russian Revolution*, 6.

<sup>105</sup> The American Historical Association. *Our Russian Ally: What Was the Bolshevik Revolution?* (Washington D.C.: USAFI, 1945; accessed in May 2023). URL:[https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/gi-roundtable-series/pamphlets/em-46-our-russian-ally-\(1945\)/what-was-the-bolshevik-revolution](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/gi-roundtable-series/pamphlets/em-46-our-russian-ally-(1945)/what-was-the-bolshevik-revolution)

small band, carried out, in deference to the democratic professions of the age, with a show of mass participation, but with hardly any mass involvement.”<sup>106</sup>

These, then, are some of the discrepancies between Soviet and non-Soviet writers when it comes to interpreting the Bolshevik Revolution, and especially over its class character (whether it was truly proletarian or not), and therefore also over its alleged inevitability in Marxist theory.

But what most concerns me here is the comparison between the Kemalist Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution. In the eyes of the Bolsheviks, there was no way out for Russia except revolution. The Kemalists were also in a similar situation; in their eyes, too, there was no way out for Turkey except resistance and revolution. But after a point we come to possible differences. In the next chapter I will argue, along with Trimberger, that the Kemalist Revolution was a top-down revolution from beginning to end -- or what is called a revolution from above. In other words, change was not initiated from below; there were no mass movements remotely comparable to the street demonstrations in St Petersburg that by turns isolated and paralysed the old régime, the army and the Provisional Government, first forcing the Tsar to abdicate, and then (by October) rendering Kerensky defenceless in the face of the Moscow and St Petersburg armed uprising. If this was a coup, it was like a coup only in its last stages, the death throes of the regime. But as for the Kemalists, they were a radical reactive-nationalist movement of career officers (and not the enlisted soldiers, not the army rank-and-file) that responded to threats of Western colonial encroachment. As Trimberger writes: “Without the threat from the West it is unlikely that high-level military officers would have risked their positions and their official status by engaging in illegal revolutionary action.”<sup>107</sup>

### **3.1.2.3. The Mobilization of the Masses**

The peasantry in Russia was liberated from serfdom in 1861, but their property was so inadequate that they had to work as subject, subordinate tenants on other people’s land, rendering them the most disadvantaged group in society. They grew angry and

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<sup>106</sup> Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York 1996), 113.

<sup>107</sup> Trimberger, *Revolution from Above*, 92.

resentful, and were willing to oust aristocratic landlords and the monarchy that supported them. This is evident from the motto of the revolution, “Peace, land, and bread.”<sup>108</sup> Although Marxist theory argues for the inevitability of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and then to communism, this is not what happened in Russia. As freedom from serfdom came late, peasants did not have enough time to become an independent producing class, and then had to surrender to the socialist state’s demand for cheap food (for cities) and cheap raw materials (for industry).<sup>109</sup> Hence they fell into another form of serfdom as Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin nationalized the land and requisitioned the surplus to meet the food shortage. This lasted until March 1921, when Lenin announced a retreat and switch to the New Economic Policy, which allowed for a partial return to a market economy. A tax was imposed on peasants as they were given the freedom to sell their surplus for their profit; this marked a huge shift in the Bolshevik strategy, though after Lenin’s death it would be harshly reversed through Stalinist collectivization. Turkey is a different matter. Contrary to Russia, there was no entrenched hereditary nobility, and therefore no majority of landless or semi-landless peasants. According to Feroz Ahmad, one reason for that is that reforms and modernization in the Ottoman Empire had different consequences for the peasantry.<sup>110</sup>

#### **3.1.2.4. The Revolutionary Leadership**

Another point of comparison is revolutionary leadership. When we compare these two revolutions, it becomes clear that they were based on two prominent personalities, Vladimir Lenin and Mustafa Kemal. Both leaders appeared in the right time and place; both had exceptional qualities; both were driven, authoritarian, single-minded, persistent, and willing to take the risks involved in making revolution; without one or the other, it is hardly likely that a revolution would take place in the way it did.

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<sup>108</sup> These patterns are persuasively set forth by the American Historical Association. From Vera Micheles Dean, *Our Russian Ally: What Was the Bolshevik Revolution?* (accessed in May 2023). URL:[https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/gi-roundtable-series/pamphlets/em-46-our-russian-ally-\(1945\)/what-was-the-bolshevik-revolution](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/gi-roundtable-series/pamphlets/em-46-our-russian-ally-(1945)/what-was-the-bolshevik-revolution).

<sup>109</sup> Katie Stuart, Jessica Godfrey, Zachariah Young, and Elsa Nickerson (2010), “Peasants and the Russian Revolution: The Effects of the Russian Peasantry on the Revolutionary Outcomes of the Revolution of 1917.” FHSS Mentored Research Conference. 202. [https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/fhssconference\\_studentpub/202](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/fhssconference_studentpub/202).

<sup>110</sup> Feroz Ahmed, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 29.

Ultimately, both of them led radical change on so many levels, and appeared as the saviour of his country.

Beyond that, their social contexts and backgrounds were hugely different. Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) was a military officer who emerged as a hero and a national liberator for leading his nation to independence and statehood.<sup>111</sup> Significantly, we have only a year of birth for him (1881), which says something about his natal deracination; his Western educational background came on top of this, and had a great influence on the direction his revolution took. I will be coming back to him in my next and final chapter. As for Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (Lenin was his political pseudonym), he was born on 22nd April 1870 into a middle-class family with Kalmyk and servile roots; in Kazan, he studied law and graduated with honours; he was a man not only of action but also of thought, a deep intellectual who could have been a top university professor in history or economics if he had not committed his life to Marxism and revolution.<sup>112</sup>

Lenin was arrested in December 1895, jailed for a year, and then exiled to Siberia for three years. After his exile ended in 1900, he went to Western Europe, returning at the time of the 1905 Revolution but again going into self-exile in 1907 when the revolutionary wave subsided.

This time, he returned to the country only after the fall of the Tsar in the February Revolution. There were many motives behind Lenin's quick and timely return on 16th April 1917; the first one was his fear of the power vacuum left after the fall of the régime. Lenin understood the importance of seizing the opportunity and he succeeded in guiding revolutionary crowds; his decisive policies and his way of dealing with his opponents had a significant impact on controlling the party, directing the country, and eradicating any chance of a counter-revolution.

The Bolsheviks led by Lenin had a crystal-clear vision. They believed in the inevitability of a revolutionary solution based on the ideas of Marx and Lenin. Communist theory, which was derived from Marx's ideas, and further reinforced by

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<sup>111</sup>I will comment further on Mustafa Kemal's biography and education in my final chapter.

<sup>112</sup> Marples. *Lenin's Revolution*, 6-7.

Lenin's theoretical elaborations, was a cogent explanation of the people's need to escape their current state. Lenin's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat was appealing and alluring to the working class, which increased the party's capacity to recruit. In addition, it gave the Bolsheviks the internal adversary they required to unite their ranks: the bourgeoisie.

Did this have any Turkish counterpart? According to Feroz Ahmad, the hard core of the Kemalist movement that led the new state was an intelligentsia made up of military and civilian bureaucrats. They gained and held the initiative despite the importance of conservative notables and the infant bourgeoisie in the national fight and the establishment of the Republic. They were also aware of revolutionary developments and ideas elsewhere, including Russia. More directly, there were also immigrants or refugees from Russia who formed a separate, well-educated, and self-conscious group, and who saw themselves as public opinion shapers that were meant to lead Turkey into the contemporary world of civilized countries. They were dedicated to the concept of change and were dissatisfied with tradition, which they considered a hindrance to development.<sup>113</sup> All these want to constitute the Kemalist functional equivalent of the Leninist concept of "the vanguard."

### **3.1.3. Iran 1979: An "Islamic-Cultural" Revolution?**

Iran's social, economic, and political struggle throughout the 20th century has been particularly remarkable as the country has endured numerous turbulent eras, including three major wars (1914–18, 1941–45, and 1980–88), three coups (1908, 1921, and 1953) that altered the balance of power, and two controversial revolutions (1905 and 1979) that had a substantial impact on socio-political developments. Of these, I have chosen the Islamic revolution of 1979 because it intersects with the Kemalist Revolution in many ways, including the geographical proximity with Turkey, as well as the struggle for independence from foreign invasions and interventions that have plagued both Turkey and Iran, obstructing or distorting their development. Secondly, the peculiarity of the Iranian Revolution contradicts the majority of contemporary

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<sup>113</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 76-77.

political and social revolutions, thereby allowing the Kemalist Revolution to be more precisely identified.

### **3.1.3.1. The Historical Causes of the Revolution**

According to Nikki R. Keddie, an American scholar of Iranian history, the origins and foundations of the outbreak of revolution in Iran date back to the early-19th century. Iran lacked a modern army, bureaucracy, and educational system during the Qajar dynasty. The Little Russian Cossack Brigade, established in 1879, was the only modern military force in the country at the time; this shows that the reigning Qajar dynasty did nothing to strengthen the government and the military and to protect Iran from further attack from the West or its neighbours.<sup>114</sup> Iran's path to modernity was not a typical one, and 1979 was not the country's first experience with revolution. The first Iranian revolution occurred in 1906 against the Qajar dynasty with the objectives of adopting a constitution, establishing a parliament, imposing certain restrictions on the monarch, designating Shia Islam as the official state religion, and protecting the rights of Iran's minorities. A military revolt in February 1921 brought Reza Pahlavi to power as founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, and eventually established him as Reza Shah Pahlavi; this was when the first genuine modernization efforts began to be undertaken. Reza desired a modern, secular and Western-style state, and in 1935 he renamed the country Iran. These efforts were comparable to those of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Turkey.

During World War II, however, Reza was compelled to abdicate, and in 1941, his son Mohammad Reza succeeded him as king of Iran until the 1979 revolution. The Iranian army was caught off guard by the British and Soviet invasion of Iran in August 1941. The Allies quickly captured crucial cities and oil facilities in the country. Following negotiations, Iranian forces retreated, while Allied forces advanced towards Tehran. This was when Reza Shah abdicated and left the country. Mohammad Reza, his son, was appointed king by the Allies. Both the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union established occupation zones in Iran, with the former in the oil-rich southwest and the

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<sup>114</sup> Nikki R.,Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective"; *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (1983), 581.

latter in the north. In the remainder of Iran, the Allies maintained a military presence to keep control over vital roads and railways. They stayed until 1946, and their departure led to a nationalist upsurge. Mohammad Mosaddegh, who had been a member of parliament since 1923, was democratically elected Prime Minister by the 18th Mejlis in 1951, and remained PM until 1953. He was against the exploitation of Iran's oil by Britain, and as PM led the Iranian parliament to nationalize the oil industry. In reaction, the British and American intelligence services staged a 1953 coup that removed Mosaddegh from power, and also wiped out all independent political parties, professional organizations, and labour unions, affectively handing all power to Mohammad Reza Shah. At this time the Islamic clergy supported the overthrow of Mosaddegh because they feared communist rule, which they regarded as a menace to Islam as a whole.

Over 1963-1978, Mohammad Reza Shah proceeded to implement a top-down modernization program that improved industry and education on the basis of oil revenues. During this period, referred to as the White Revolution, Iran's social and economic conditions improved significantly. However, not all agriculture benefited from these reforms, and as a result of negligence and corruption, there was a rise in discontent among farmers who, despite being transformed into landlords, were now responsible for additional costs that were previously covered for them. As their religious authority was eliminated by the new reforms, the frustration of the Islamic clergy grew. Eventually, the situation spiralled out of control: "The discontent over living conditions, pay cuts, and the threat of unemployment fused with the general disillusionment and anger with the régime."<sup>115</sup> In addition to the economic situation in Iran, the Shah's political executive was an autocrat who enshrined the one-party policy through the so-called Rastakhiz Party, translated as Resurgence Party of the People of Iran, which was founded in 1975, established branches in the bazaars, and disbanded old guilds while establishing new ones directly under the control of state officials. Local communities were outraged by the party's use of the Iranian security apparatus SAVAK to restrict public liberties and eradicate the opposition physically and morally, as individuals were required to join or flee the country.

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<sup>115</sup> Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62.

### 3.1.3.2. Outstanding Features of the Revolution

There are three main characteristics of the Islamic Revolution of Iran that eventually exploded in 1979. The first one is that the revolution beheld massive and diverse mass participation. Contrary to the Kemalist Revolution, the Iranian Revolution had mass support from the outset in the form of public demonstrations against the 1964 arrest of Khomeini and in support of the developing Islamic revolution. It offered a unique model of mass influence and participation, featuring several groups, parties, and even guerrillas or units for violent action. This diverse participation has made many scholars question whether the revolution was an Islamic revolution, or a political revolution built by the clergy and inspired by selective appeals to the sacred texts. Even though the bulk of the actions, such as street protests and mass strikes, were non-violent, the majority of Iranians had become tired of the Shah's failed policies. Even though these protests were non-violent, it is astonishing that they were able to topple the government. Eventually the Shah was left with no choice but to flee without even attempting a counterattack because of his extreme weakness, unpopularity, and disrepute.<sup>116</sup>

Another unique aspect of this mass participation is that it included the participation of ideologically contradictory groups that represented all the various political currents in Iran. The liberal current, with which people associated a desire to establish a normal democracy and create a rich and powerful Iran, was represented by Mahdi Bazergan, who was one of the democratic and liberal figureheads of the revolution, and who was named the first prime minister of the revolutionary government. On the other hand, several left-wing guerrilla groups also participated in the revolution, such as the *Feda'i*, the pro-Tudeh *Feda'i Munsh'eb*, the Islamic *Mujahedin*, and the Marxist *Mujahedin*. The primary objective of these movements had been to overthrow the pro-Western regime of the Shah and to work for the triumph of the oppressed classes in Iran. Two of their best-known figures were Nur al-Din Kianuri, who was head of Tudeh, the Communist Party, and Massoud Rajavi, head of the People's Mujahedin Organization.

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<sup>116</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution"; MERIP Reports, no. 87 (1980), 21.

Nonetheless, by far the most prominent current was the religious movement, influenced by the teaching of the Qom seminary and the body of great Shiite religious scholars, led by Imam Khomeini, who became the Supreme Leader of Iran. The Shiite clergy in Iran made it clear that they sought to extricate the country from all notions and approaches held by the other major revolutionizing currents. Establishing an Islamic state was their goal. The thirteen lectures that Imam Khomeini gave at the Najaf Hawza in 1969 resulted in the notion of the *faqih* that he posited in his book on *The Islamic Government*. According to this theory, power should be given to the Wali al-Faqih in his capacity as the Hidden Imam Mahdi's representative. This formula was intended to return matters to (what was regarded as) their original and natural state. Shiite jurists believed that the Shah's authority represented a usurpation of the mandate of the Hidden Imam Mahdi. Furthermore, the clergy wanted to purify Iran from the ideologies of all the other major currents that participated in the revolution, as well as from the “moral decadence” that the country had sunk into, and which had led the clergy to break their silence.<sup>117</sup>

In this regard, another and very major point of comparison with the Kemalist Revolution becomes the prominent role of Ruhollah Khomeini, also known as Ayatollah Khomeini, who emerged as the political and religious leader of the revolution, and who replaced the monarchy with the Islamic Republic of Iran and ruled until he died in 1989. As we shall see again and again, Mustafa Kemal was a professionally trained military man, a modern-educated general and political leader who represented a new, Westernized and Westernizing military-bureaucratic elite. On the other hand, Khomeini was a leading scholar in Shia Islam political thought. Khomeini started his revolution through his Shiite teachings in the ulema seminaries. Khomeini's doctrine of *al-wilayat al-mutlaqa*, known as *Wilayat al-Faqih*, in the framework of which Khomeini promoted himself to be the *Wali-Faqih* (the supreme jurisconsult), evolved into the identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>118</sup> As part of the process, he rose to the position of the Supreme Leader of Iran, the head of state, the highest political and religious authority of the Islamic Republic. Henceforth, the

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<sup>117</sup> Abrahamian, “Structural Causes,” 26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3011417>.

<sup>118</sup> Hamid Mavani, “Khomeini's Concept of Governance of the Jurisconsult ‘(Wilayat al-Faqih)’ Revisited: The Aftermath of Iran's 2009 Presidential Election”; *Middle East Journal* 67, no. 2 (2013): 207.

régime witnessed a clear domination of the clergy. According to the historian Ervand Abrahamian, Khomeini tapped into religious sentiments; he used a language and symbols (such as the Islamic calendar) that were all very important to the general public (including the working class). Moreover, Khomeini appeared at a time when most secular, national organizations were dismantled by the Shah. This created a political vacuum, and allowed the religious leaders to step in to fill this vacuum. Abrahamian asserts that this was a time where modern institutions were breaking down, the state and the monarchy had broken down, and in this situation a charismatic figure could appear, not just as a popular figure but almost a figure who is seen to have a (divine) authority from above. According to Abrahamian, Khomeini was seen as more than just a political leader but something above that. So the term used to describe him was Imam -- a term that is restricted to only very few religious leaders in Shia Islām.<sup>119</sup> Given Khomeini's charismatic presence and educational background, the situation in Iran provided him with the right conditions to rise as a rescuing figure, someone people thought they could trust, as they compared him with the Shah and his government, who spent extravagantly and showed no interest in the people.<sup>120</sup>

In the end, as with the Kemalist Revolution, and indeed all other revolutions, the Iranian Revolution overthrew the old régime. It overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty, and with it, it ended a half-century and more of the rule of the last monarchy in Iran, making Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi the last Shah. The overthrow of the old régime meant a complete overthrow of the country's pre-revolutionary political, social, and ideological structures.<sup>121</sup> Contrary to modern revolutions, including the Kemalist Revolution, the Iranian Revolution did not adopt a modern secular system. It brought to the fore what Ervand Abrahamian describes as

a traditional clergy armed with the mosque and inspired by a seventh-century political philosophy which argues for a divine right to protect the community from foreign influences and guide the country towards righteousness.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Foreign Policy Association, "How Ayatollah Khomeini Rose to Power in Iran"; YouTube, July 7, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIKOrhgclHs>.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>121</sup> Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," 580.

<sup>122</sup> Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 21.

As a result of this shift, the Iranian Revolution came to be known as the Islamic Revolution, marked the political victory of the religious current, and the heavy losses suffered by the secular, liberal, nationalist or communist political forces, which were forced to leave the political scene. All other men, parties and leaders of the revolution were defeated and overthrown, and most of them ended up with either execution or exile. The opposition groups that helped overthrow the Shah were disappointed, because the revolution they dreamed of and fought for did not lead to the establishment of the dream modern republic. Instead, the Iranian Revolution imposed a completely new political reality perpetuating the symbolism of Imam Khomeini as the leader of the revolution, the founder of the Islamic Republic, a national hero, and the founder of a new political and religious thought and ideology that is hostile to the West, modernity, and imperialism.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KEMALIST REVOLUTION

The Kemalist Revolution did not take place as an abrupt occurrence within the historical context of Turkey. Instead, it might be argued that it was profoundly related to a sequence of previous changes instigated by challenges to the Ottoman economy, society, and the state originating in the international environment, such as (1) the great age of European exploration, and the consequent shift of the centre of gravity of the world economy to the Atlantic (away from the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean); (2) the Military Revolution, which enabled the rise of increasingly powerful modern states in Europe that the much more traditional Ottoman state apparatus found it difficult to cope with; (3) the Industrial Revolution, which further exacerbated this imbalance; (4) the industrially grounded New Imperialism (or the Age of Empire) of 1875-1914 that posed a grave threat of partitioning and piecemeal colonization; and (5) the rising nationalisms of the Balkans, which went beyond their struggles for independence to trying to carve mini-empires of their own out of the contracting territories of the Ottoman Empire.

#### **4.1. The Historical Background to the Kemalist Revolution**

It was in response to these largely external dynamics that (a) the Ottoman state began to try to adapt itself to Early Modernity over the 17th and 18th centuries; (b) faced with a new Industrial Modernity, it undertook even more comprehensive modernization reforms in the 19th century; (c) these, in turn, brought forth the Young Turks Revolution of 1908, and the Unionist Decade of 1908-1918; (d) both the successes and the ultimate failure of the Unionists gave birth to the Kemalists as a second generation of Turkish modernist-nationalism, and through them to the Kemalist Revolution. Hence in the final analysis, the Kemalist Revolution may be said to have resulted from the Ottoman Empire's direct engagement with the political, military, and economic advancements in Western societies and the European imperial powers -- and

to have considerably changed the terms of that engagement, which has nevertheless continued into the early-21st century. Otherwise, and more iconoclastically put, the Kemalist Revolution, despite its strong association with the image of Mustafa Kemal, his visionary ideals, and the perhaps truly special qualities of his political and military leadership from the 1920s into the 30s, did not really represent a novel and ground-breaking occurrence. The modernization of the Ottoman Empire was not a singular event, but rather a gradual process, initially launched and long influenced by the Palace and the Sublime Porte. It was driven by the reformist inclinations or explorations of at least some sultans, who, precisely in order to maintain and consolidate their own power, sought to improve the Ottoman Empire's conditions, enhance the efficiency of its administrative and military systems, and strengthen its influence throughout its vast provinces. Additionally, these reforms aimed to reinforce the state's capacity to counter the challenges posed by Western nations, with their advanced material and civilizational capabilities, as well as their superior military technology.

It is as part of this continuity emphasis that Bernard Lewis, whom we have already referred to, has emphasized the need to re-examine the early Ottoman imports from Europe, which came together with and after military engineering and printing in the 18th century. This is the so-called Tulip Era (*Lâle Devri*), a distinct sub-period of relative peace and calm between 1718-1730 that is also agreed to have introduced or witnessed a “mild enlightenment.”<sup>123</sup> It was a time when the Ottoman elite began to exhibit a growing fascination with at least some superficial aspects of French culture. Yirmisekiz Mehmed Celebi, who was the first Ottoman ambassador to Paris in 1720, was instructed to investigate French technology and various things that could benefit the Ottoman Empire. İbrahim Müteferrika, a Hungarian convert trained to become an Ottoman diplomat and man of letters, established the first Turkish-Muslim printing press in 1727, and went on to publish a number of books on scientific and military subjects. At the same time, these early attempts at reform faced opposition from the conservative ulema and the janissaries, because they were seen as a threat coming from the lands of the infidels, and threatened the traditional military-bureaucratic establishment. This led to a zigzag pattern of advances and retreats, with, for example, the janissaries forcing the closure of a new Officers' School. In 1727, though it was

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<sup>123</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey: A Short History* (2nd ed. The Eothen Press, 1988), 69–70.

reopened in 1747, and a Naval Mathematics School was further established in 1773. The impetus for reform resumed with the arrival of French advisor Baron de Tott, a French military officer hired after the end of the disastrous 1768-1774 war with Russia to instruct and refashion the artillery and engineering divisions. It is also interesting to note that before and even after the French Revolution, the Ottoman Empire's military reform efforts were conducted in coordination with France and proceeded at more or less the same pace. Several works on military tactics were translated from French, the printing press was revived, and new officers' schools were founded.<sup>124</sup> These and other reforms became part of a much more comprehensive vision under Selim III (1789–1807), rendered ever more urgent given the need to strengthen the state's military capacity in its European wars. But these Selimian reform initiatives also faced serious challenges, given the military weight of the janissaries, and their influence on the state and the capital, Istanbul. Bernard Lewis argues, in *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, that military modernization could not have been achieved except by eliminating the old military régime that was dominated by the janissary forces, who also took advantage of the support they received from the ulema and from the Bektashi Sufi order, which served as their spiritual guide. Indeed, military reforms were only able to take off under Sultan Mahmud II (1785-1839), who was able to achieve what his predecessor, Selim III, had failed to do.

But army reform also required an extra and imperative measure, namely the elimination of (whatever remained of) the *timar* system or military feudalism. This particular kind of feudalism had been part and parcel Ottoman land tenure since its inception. The concept of *timar* can be succinctly described as a conditional land grant by the sovereign to a feudal knight (*sipahi*) in return for military service, comprising both himself and an appropriate number of secondary warriors (men-at-arms or *cebelus*) kept and fed as part of his household in proportion to his fief's estimated revenue. The provincial cavalries raised in this way were effective in fighting over roughly 1300-1600, but became increasingly dysfunctional in the face of the tactical discipline and firepower of the new European infantry armies produced by the Military Revolution. In response, the Ottomans found that they, too, had to come up with large peasant-based infantry armies quipped with firearms, forcing their original feudal

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<sup>124</sup> These patterns are persuasively set forth by Davison, *Turkey: A Short History*, 69–70.

system to be replaced by tax-farming (*iltizam*) in the 17th and 18th centuries. Under this new system, timar lands reverted back to sultanic ownership and were then auctioned off as tax-farms. The tax-farmers in question no longer had any military duties. But the cash they provided was used to hire peasant soldiers and equip them with firms.

So the *timar* system of the Classical Age had become largely decrepit by 1800. Nevertheless, its vestiges and legal underpinnings survived, side by side with tax-farming and other forms of revenue-sharing, creating a hopeless jumble of pre-modern institutions and practices. It was this heterogeneity, this *ancien régime* complexity that Sultan Mahmut II tackled, instituting reforms in several areas, including the political, economic, legal, bureaucratic-administrative, and ceremonial spheres. Regaining power over the resurgent provincial gentry and notables, and establishing a modern centralized government in which he would serve as ruler, reformer, and even trader, were his main goals.<sup>125</sup> To oversee this particular aspect, he even formed a special administrative body inside the government in order to divert the substantial financial flows generated by Islamic pious foundations to the greater benefit of the Sultan. This led to a decrease in the autonomous authority of the ulema, with particular emphasis on the prominent figure of the *Shaykh al-Islām*.

#### **4.1.1. The Most Important Changes in the Tanzimat Era**

Next came the Tanzimat Era, which is widely regarded as an extension of the reform efforts initiated by Sultan Mahmud II, though from 1839 this was now subject to a new kind of legitimation based on binding (proto-constitutional) declarations and documents. The initiation of these changes can be traced back to the reign of Sultan Abdulmejid I (1839-1861). During this period, the Foreign Minister, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, played a pivotal role in spearheading these reforms, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs, leading to his subsequent promotion and becoming Grand Vizier (or Prime Minister) on multiple occasions. On November 3, 1839, the Imperial Rescript of the Rose Chamber, or the Tanzimat Edict for short was issued to inaugurate a new phase of reforms that included improving the rights of citizens and minorities in the

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<sup>125</sup> Davison, *Turkey: A Short History*, 73.

Ottoman Empire. This was a measure that some historians have considered to be a bribe to obtain military support from the West against the threat posed by the advancing forces of the rebellious Ottoman governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, who was able to defeat the forces of the Ottoman Empire in the 1839 Battle of Nizip and make his way toward Istanbul. The Tanzimat Edict was further augmented at the conclusion of the Crimean War (1853-1856) with a comparable statute known as the Reform Edict of 1856, continuing to modernize the army, the administration, education, and the administration of justice.<sup>126</sup>

During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamit II, who assumed power on August 31, 1876, modernization reforms continued in various fields, the railway sector developed, and the importance of the press increased. A key though abortive step taken by Sultan Abdülhamit II was the issuance of the first Ottoman Constitution on December 23, 1876, according to which a Council of Deputies (Parliament) was established, though this first parliamentary experience did not exceed eleven months. Erik Jan Zürcher, in *Turkey: A Modern History*, refers to the “secularization of education.”<sup>127</sup> This turned out to be of enormous importance. There was a need for a professional training college not just for the army but also for the bureaucracy, whose loyalty had to be to the state, even as a new emphasis on Islamism and the Caliphate went hand in hand with reforms that continued to be influenced by European ideas and models.<sup>128</sup> Under direct French ministerial advice, further educational reforms were implemented, with new middle schools (*Rüşdiye*) established in 1839, high schools (*İdadiye*) in 1845, a university-level civil service school (*Mektep-i Mülkiye*) in 1859, and elite colleges called the Imperial Schools (*Sultaniye*) in 1868 (modelled after the French lycées).<sup>129</sup> In the meantime, the modern military schools that had been established earlier on European models continued to offer an education that produced a new officer class.

As a result, this long 19th-century modernization from above succeeded in creating “a new military and bureaucratic elite;” a new and modern bureaucracy, and a new and

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<sup>126</sup> Gavin D. Brockett, “Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38”; *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998), 44.

<sup>127</sup> Erik J. Zürcher. *Turkey: A Modern History* (4th edition; London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd), 135.

<sup>128</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 56.

<sup>129</sup> Carter Findley, *Turkey: Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Yale University Press, 2010), 91; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 57.

modern military officer class. Within several generations of bureaucratic elite power, it was specifically this new modern officer class that assumed autonomous power in 1908 with the Young Turk Revolution, later maintaining its grip and initiative with the Kemalist Revolution. As Zürcher puts it, “these schools brought forth the reforming cadres that were to lead the empire and the Turkish Republic”<sup>130</sup> and “they formed the apex of the educational pyramid of the empire.”<sup>131</sup> Simultaneously this new elite, under the influence of revolutionary events and ideas elsewhere, such as the French Revolution, Prussian modernization from above, and the Bismarckian unification of Germany, further developed its own civilizing mission with regard to “primitive” or “backward” Ottoman society, and therefore its own agenda of modernization from above. This, they also perceived to be necessary for imperial survival under the impact of the Great Powers, trying to defend what was left of the Ottoman Empire against imperialist bullying and the danger of piecemeal colonization.

#### **4.1.2. The Sequence of Events Preceding the Kemalist Revolution**

In 1918, World War I ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. It had entered the war due to the erroneous assessments of the new Unionist elite that ruled in the name of the Ottoman sultan after the 1908 Constitutional Revolution against Abdulhamid II. This was an elite in which the Young Turks as a loose umbrella appellation comprising various groups overlapped with the much more tightly organized Committee of Union and Progress. The error was in overestimating the strength of the German military machine against the Western Allies.

Because of the eventual defeat, on October 30, 1918 the Ottoman Empire was forced to accept the Mudros [Mondros] Armistice, which was full of very strict provisions about dismantling the entire army, and leaving very little to provide a defence mechanism for security and survival. The victorious Allied forces established real or hypothetical occupation zones (or zones of future influence) in Istanbul and Anatolia. Two years later, in 1920, the Allies, led by an insistent and vindictive Britain, dictated a new treaty, known as the Treaty of Sèvres, which threatened to open the door for the victors to seize and partition the remaining lands of the Ottoman Empire that were

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<sup>130</sup> Zürcher. *Turkey: A Modern History*, 63.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

mostly inhabited by its Turkish-Muslim citizens. This treaty envisaged Greek, Italian and French zones in, respectively, western, southern, and south-eastern Anatolia. The only part left for “Turkey” was a small north-central section of Anatolia. Furthermore, if the Bolshevik Revolution had not occurred in 1917, there would also have been a possible cover for a massive Russian occupation in eastern Anatolia. Had this happened, encirclement would have been complete on all sides.

Thus, things were moving towards the final and complete division of the Ottoman Empire and the colonization of this country, which however had not been occupied. This meant that all that remained of the Empire was likely to be incorporated into the French and British colonial empires, plus a small portion to be handed over to the expanding Greek nation-state. In actual fact, the terms of the humiliating Mudros Armistice and the Sèvres Treaty were not adhered to because of a successful national resistance that emerged in Anatolia. This was led and organized by a high-ranking career officer by the name of Mustafa Kemal, later known to history as Atatürk. Coming out of the 1918 defeat as an untarnished war hero, he used his appointment as General Inspector of the Ninth Army to cross over from Istanbul to Samsun (on the Black Sea coast) in May 1919, and not to impose law and order as his sultanic appointment required, but, together with all the other professional officers and experienced civilian bureaucrats who either crossed over with him or rallied around him, to organize the National Struggle of 1919-1922. Ankara, which is located in central Anatolia, became the central base and headquarters of this new nationalist movement. From Amasya and Erzurum, officers led by General Mustafa Kemal began to reorganize the remnants of the Ottoman Empire's armed forces in Anatolia and to incorporate them into the national resistance. The first battles began against factions of Armenian nationalist fighters in eastern Anatolia, after which these and local forces turned to face the French occupation in the south-east, also winning victories on that front.

As the (British and other) Occupation authorities in Istanbul grew more and more apprehensive about these developments, Mustafa Kemal and his companions were accused of being in rebellion against Sultan Mehmed VI Vahideddin. Hence, he decided to resign from his official position as Army Inspector, and assumed the leadership of the Association for the Defence of Rights in Eastern Anatolia, which was

officially registered in Erzurum on August 3, 1919. As, now, the leader of a national war of resistance against a multilateral (British, French, Italian, and Greek) foreign occupation, Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram to all civil and military authorities throughout the Ottoman Empire, underlining three points:<sup>132</sup>

- i. The integrity of the country and the independence of the nation are in danger.
- ii. The central government is unable to discharge the duties for which it is responsible. As a result, the nation is regarded as non-existent.
- iii. Only the will and resolution of the nation can save the independence of the nation.

This became the rallying cry and organizing platform for the National Struggle, which from 1920 was mostly fought against the Greek Expeditionary Army on the Western Front. As the Ankara forces grew in numbers, strength, and fighting capacity, the Greek advance was halted in several key battles in 1920-21, and their entrenched defensive positions finally destroyed in the Great Offensive, so-called, of 26-30 August 1922. In the end the nationalists, led by Mustafa Kemal, were able to retrieve Anatolia and a small part of Thrace from the wreckage of the defunct Ottoman Empire, and on this territory, to launch a new nation-state, the Republic of Turkey, on October 29, 1923.

#### **4.2. Questions About the Kemalist Revolution**

At this point this study moves to provide an overall assessment of the Kemalist Revolution, which comprises both the National Struggle and its ultimate product, the emergence of the new Republic on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Against a first background of theories of revolution as outlined in Chapter I, and a second background of some main types of revolution as outlined in Chapter II, where, in this final Chapter III, is the Kemalist Revolution?

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<sup>132</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 247.

#### **4.2.1. Was it a Revolution or a Coup?**

In the first chapter, I discussed the question of when a massive change might be considered revolutionary. Does the Kemalist Revolution meet the conditions for what can be referred to as revolution? Was the level of change it achieved systemic? How long did it take to achieve the goals of the revolution? How was the change carried out -- from above, from below, or both? In the first chapter of this thesis, I overviewed the different definitions offered by scholars for the term revolution, and I concluded that they all insist on the element of *systemic* change; a revolution must lead to an essential, pivotal, and irreversible transformation. This is the main and core meaning of a revolution.

#### **4.2.2. How was the Change Brought About?**

Crucially, though, not all change must be carried out from below; it does not have to be initiated or supported by the masses in a way similar to the French Revolution. What happened in 1789, or over 1789-1794, is only one type of modern revolution. The Russian Revolutions of 1917 provide another possibility, where an earlier phase of mass demonstrations served to weaken the regime before an authoritarian act of armed uprising, and then also hierarchically command Civil War. There have also been national-liberation revolutions aiming to free the country from colonization, which have taken longer to accomplish their goals, as exemplified by the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804. Many of these revolutions have involved this or that degree of mass participation, which is what has given them more legitimacy in the eyes of people.

However, there can also be top-down revolutions, or what is known as “revolution from above.” This is a term used by Ellen Kay Trimberger that suggests the opposite process of historical change. It does extend to cover all aspects of state and society: political, social, and economic. But it is initiated from above, and may not involve much internal violence while still achieving its goals. Trimberger argues that this is the case with revolutions in Egypt, Peru, Japan, and Turkey, many in some way seeming to reflect features of the German unification revolution.

To repeat: In this approach, a revolution from above is distinguished from a coup.<sup>133</sup> Trimberger differentiates clearly between a revolution and what many would consider a coup. Revolutions destroy the dominant social group, and the economic, social, religious, and cultural structures of a country -- a change that she describes as fundamental and necessary. Trimberger writes: "... this destruction is a fundamental precondition for the innovative and positive change associated with revolution."<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, in a coup (in a traditional, monarchic-aristocratic kind of establishment), the economic and political foundation of the aristocracy is not destroyed.<sup>135</sup> In other words, a coup is simply a replacement of one elite by another. Crane Brinton also affirms the idea that contrary to a coup, a revolution is accompanied by social, political, and economic transformation: "...the revolutionary substitution of one group for another, if not made by actual violent uprising, is made by a coup d'état." Lawrence Stone, too, offers a definition of revolution that distinguishes between the seizure of power that leads to a major restructuring of the government or society, and the simple replacement of the old elite with a new one:

Change, effected by the use of violence, in government, and/or régime, and/or society. By society is meant the consciousness and the mechanics of communal solidarity, which may be tribal, peasant, kinship, national, and so on; by the régime, is meant the constitutional structure - democracy, oligarchy, monarchy; and by the government, is meant specific political and administrative institutions.<sup>136</sup>

Stone confirms that a coup d'état involves nothing more than a violent change of ruling personnel, whereas revolutionary change covers (should cover) the state, government, and society. Hence the Kemalist Revolution, while carried out from above, cannot be regarded as a simple coup because of the political, economic and social impact of its modernization and secularization reforms which completely changed Turkish society. These can easily be said to have fulfilled the single most important condition for revolution, which is to produce a radical change in the system, also comprising socio-

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<sup>133</sup> An overview of the conditions of "revolution from above" by Trimberger is found in Chapter 1, Page 35, of this thesis.

<sup>134</sup> Lewis, op. cit., 2.

<sup>135</sup> Trimberger. *Revolution from Above*, 6.

<sup>136</sup> Lawrence Stone, "Theories of Revolution"; *World Politics* 18, no. 2 (1966), 159, quoted in Mario Coccia. "What Are the Characteristics of Revolution and Evolution?"; *Journal of Economic and Social Thought*, vol. 5, n. 4, (2018), 291.

economic shocks and rapid adaptations to new contexts.<sup>137</sup> It can be argued that if the threat posed by the foreign invasion of Anatolia had been successful, so that colonial modernization came on the agenda, the Powers in question might not have achieved what Atatürk achieved in ten years with his introduction of radical modernization in a non-colonial context: abolishing sultanate and caliphate, and de-linking from a long Islamic culture of the state, redirecting society toward a different future which he saw in Western civilization.

#### **4.2.3. What are the Outstanding Features of the Kemalist Revolution?**

The Kemalist Revolution, officially referred to in Turkey as the Turkish Revolution, has numerous distinctive features. First, it is associated with one individual, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), from whom it derives the name by which it is referred to in Western literature. Beyond this striking feature, four more key components of the Kemalist Revolution are frequently cited: Resistance, Nationalism, Liberation, and Modernization.

The Turkish Republic was born out of war, in fact several successive wars, the last and most decisive of which was the National Struggle or the War of Independence. But what kind of war was it? It was neither a war of liberation from direct colonialism, nor was it a unification revolution. Instead, it succeeds in preserving, maintaining and solidifying an existing (but weakened and eroded) independence. This victory then provided Mustafa Kemal and his followers with the prestige and momentum they needed for regime change. Hence, as the political scientist Suna Kili, too, has noted, the Kemalist Revolution can be divided into two parts: the military struggle against invasion and occupation (or potential colonization), which she calls “a resistance in the name of national and popular sovereignty,”<sup>138</sup> and then the internal struggle to alter the structure of the state. So the revolution started out as a nationalist revolution, with the aim of defending what is left from the Ottoman Empire, and it ended as a “power modernist” revolution, one which used the revolution as a means of moderation, to

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<sup>137</sup> Coccia. “The Characteristics of Revolution and Evolution,” 291.

<sup>138</sup> Suna Kili, “Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey”; *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 1, no. 3 (1980), 382- 404.

create a national state.<sup>139</sup> So in this respect Mustafa Kemal may be said to have continued the struggle the stage for which was set by the Young Turks, though it was more radical and implemented in a relatively short time.

To go back to the centrality of Mustafa Kemal: when we look at other revolutions, there is no other that is named after a single figure; the French Revolution, for example, despite the many intellectuals, lawyers and noblemen that it drew in, is not to be associated with just one man (and not even Napoleon) -- as is the case with the Kemalist Revolution. Sina Akşin, a Turkish historian, goes so far as to argue that while the French Revolution promoted explicitly formulated, verbalized social values and principles (such as Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity) that came to constitute the face of the revolution, “What the motto liberty-equality-fraternity represents for the French Revolution, Atatürk represents for the Turkish Revolution; he is its symbol.”<sup>140</sup> As for the Russian Revolution, inspired by the teachings and theory of Marx, while it was guided by Lenin as a formidable intellectual, Marxist theory itself, as well as the presence and collective authority of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party, in principle (and despite the later personality cult of Stalin) precluded attributing the revolution to a single individual. As the Russian Revolution has not been called the Leninist Revolution, so the Chinese Revolution has not been called the Maoist Revolution, and the Cuban Revolution has not been called the Castroist Revolution.

In contrast, Mustafa Kemal personifies the Turkish Revolution because he plays all the key roles. He is the victorious military leader of the national struggle for independence, which earns him the title of *Halaskâr Gazi* [the Savior or Liberator]. He is also the visionary political leader, the Chairman of the revolutionary Grand National Assembly in Ankara, the founder and leader of the People’s Party (later the Republican People’s Party, or RPP/CHP), and the founder and first president of the Republic. There was no division of labour in this, no element of collective leadership. Mustafa Kemal was so much more than a first among equals. At this point, it is important to note that among his multiple roles and functions, his party leadership should not be underestimated. It was through the RPP, the founding party that the

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<sup>139</sup> Leonid Grinin; Anton Grinin & Andrey Korotayev. “A. 20th Century revolutions: characteristics, types, and waves”; *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9, 124 (2022), 3.

<sup>140</sup> Sina Akşin, *Essays in Ottoman-Turkish Political History* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2011), 209..

Kemalist cultural revolution was implemented. And as Samuel P. Huntington has put it: “Kemal was the dominant figure in the creation of the other.”<sup>141</sup>

#### 4.2.4. The Character of the Leadership

This brings us to the following point: the significantly defining nature of the Kemalist Revolution lies in the essence of its leadership. A group of well-educated professionals, including both military officers and civil administrators, enjoyed a level of autonomy that allowed them to implement revolutionary change with minimal violence. This class, which is often referred to as an elite, was led by Mustafa Kemal, who in terms of his social origins was a member of the middle class -- but a member of a middle class formed not through the economy but through education, i.e. through the state. This had been true since the 19th century introduction of modern schools, many of whose graduates viewed the army as a means of employment and career-building -- in contrast to the upper classes of the imperial capital and their families, who benefited from their connections with the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>142</sup> This constituted the social backbone of first the Unionists and then the Kemalists. In both cases the bulk of the leadership of the party came from the ranks of the military.<sup>143</sup>

At the same time, what Suna Kili has called “a resistance in the name of national and popular sovereignty”<sup>144</sup> did receive significant support not only from modern and modernizing products of class-formation through the state, but also from the much more traditional Muslim middle classes of Anatolian towns and cities. Their support expressed a certain level of reaction to or dissatisfaction with the Sublime Porte. This was largely due to the association of the sultan with the Mudros Armistice and the Occupation of Istanbul. But it did not extend beyond resistance to systemic revolution. So the modernization project was carried out at a time when the majority of the Turkish society was predominantly Muslim and “imperial” for more than six hundred years. The majority feared the radical change that ensued with and under the Republic. This is why the Kemalist Revolution did not involve or embody mass participation in the

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<sup>141</sup> Samuel P. Huntington. *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Yale University Press, 2006), 257.

<sup>142</sup> Ahmed, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 56.

<sup>143</sup> Huntington, op. cit., 257.

<sup>144</sup> Suna Kili, “Kemalism in Contemporary Turkey”; *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 1, no. 3 (1980), 382- 404.

course of the political, social and economic reforms implemented by the Republican People's Party after securing independence. Like the Unionists, the Kemalists, too, were elitist in outlook. The secular reforms which were implemented after the independence were implemented from above; in other words, change was a top-down process.<sup>145</sup>

The fourth characteristic of the Kemalist revolution lies in the nature of the ideas they defended.<sup>146</sup> The Kemalist Revolution came later than many European revolutions; however, it carried out the same Enlightenment mission of spreading and implementing (modern, progressive) ideas. The concept of revolution in its modern sense was not present in Islamic history. Social movements that Muslims witnessed over centuries were either rebellions against the caliphate, or uprisings against the sultan. They were labelled as *khurooj* or *fitna*, against which long-term reforms were preferred.<sup>147</sup> So as with most modern concepts, the Turks, like the Arabs, borrowed the concept of revolution, too, together with its political implications, from the West, and more specifically from French political discourse. This included both the Unionists and the Kemalists. But even more than the Unionists, the Kemalists interpreted and implemented them (and especially Jacobin revolutionism) not in a democratic but an authoritarian, not in a from-below but from-above manner.

#### **4.2.5. Where is the Kemalist Revolution?**

Given Turkey's geographical location, which spans both Asia and Europe, I argue that the Kemalist Revolution holds a correspondingly unique position among world revolutions. It is somewhere between European and non-European revolutions, or between Asian, Middle Eastern and African revolutions, which perhaps makes it the latest European revolution or the earliest non-European revolution.

Hence, too, it was not a colonial type of revolution. This late-modernization revolution's ultimate aim was to achieve the overarching objective of modernising the

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<sup>145</sup> Ahmed, loc. cit.

<sup>146</sup> Leonid Grinin; Anton Grinin & Andrey Korotayev. "A. 20th Century revolutions: characteristics, types, and waves"; *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9, 124 (2022), 9.

<sup>147</sup> Tamzarti, "The concept of revolution."

decaying Ottoman Empire by transforming it into a modern state. Of course, this was also linked to the question of independence and statehood. But because the Ottoman Empire had never been colonized, the aim was not to win independence but to maintain, solidify, reinforce and consolidate an already-existing independence. In this sense Turkey's National Struggle was not similar to Asian or African wars of national liberation of the second half of the 20th century. It happened when Ottoman Turkey had arrived on the verge of piecemeal colonization.

Finally, and most importantly, if the Kemalist Revolution is or was a revolution from above, as explained earlier; who was the fundamental agent? It was not the working class, nor the peasantry, nor a bourgeoisie formed by the economy (through the development of capitalism), but a new military-bureaucratic elite created by 19th century reforms within the Ottoman Empire. It was a new elite with a very modernistic outlook, a product of Tanzimat education and modernization.

### **4.3. The Character of the Revolutionary Leader**

Here I am talking neither about a purely individual profile, nor about a purely social, generational profile, but both.

#### **4.3.1. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (A Short Biography)**

Mustafa Kemal was the revolutionary leader and the founder of the Turkish Republic. Similar to many revolutionary leaders, Mustafa Kemal was influenced by the circumstances of his time. When preparing this thesis on the historiography of the Kemalist Revolution, I devoted time to reading and researching his biography. Predictably, in popular biographies he is generally portrayed as a hero. At the same time, few scholarly biographies allow the reader to learn more about the circumstances and events that shaped Mustafa Kemal's personality and character, or the conditions that allowed him to rise into his historic role. These circumstances and events are of particular interest to my inquiry. I have encountered two biographies which I am referencing. The first one is Andrew Mango's *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (1999). The second is a more recent work by the Turkish historian M. Şükrü Hanioglu, titled *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography*. It was published in

2011. A much-expanded Turkish version (a thousand pages to the original 271) has only just arrived.

The revolutionary leader's childhood and education reveal a great deal about the historical circumstances and struggles of the time. He was born in 1881 in Salonica (*Vilayet-i Selanik*), now Thessaloniki, Greece, which at the time was still a Rumelian (Balkan) province of the Ottoman Empire. It was a modest middle-class family; his father, Ali Rıza Efendi, was a junior civil servant, while his mother, Zübeyde Hanım, was a devout Muslim housewife. Mustafa was their fourth child; his male siblings passed away at a young age, and only one of two sisters lived until 1956. Hence the young Mustafa was left as the only male child in the family, which may have given him a special place in the household, and therefore also a sense of responsibility and pride.<sup>148</sup>

When Mustafa reached school age, a dispute is said to have arisen between his mother and father over which school he would attend. His mother wished him to enrol in Hafız Mehmet Efendi's neighbourhood school, a school that taught the Holy Koran. His father, on the other hand, wanted him to receive a modern education; after all, it was the choice of middle- and upper-class Muslims, and it was one way for them to secure employment and rise in society. Mustafa remained grateful to his father for insisting that he attend the Şemsi Efendi School, a decision that appears to have shaped the way he looked at the world. After attending Hafız Mehmet Efendi's school for a few days, Mustafa was switched by his father to Şemsi Efendi, which was a new school with a comparatively modern outlook. This struggle between conservative and progressive ideas, between traditional Islamic and European culture, marked Atatürk's life from the start.<sup>149</sup> Hanioglu refers to the conflict between *alla franca* and *alla turca* as "the confusing dualism."<sup>150</sup> The dispute had an impact on Mustafa Kemal from the beginning, and later extended to his military and political life, reflected in the changes he brought about in the structure of the Turkish state politically, culturally, and

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<sup>148</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (London: John Murray, 1999), 15. .

<sup>149</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, 18.

<sup>150</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu. *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 19.

socially, through which he aspired to achieve a complete separation from the past in favour of a progressive future.

After the death of his father, Mustafa was forced to abandon his school in Salonika, and to move with his mother and sister to the home of his mother's half-brother Hüseyin Ağa in Rapla, near Langaza (now Langadha), to the east of Salonika, where there was a sizable community of Muslims. Attempts to educate him in the small village of Rapla were unsuccessful. Later he was enrolled in a standard civil preparatory school (*idadi*) but didn't last long, leaving and refusing to go back after an incident where he was physically punished by one of his teachers. It was then that he made his first major independent decision in life by switching to a military preparatory school despite the objections of his mother. Later he recalled that he was fascinated by the students' military uniform. He remarked to his comrade Kılıç Ali: "It was when I entered the military preparatory school and put on its uniform, that a feeling of strength came to me as if I had become master of my own identity."<sup>151</sup> The second name Kemal was given to him by his mathematics teacher Mustafa Sabri as a mark of distinction, in recognition of his intellect and diligence in the subject. The word means "perfection" in Ottoman Turkish, and he has been known by this name ever since.<sup>152</sup> Mustafa's mother got married while he was attending the military school; this upset him, and he decided to leave home and moved to live with a distant relative. Subsequently, he always enjoyed a high level of independence.

Following his graduation in 1896, his teachers encouraged him to enrol at the Monastir Military High School, which is today in Bitola in the Republic of North Macedonia. He did so, and it was at this school, and as a consequence of Tanzimat reforms, that Mustafa Kemal received a diverse education, learning French, Persian, and Arabic while the school also offered religious courses. Mustafa Kemal excelled in mathematics, but also became an accomplished writer and speaker, and developed a profound appreciation for Ottoman poetry. In addition to his leadership abilities, he appears to have possessed a strong military spirit and character. As a revolutionary leader, he would find all these skills useful, indeed indispensable. Some of his favourite compositions were the patriotic poems of Namık Kemal, who was known as

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<sup>151</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, 57.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

the poet of freedom, and whose writings were banned under the instructions of Sultan Abdülhamit II. Mustafa Kemal and a classmate called Ömer Naci appear to have shared a passion for composing Ottoman verse, but their teacher discouraged them from doing so because it conflicted with their military education.<sup>153</sup> Later, however, Officer Mustafa Kemal's political and military decisions and achievements would reflect the influence of poetry. In November 1898, Mustafa Kemal graduated from the military high school in Monastir, and he was ranked second in his class.<sup>154</sup>

On 13 March 1899, Mustafa Kemal enrolled in the most prestigious Military Academy in Istanbul. It had been founded in 1834 by Mahmud II to produce European-style military officers. It was here that he completed his education. It was also here that he encountered French political thought -- through his command of the French language. French political thought had a great influence on the Ottoman elite, much like the French model, which greatly influenced the development of Ottoman administration and the construction of the modern army, as well as in the press, culture, and other areas. In 1905, he entered the army as a staff captain, and was appointed to Damascus with the Fifth Army for field training.<sup>155</sup> During his military service, he began promoting a covert cell entitled Motherland and Liberty (*Vatan ve Hürriyet*) which he had established with a group of his Salonika-based associates. When he returned to Salonika from Damascus, he found that his friends had joined the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which he, too, joined a few years later in 1907.

#### **4.3.2. The Influence of Salonika on Atatürk's Personality**

Mustafa Kemal's birthplace and home town is agreed to have had a significant impact on his intellectual and cultural development. Situated in the Rumelia region of the Ottoman Empire, this city was significant because of its strategic position as a junction for European railway lines, and also as the second most prominent seaport in the Ottoman Empire after Istanbul. Western countries provided significant assistance to its Christian minorities, thereby fostering a sense of independence among the Greek population. In time, this support further exacerbated the divisions between the city's

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>155</sup> Loc. cit.

Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities. But as Mustafa Kemal acquired his formal education in Salonika's schools, his upbringing was shaped by this diverse metropolitan population of Greeks, Turks (Muslims), Slavs, Armenians, Jews, and various other ethno-religious groups. Also among them were Sephardi Jews and Dönmes (converts from Judaism to Islam). The cosmopolitan nature of this environment, along with its intricate social and political dynamics, is likely to have played a significant role in shaping his individuality and fostering his political consciousness.

Unsurprisingly, Salonika also served as a fertile environment for the proliferation of nationalist groups that emerged across the European territories of the empire during the 19th century.<sup>156</sup> In this context, Hanioglu notes that it was also during his posting to the Third Army based in Salonika that Mustafa Kemal joined the ranks of the Committee of Union and Progress, with which, however, he evolved a problematic relationship. On the one hand, he was involved in military activities in support of the CUP during its period in power after the 1908 revolution, including his influential military role in suppressing the 31st March coup of 1909. On the other hand, his personal ambition kept him away from the first leadership ranks of the Unionist party.

#### **4.3.3. Mustafa Kemal's Relationship with the Committee of Union and Progress**

The historiography surrounding the birth of modern Turkey often portrays the relationship between Mustafa Kemal and the CUP as very contentious.<sup>157</sup> The Dutch historian Eric J. Zürcher, in his book on *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation-Building: From The Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey*, has provided detailed information regarding the beginning of this relationship. Zürcher says that Mustafa Kemal joined the CUP in February 1908 (other sources say late 1907) with membership number 322, which implies that he may have been a bit late; as the organization was already well established and had a clear-cut leadership, Mustafa Kemal was not going to be in its

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<sup>156</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography*, 19.

<sup>157</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 124.

front ranks, and this may have angered him, because he may have seen himself as one of the initiators of revolutionary activity in Macedonia.<sup>158</sup>

But it is also possible that the tension between Mustafa Kemal and the Committee also had something to do with social status. In particular, while Enver Pasha eventually married into the royal family, Mustafa Kemal did not belong to a prominent social class. Enver also had the advantage of having risen to political prominence through the 1908 Revolution. The rivalry between the two men had started in military school, and continued into field operations. When the 31st March counter-revolution erupted in Istanbul, a special army expeditionary army was quickly organized to suppress it, and initially Mustafa Kemal was its chief of staff<sup>159</sup> -- though Enver then quickly returned from abroad to take over. When Italy invaded Tripoli (Libya) in 1911, both arrived to organize the resistance -- under the overall command of Enver Pasha, Mustafa Kemal also adopted controversial positions within the CUP, for example objecting to officers holding both military and party positions. He maintained this principle after he became President, and thereby played a significant role in the relative distancing of the army from partisan politics. In February 1913, Mustafa Kemal even expressed his disapproval of Enver's coup d'état (the Bâbiâlî Incident), which led to an immediate decline in his standing. All in all, Kemal had problems making his way in politics as long as Enver Pasha retained his position of authority.<sup>160</sup>

#### **4.3.4. Building Status Through the Military Institution**

Mustafa Kemal aimed to compensate for his limited involvement in the CUP through front-line participation in the last wars of the Ottoman Empire, ranging from Libya (1911), through the Balkan Wars (1912-13), to Gallipoli and Palestine during World War I. These engagements allowed him to establish a prominent presence within the Ottoman military establishment. Particularly crucial was his role in defending Gallipoli and the Dardanelles in 1915, which turned out to be a fundamental link in the chain of events leading up to the War of Independence. But even during this

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 214.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 126.

military trajectory that was marked by significant responsibilities, his aspirations were often met with opposition from his superiors, and especially Enver Pasha.

Shortly after his graduation in December 1904 from the Imperial Staff College, he joined the Fifth Army, which was based in Damascus, the capital of Levant Province. There, over the course of two years, he performed his military duties while also engaging in clandestine political activity, which led him to pay a visit to Salonika, after which he obtained a transfer to this hotbed of revolution. From September 1907 to June 1908, he served on the staff of the Third Army, and then in early July 1908 he was appointed inspector of the railway line between Salonika and Skopje, a position that gave him mobility, and which Zürcher believes allowed Mustafa Kemal to play a role in the CUP's internal communications. In September of the same year, the CUM sent him to Tripoli on a mission to explain the 1908 Revolution to its residents and to mobilize support for the party, but according to some historians, Mustafa Kemal believed that the Unionist leaders intended this mission to be a kind of exile. In the meantime, his peers and colleagues like Ali Fuat, Ali Fethi, Hafız Hakkı and Enver were appointed military attachés to Rome, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna.

After his return from Tripoli, Mustafa Kemal was appointed Chief of Staff of the 11th Reserve Division in Salonika. Within the framework of this mission, Mustafa Kemal carried out a vital military job, which was eliminating the counter-revolution in Istanbul in 1909, even though he was not in the position of overall commander, but chief of staff for the entire expeditionary army assigned to this task. Afterwards, he served in the officer training unit in Salonika, and then again on the staff of the Third Army. In 1910, he took command of the 38th Regiment in Salonika, and in 1911 he served on the staff of Mahmud Şevket Pasha during the suppression of the Albanian rebellion. year, In September 1911 he was appointed to the General Staff in Istanbul, but he never took up his position as he left for Tripoli again on October 11.<sup>161</sup>

While these top Unionist officers were fighting in Libya, news came of the outbreak of the Balkan War, which inflicted great losses on the Ottoman forces, and the Bulgarians occupied Thrace. Enver, Mustafa Kemal and the others returned to Istanbul,

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<sup>161</sup> Mango, *Ataturk*, 98.

and Enver was appointed Chief of Staff of the Tenth Army Corps, which was the strategic reserve that comprises divisions in Istanbul, Izmit, and Bandırma. Fethi was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army Corps assigned to defend the Gallipoli Peninsula, while his friend Mustafa Kemal served under him as Chief of Operations of the Army Corps Staff.

At this time the Ottoman Empire received an ultimatum from the Great Powers requiring the Ottomans to submit to new borders that would entail the loss of Edirne, the ancient capital of the Ottomans, at a time when this city was still in the hands of the Ottomans. This prompted the CUP leaders to stage a coup d'état on 23rd January 1913 to overthrow the government of Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasha and seize power. In June, the Bulgarians attacked their former allies, Greece and Serbia; this triggered the Second Balkan War, and the Unionists decided to take advantage of this opportunity to liberate Edirne under the leadership of Enver Pasha. This achievement qualified him to become Minister of War.

This jump in Enver's career prompted his companion Fethi to leave the army and request his appointment as ambassador to Bulgaria. It also required his ally Mustafa Kemal to join him as a military attaché, a position he held until 1914, that is, until after the Ottoman Empire entered World War I, which prompted Mustafa Kemal to request a return to field service. This is how he was appointed commander of the 19th division in Tekirdağ, in which capacity he played an important role in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. His success as a front-line commander led to his 1916 promotion from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general, with the title of pasha in, at the age of thirty-five.

After this promotion, Mustafa Kemal spent nearly a year without political activity, although he served as commander of the Sixteenth Army Corps in eastern Anatolia in 1916, as commander of the Seventh Army in Palestine in 1917 under the German von Falkenhayn, and again in 1918 under the command of Liman von Sanders. After the Ottoman withdrawal from Syria and the Armistice of Mudros, he succeeded Liman as commander of the remaining Ottoman armies in Syria. Throughout this time, according to Zürcher, he was involved in activities that at least undermined military

discipline and which could often be called politics, perhaps due to his connections which were dominated by tension with German officers.

#### **4.4. Debates on the Kemalist Revolution in Western Scholarship**

According to Gavin D. Brockett, the prominence of Mustafa Kemal in depictions of early Republican history, or the Turkish Revolution plus the years of his presidency (1923-1938), is reflected in two notably divergent historiographic trends. One focuses solely on the Atatürk era and is based on the scholarship of Turks concerned with proving that this period represented a clear rupture with the past and thus the creation of an entirely new Turkish nation-state; the latter is typical of the work of foreign historians who emphasize the continuity between contemporary Turkey and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>162</sup> This is evident in the work of Western historians who are the focus of my study, the core source viewed in this thesis: is Bernard Lewis's *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*; Feroz Ahmad's *Making of Modern Turkey* and Eric J. Zürcher's, *Turkey: A Modern History*.

Firstly, Bernard Lewis, in his book "*The Emergence of Modern Turkey*," deems that it is natural to search for similarities between the Kemalist revolutions and the major European revolutions in England, France, and Russia, and here Lewis also refers to the 1908 revolution against Sultan Abdul Hamid II. On a realistic level, Lewis notes that this revolution does not lack similarities with the rest of the major European revolutions.<sup>163</sup> Lewis argues that similar pre-revolutionary characteristics can be seen in the old Turkish regime as well as in others, such as fiscal restraint coupled with commercial expansion, administrative reform coupled with inept government, questioning of fundamental allegiances among rulers and intellectuals, and a gradual decreasing of support on the part of significant sections of the population.<sup>164</sup> Although methods drawn from European history were used to explain the successive phases of the Turkish revolution as a struggle against economically defined groups for control of the state, or as an impulse for a popular movement seeking liberation from tyranny.

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<sup>162</sup> Brockett, "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution," 44.

<sup>163</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 481-482.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 482.

Lewis argues, that liberty and class struggle can sometimes be distinguished, but they do not provide a well-suited approach to the realities of modern Turkish history.<sup>165</sup>

According to the same historian, during the transition from the constitutional revolution of 1908, to the repression practiced by the leaders of the Young Turks, up to the stage of the authoritarian republic established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, it is possible to see how the features of hope, terrorism and dictatorship mix, and here Lewis does not notice only some superficial similarities with the stations witnessed by the English and French revolutions. The matter is related to the violent rhythm of change led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, compared to the great transformations that Europe witnessed, including against the church, the state, the renaissance, the counter-reform, the scientific awakening, humanism, liberalism, rationality, and the Enlightenment, and all the adventures and struggles of the great European ideas that passed unnoticed. She was not a stranger to society or was not related to it.

Lewis is certain that the growth, change and struggle that preceded and shaped the Turkish revolution are radically different from the English and French revolutions, and even if to a lesser degree in the Russian revolution.<sup>166</sup> Some have come to embrace the idea that there are differences between the European revolutions and the Kemalist revolution, which they saw in the Turkish transformation as the prototype for nationalist revolutions. Rather, they saw that the Kemalist revolution may not lack similarities with the struggle of countries in the Middle East, Far East, and even the Indian subcontinent, which were struggling for liberation from Western domination, though Turkey differs from these countries in that it has never been subject to direct European rule.<sup>167</sup>

The Kemalist revolution was carried out in full with its political, cultural, social, legal, and secular entitlements, as described by Lewis, who also noted that the changes brought about by the Kemalist revolution stood in stark contrast to the conservative and cautious environment of most governments in the Ottoman Empire. According to Western historians, the constitutional upheaval of 1908, the laws enacted in the latter

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 484-485.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 483.

<sup>167</sup> Loc. cit.

quarter of the nineteenth century, and the reforms brought about by the Kemalist Revolution, destroyed more than they constructed. While the model brought from Western civilization seemed primarily superficially, it did not make up for what the previous system of social relationships and duties had destroyed. Furthermore, the benefits that came as a substitute for the Ottoman Empire's peace and brought by colonial regimes - such as security, unity, material progress, efficient and honest government, and the formation of a modern trained civil service were missing in Turkey, which faced only commercial and diplomatic pressures from Western powers. Then, historians emphasize that the Turkish national struggle, as expressed by the Kemalist revolution in particular, was directed against Western rather than Russian encroachments, especially since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was eager to establish good relations with the Soviet Union and benefited from Soviet methods in managing the command economy without adopting or siding with the communist regime.

On the contrary, must lead the revolution whose compass is Western civilization, and he is confident that this change in its complete and flawless picture is nothing more than a consecration of the Western civilization model with all of its features and intricacies. As a result, Westernization is one of the most important representations of the change brought about by the Kemalist revolution, as well as the first and second revolutions of 1876 and 1908. The Ottomans or Turks worked hard, long, and hard to embrace and apply the European way of life in government, society, and culture. Despite the fact that there is disagreement over the level of success attained in this endeavour, there is little question that huge and vital segments of Turkish public life have been irreparably alienated.<sup>168</sup>

On the nature of the Kemalist revolution, historian Feroz Ahmad, in his book "The Making of Modern Turkey", which was first published in 1993, contends that the concept of an Islamic state was a burden on Mustafa Kemal and his allies, who saw it as a method to maintain the status quo and prolong Turkey's backwardness, and In exchange, they see Turkey transforming into a modern nation-state, as expressed in particular by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), where Feroz quoted Atatürk saying, "to live as an advanced and civilized nation amid contemporary civilization," which necessitates

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 486.

that it be like this nation. Secular and rational, with an emphasis on contemporary science and education in order to build a modern industrial economy. But, according to Feroz Ahmad, before Turkey could be reformed in the Kemalist image, it was essential to take political power away from reactionaries and conservatives.<sup>169</sup>

Ahmad claims that the Turkish national revolutionary movement was defined by the emergence of an independent Turkish state, which succeeded the semi-colonial Ottoman Empire, and that this was a reaction to the historical circumstances that existed at the time. This historian observes that the Turkish people started its revolution with a national structure free of classes and have continued to adopt steps that reject and render unnecessary class creation.<sup>170</sup> According to Ahmed, the Kemalists sought to adopt the West's materialism, technology, and modern weapons, as well as its ideas, in order to transform society in the broadest sense; that is, the Kemalists' conviction aimed at establishing a secular society in which the state-controlled religion rather than separating it from it. They aspired to accomplish both westernization and modernization through a fundamental transformation of their traditional patriarchal culture.<sup>171</sup>

On October 29, 1923, Turkey was proclaimed a republic by the Kemalist-dominated Grand National Assembly in Ankara, and Mustafa Kemal was chosen president. A step that Feroz Ahmad saw as reflecting the Kemalists' ultimate goal, which is their commitment to modernity and equality through radical change, rather than modernization and the old system's hierarchy, because they were rejecting the hierarchy and traditions, which were the foundations of which the old Ottoman imperial system was based, and on which many nationalists, who formed the Progressive Republican Party in 1924, wishing to preserve it, were based.

At the third conference of the Republican People's Party, which was held in May 1931, that is, a month after Ataturk announced his six principles, these principles were adopted by the party: Republicanism (*cumhuriyetçilik*), Populism (*halkçılık*), Nationalism (*milliyetçilik*), Secularism (*laiklik*), Statism (*devletçilik*), and Reformism

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<sup>169</sup> Feroz Ahmed, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 53.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>171</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey, the Quest for Identity* (England: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 84.

(inkılapçılık). These principles have become the slogan of the Republican People's Party, and are symbolized by the six white arrows on the party's logo. Six years later, on February 5, 1937, these principles were incorporated into the constitution, within the amended Article (2), which came in accordance with the following text: “The Turkish State is Republican, Nationalist, Populist, Statist, Secularist, and Revolutionary-Reformist.”<sup>172</sup> These principles roughly defined the features of the Kemalist revolution and its ideology, which will characterize the Turkish Republic to this day and will become sacred, non-negotiable constants, which brought about a complete break with the Ottoman imperial past, especially since it was reinforced by a series of radical measures and measures that included changing the alphabet.

Here, the Turkish historian M. Şükrü Hanioglu, author of the book "*Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography*", acknowledges, that Mustafa Kemal led one of the greatest societal transformations of the modern era: “Not only as a statesman but also as a self-made thinker, he invested tremendous energy in preparing the intellectual groundwork for this momentous project.”<sup>173</sup> According to Hanioglu those who claimed that the Kemalist revolution was not the product of an ideology, but rather a natural response to the expansion of capitalism and its inevitable consequences, and colonialism, and those who saw it as a decisive victory achieved against these evils, and considered it evidence that the state that the Turkish Revolution produced it was not a bourgeois state like that produced by the French Revolution or a proletarian state like that produced by the Communist Revolution, but it was the first example of the liberation of a technically backward semi-colony.<sup>174</sup>

Despite the Kemalists' denial of the ideological nature of the Kemalist revolution, according to Hanioglu, there have been attempts made over the years by Turkish intellectuals and statesmen to build an ideology out of Mustafa Kemal's ideas around the "Turkish revolution," in the belief that Turkey, unlike Western societies, is divided. It was a classless society, so the engine of revolutionary change led by Mustafa Kemal came from within the state and its auspices. However, according to Hanioglu, once Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died, he unintentionally, though not by chance, became the

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<sup>172</sup> Ahmed, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 63.

<sup>173</sup> Hanioglu. *Ataturk*, 194..

<sup>174</sup> Hanioglu. *Ataturk*, 187.

revered founder of a new religion, whose name is **Kemalism**.<sup>175</sup> This means that Mustafa Kemal did not become a mere ideologist but rather a prophet from the twentieth century preaching a new mixture of scientism and nationalism, which are the twin pillars of a new religion called **Kemalism**, guided by what came in a book titled "**Kemalizm**" published in (1936), in which he described the deputy Şeref Aykut defined **Kemalism** as "a religion for living," and this was done despite Mustafa Kemal's "lack of enthusiasm for dogma."<sup>176</sup>

Hanioğlu acknowledges that Mustafa Kemal spearheaded a significant societal shift in the modern age, both as a statesman and as a self-made thinker. He dedicated significant effort to establishing the intellectual groundwork for this ambitious endeavour. The individual gathered ideas and engaged in the exploration of many subjects and conceptual frameworks. The individual in question engaged in the examination of several subjects, including history, language, nation, race, religion, and science. Subsequently, they formulated specific findings and engaged in discussions with their companions, frequently at extended dinner gatherings.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 193.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis has yielded numerous findings, with the foremost being the recognition that revolution is a multifaceted phenomenon that necessitates examination through various historical, social, political, and psychological perspectives. This comprehensive approach elucidates the fact that revolution, along with the transformative notion it encompasses, is an integral component of human history. This transition encompasses not only political regime alterations but also broader transformations across various domains of the state and society. The inevitability of change in human existence necessitates its occurrence within all societies and its impact on all systems in the world. The occurrence of change is typically accompanied by a process of dismantling existing realities and systems. This is the primary reason why humanity has consistently experienced a sense of apprehension towards change, as it entails a shift from the known to the unknown.

Moreover, change is often accompanied by significant expenses that individuals must bear. Hence, the emergence of obstacles to change and the resistance encountered during revolutionary attempts have consistently been observed. Consequently, effecting change necessitates the dismantling of these obstacles, specifically through direct intervention in existing structures and systems that promote the notion of stability and resistance to change. When examining the notion of revolution as a contemporary concept encompassing radical transformation and the abandonment of existing models or historical precedents, the scholar encounters the necessity of focusing on the revolutions originating from the Western world. This is due to the established criteria and methodologies for studying and comprehending revolutions, predominantly derived from Western literature.

The French Revolution is widely regarded as the inaugural archetype of the modern revolution, as it exemplifies the notion of irreversible change. The dominance of this

new paradigm over other models observed in human societies was secured by this factor. The issue here is the concepts and standards accompanying this revolution, which include popular participation and the intellectual frameworks that established the concepts of freedom, fraternity, and equality. In my perspective, the French Revolution engendered a paradigm shift in the perception of revolution, wherein it evolved from a predominantly unfavourable notion to a more favourable one, notwithstanding the tumultuous and financially burdensome radical stages it underwent and the consequential disturbances it instigated. The republican system established by the French Revolution emerged as an influential model that garnered widespread admiration and served as a focal point for succeeding human revolutions. This transcendent appeal extended across geographical, historical, cultural, and social disparities, encompassing both the French Revolution and its following counterparts.

This thesis presents a comprehensive examination of many theories that have been employed to analyse revolutions, with particular emphasis on the Marxist theory, which is considered to be of utmost significance. The French Revolution, along with subsequent human revolutions, has been predominantly interpreted through the lens of Marxist theory. However, contemporary studies have broadened the theoretical framework of revolution and have begun to investigate revolutions that took place in various regions. The subject of geography extends beyond the confines of Europe and encompasses regions like as Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which have experienced significant historical events, including the Kemalist Revolution. The initial part of the study critically examined several definitions of revolution and subsequently identified several modern definitions of revolution as documented in scientific literature. The primary significance of these definitions lies in the recognition that revolution entails a profound transformation accomplished through the use of force. However, it is noteworthy that certain definitions specifically emphasise the objective of altering the governing system (political change), while others advocate for a change in regime that incorporates active involvement from the populace, thereby encompassing the social and religious aspects (cultural dimension) and distinguishing it from a mere coup d'état. The most important finding of this study regarding the definition of revolution: “a systemic change, involves a fundamental change in one or more of the following aspects: political, economic, social and cultural and has a direct influence on the society, and may involve violence”. The most important finding of this study regarding

the definition of revolution is that it is an institutional (structural) change and involves a fundamental change in one or more of the political, economic, social and cultural aspects. It has a direct impact on society and may involve violence.

In the second chapter, an examination was conducted on the characteristics of the revolution, with a particular focus on three revolutionary models: the French, the Russian, and the Iranian. Through this analysis, it was determined that the Kemalist Revolution cannot be regarded as an isolated event, but rather as part of the broader world revolutions and universal context of transformation. This is particularly evident in the revolution's objective to modernise the state structure and enhance its responsiveness to contemporary challenges. The French Revolution served as a significant source of inspiration for the leader of the Kemalist revolution, as it embodied a vision for the establishment of a modern republic and a complete departure from the previous regime. This influence was not limited to the personal desires of Mustafa Kemal himself, but rather his aspirations, as outlined in this thesis, represented a continuation of the transformative trajectory experienced by the state. The Ottoman Empire, starting from the mid-eighteenth century, heavily relied on the influence emanating from France.

One of the key discoveries elucidated in this chapter pertains to the intersection between the Kemalist Revolution and the Russian Revolution. Notably, both revolutions shared a common objective of attaining parity with Western modernity. While the Kemalist Revolution did incorporate certain leftist policies from the Communist Revolution, it remained distinct from the influence exerted by the working class or class. Similar to the Russian revolt, the peasant revolt also depended on a cohort of military leaders and administrators.

The Iranian Revolution and the aforementioned revolution share a commonality in that they both engendered significant cultural transformations, albeit in contrasting manners. The revolution in Iran resulted in the emergence of a prominent religious elite, whereas the Kemalist revolution in Turkey weakened the caliphate system and the amalgamation of political and religious authority held by the Ottoman sultans. The adoption of an ideology characterised by radical secularism resulted in the establishment of a distinct boundary between religious and political domains. One of

the most perilous consequences was the emergence of a linguistic divide from the Ottoman legacy, as it embraced the utilisation of the Latin alphabet. Ultimately, Iran witnessed the establishment of a distinct religious dictatorship, in stark contrast to what has been frequently described as a régime of authoritarian secularism that emerged in contemporary Turkey, which only transitioned towards a more democratic framework in the 1950s.

The similarity with the Iranian revolution is that both revolutions brought about a massive cultural change, albeit in the opposite way. In Iran, the revolution produced a dominant religious class, while the Kemalist revolution undermined the caliphate system and the combination of political and religious power of the Ottoman sultans, and it adopted strict secularism that created and established the separation between the religious and the political. The most dangerous thing is that it created a linguistic break with the Ottoman past by adopting the Latin alphabet

The third chapter discusses the modernising efforts observed in the Ottoman Empire during the mid-18th century. One of the most significant reforms during this period was the "Tanzimat," implemented in the nineteenth century. This reform initiative resulted in the promulgation of crucial decrees, notably the "Edict of Gülhane" in 1839, and the subsequent establishment of a constitution in the year 1876, Sultan Abdülhamit II officially embraced or endorsed the aforementioned. The final event under consideration is the Young Turk Revolution, executed by the Union and Progress officers, resulting in the removal of Sultan Abdul Hamid from power in November 1908.

The profound influence of the Kemalist Revolution on the history of the Turkish Republic, within its present-day territories, is indisputable. This pertains to both the political system and the societal framework. A republic with secular, popular, and nationalist characteristics emerged, leading to a significant departure from the identity and political framework of the Ottoman Empire. The societal class structure and its associated disparities encompassed various delicate facets, such as societal ideologies, physical appearances, and epistolary practises. These elements not only underscored their influence but also effectively delineated the distinctiveness of the Kemalist revolution as a Turkish paradigm that exhibited significant inspiration from Western

revolutions. Moreover, the objectives of this revolution were formulated to align with the accomplishments of European nations across multiple domains.

Mustafa Kemal had the unique privilege of exerting significant influence over the system established by the Kemalist revolution, enabling him to implement policies that were influenced by the principles of the communist left. The individual in question maintained a persistent focus on the accomplishments of Western civilization, prioritising the establishment of the nation-state and exhibiting a willingness to diminish the significance of pluralism, a characteristic inherent to Western democracy. This particular method persisted for the whole of his rule and a significant portion of General Ismet İnönü's reign, with the circumstances remaining mostly unchanged until the 1950s. During this period, multiparty elections were introduced, resulting in the victory of the Democratic Party, led by Adnan Menderes.

The significant impact of Mustafa Kemal can be attributed to his leadership in the national resistance against the Greek and Italian incursion into the Ottoman Empire, an endeavour that was perceived as a sacred endeavour and a momentous accomplishment for Mustafa Kemal and his associates. The support garnered from a broad spectrum of the Ottoman state and populace was important in facilitating the success of his Kemalist revolution. This conflict, effectively leveraged by him, had profound and perilous implications, surpassing the capabilities of the invading forces, so ensuring their ultimate failure. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the departure of the Allied forces from Istanbul coincided with the triumph of Atatürk's forces in Anatolia, leading to the subsequent demise of the Ottoman Caliphate and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. This pivotal event marked the commencement of a series of remarkably transformative measures undertaken by Atatürk, resulting in the creation of a new state that deliberately severed ties with its historical roots. Atatürk's vision encompassed the development of a distinct national identity and a civilizational framework closely aligned with a specific model of civilization. The term "Western" refers to a cultural, artistic, and literary tradition that originated in the west, therefore, is the antithesis of the objectives pursued by the European triumphant powers in the aftermath of World War I. Therefore, it may be said that the Kemalist revolution, which was initiated and led by the military, is the final instance of a modernist European revolution carried from above. Additionally, it can be considered as the first revolution in the Middle East in the twentieth century.

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