1. The Renaissance of Kemalism:

Foreigners who visit Turkey are in many cases surprised at the omnipresence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Everywhere they see his statues, busts, pictures. I think they mostly interpret this as a "personality cult" and tend to think of it in negative terms. The explanation for Atatürk's omnipresence is this: it is he that personifies the Turkish Revolution. Most other revolutions are the work of many personalities. The French Revolution cannot be identified with a single person. With the Soviet Revolution we see the preponderance of Lenin, but he was able to guide the revolution, after it came to power for 7 years only. Without Stalin, one cannot understand the Soviet Revolution. Perhaps the role of Mao-Zedung in the Chinese Revolution is comparable to Atatürk. He ruled China for 27 years. However, his successors have well-nigh repudiated him. There is also the question of the complementarity of various communist leaders. With Mao, one cannot help noticing the role and complementarity of Stalin, Lenin and Marx. With Atatürk, no such complementary figures come to mind. Atatürk is the victorious leader of the struggle for independence, he is the founder of the Turkish Republic, he is the leader of the Turkish Revolution. One can say that it is a complete "success story". That is why his person is the symbol of the Republic and its Revolution. What the motto liberty - equality - fraternity represents for the French Revolution, Atatürk represents for the Turkish Revolution, he is its symbol. You cannot be for the Turkish Revolution and against Atatürk. But I think you can be for the French Revolution and against, say, Robespierre, Rousseau, Danton, Voltaire etc.

For many decades after the death of Atatürk, the great majority of the Turks have felt nothing else than an unadulterated love and admiration for him. It is clear that such a climate of opinion was not conducive to a critical evaluation of Kemalism. Kemalism was explained rather superficially by the official six principles (republicanism, populism, revolutionism, secularism, statism, nationalism) which were inscribed into the Constitution of 1924. It cannot be said (in general) that these principles were analyzed in depth. Criticism and, indeed, hatred for Atatürk and for all that he stood for existed among Islamic fundamentalists, but until 1945 they were vigorously repressed. They continued to be repressed after 1945, but with much less vigour. Nevertheless, they were generally treated as a sort of lunatic fringe. Things began to get serious with the founding of the religious-minded National Salvation Party (MSP) in 1972, which polled nearly %12 in the elections of 1973. This support for the religious party and its successor was to increase over the years. The military junta which engineered the coup of 1980, embarked upon a policy of creating an official ideology called "Turkish-Islamic synthesis", coupled with a policy of severe repression of the Left, including the Kemalists. The curious thing is that all this was done in the name of Kemalism.
With the resumption of multiparty politics in 1983, the Left intelligentsia began to criticize the junta. Some of this criticism was also directed towards Kemalism itself. These were the so-called proponents of "civil society". Some of them also advocated the dismantling of the Republic founded by Ataturk, in order to set up a "second republic". This often violent criticism of Kemalism encouraged many Islamists to come out into the open with their negative views of Kemalism. Thus, a strange alliance between some of the secular critics of Kemalism and certain Islamists was struck. All this was very painful for the Kemalists who were thus forced to think how the arguments of the anti-Kemalists could be refuted. It can be said that anti-Kemalist criticism has hastened the process tending towards a better comprehension of Kemalism. I say "hastened" because it is generally natural for social phenomena to be better interpreted and understood with the passage of time. Movements like the Renaissance and Enlightenment receive their names and are better understood with the lapse of time. Turkey lived Kemalism from 1919 until Kemal's death in 1938 and then until 1950. Today Turkey begins to comprehend Kemalism and this comprehension has led to a renaissance of Kemalism.

2. The Philosophical Nature of Kemalism:
Kemalism is a movement of enlightenment. To give a single example, Ataturk expressed this idea when he called, in the name of the Republic, on teachers to "raise generations with free ideas, free consciences, free knowledge". Ataturk was thus adopting the famous formula of the poet Tevfik Fikret, who in a poem had thus described himself. Suat Sinanoglu defines ithe philosophical aspect of Kemalism as the "limitless freedom of the mind". Philosophy professors Bedia Akarsu and Macit Gokberk have also defined Kemalism as a movement of enlightenment.5

Ataturk was a humanist. Even in the most dangerous moments of the War of Independence, he did not declare a holy war. His gentlemanly conversation with the Greek Commander Trikupis who had fallen prisoner in 1922, his refusal to tread on the Greek flag that was laid out at his feet, the words he pronounced for the Anzac dead in 1934,6 attest to his humanism. On one occasion, he described war, unless fought in defence of the motherland, as a crime.7 While totalitarian and racist dictatorships were triumphing throughout most of Europe, and many Turks were attracted to these currents, Ataturk stood fast. His invitation and welcome to 142 German academicians thrown out from their universities by the Hitler regime in 1933 because they were Jewish or dissident is another eloquent indication in this direction.
3. Kemalism as a Model for Development:

The Kemalist model of development can be characterized as "integral development". This means whole, all-out development. To get hold of the West's machines, instruments, factories is not enough. Behind this technology lies the West's science. We have to adopt that too. Otherwise the technology we adopt will look and be artificial in our hands. But the upper reaches of science enter into the domain of philosophy. Therefore we have to adopt Western philosophy and the humanities (human sciences) of which it is a part. Naturally we must not forget that social sciences are an indispensable part of the sciences. On the other hand, for the development of philosophy we must not neglect its relation with the arts and culture in general. Thus we see that technology-science-philosophy- the arts and culture form a whole. For them to thrive, we need freedom of thought, respect and appreciation for science, culture, the arts and those engaged in these domains. Such persons and institutions should not be under the pressure of social, political, religious dogmas. In the Kemalist model of integral development, the creation of university is as important as the construction of a railroad; the opening of a conservatory is as important as the building of a factory.

To understand the model of integral development we can contrast it with its opposite: the model of material development. One of the best examples of this model are the petroleum-rich sheikhdom. These countries can afford to buy the latest technology: the most modern cars, airplanes, computers, factories. They are able to purify sea-water and to cultivate the desert. Nevertheless, these countries, while enjoying the fruits of the latest technology, in respect to social and cultural conditions, live more or less in the 9th century. All that technology and those computers do not impede their living in the 9th century. In Turkey, after 1950, the integral development model was to a certain extent abandoned and a shift towards the material development model occurred. Thus the construction of roads - dams - factories took first place, and social and cultural development was pushed somewhat into the background.

4. The Ideological Program of Kemalism:

This consists of the six principles (or "arrows") proclaimed by Ataturk's Republican People's Party. The first principle is republicanism. Critics of Kemalism have pointed out the absence of
the principle of democracy. To them, republicanism, with the many examples of dictatorial, even totalitarian republics is not a meaningful principle. This, of course, is a pertinent observation, but it does not quite apply to Ataturk. In 1929, he wrote a school textbook of civics with the aid of Afet İnan. This was published under the name of İnan. When İnan re-published the book in 1969, she disclosed that it was to a large extent co-authored by Ataturk and included therein photocopies of Ataturk's handwritten manuscript. This included the section on political regimes. According to him, democracy is the best regime and it is superior to constitutional monarchy.

Not only was this a case of Ataturk's intentions. While many European countries seemed to be heading towards some kind of totalitarian dictatorship, the Kemalist regime was relatively democratic. A proper assessment of the degree of democracy of a regime can be made by comparing it with other contemporary regimes. Ancient Athens, in spite of so many slaves, foreigners and women who enjoyed no political rights whatsoever, can be called a democracy because it was more democratic than other contemporary regimes. In the same manner, the Kemalist regime, in spite of its being a single-party regime, seems to have enjoyed more democracy than the general average of European democracy. It is for this reason that the 142 German academicians who were dismissed from their universities by Hitler's government, chose to settle down in Turkey. There is no reason to believe that these academicians, many of whom were brilliant, were so naive or helpless as to go from one dictatorship to another dictatorship. Today Turkey is more democratic than in the time of Ataturk. However, this does not make us very much happier, because since the interwar period Europe, on the whole, has overtaken and surpassed Turkey in this respect.

The principle of nationalism was of a non-aggressive, non-expansionist, freedom-loving nature. "Peace at home, peace in the world" was Ataturk's watchword. This nationalism was not racist. Ataturk said, "Happy is he who calls himself a Turk"
"who is a Turk"). The definition of Turkish nation was: "Turkey's people who founded the Republic of Turkey." (1929). Every citizen of the Turkish Republic was considered a Turk, whether ethnically Greek, Circassian, Kurdish, Armenian or Jewish. This nationalism was not rightist, conservative. It was a nationalism that was not content with limited ambitions such as making Turkey the most powerful state in the region or in the Islamic world. It aimed at making Turkey competitive among the most advanced nations in the world and in every field. Turkey had to be in the forefront not only in the economic or military fields, but also in art and literature, human rights and science. Right-wing, conservative nationalists generally tend to accentuate economics, military power and politics.

Revolutionism means spreading enlightenment everywhere and, if possible, to everyone in Turkey, to realize integral development and to strive actively to achieve these ends. These aims have not yet been attained and are relatively longrange, but is is necessary to get there as soon as possible. Until Turkey does that, revolutionism should be in the agenda.

Populism means a policy favoring the people. The concept of people can be (and was) interpreted to mean all classes and groups in the population, but it encompasses primarily low-income groups such as the peasants, workers and others. It is a policy which tries to promote the material and cultural development of such groups. It should not be confused with the populism that means flattery of the masses. However, in a multi-party system this is not so easy to resist. In theory, at least, it can be said that in a single-party system policies which are not popular with the masses, but which in the longer term will benefit them, are easier to pursue. The Kemalist regime, except for two attempts at multi-party politics, was until 1945 a singleparty regime. If the Revolution has attained an appreciable diffusion among the population, it can presumably continue its progression in a multi-party system as well. For this, one large political party at least (even if it is not in power) should defend a principled Kemalism and the other large
parties too, should in the last analysis be Kemalist.

Statism (or etatisme) is a principle developed from experience. Turkey's nascent capitalist class was unable to create an appreciable level of industrialization in the 1920's. Further, the 1929 World Depression was the cause of much misery. Statism was born from these needs. During the Kemalist era and afterwards it was able to create an industrial system. Statism, beyond creating industry and enabling the state to regulate the economy, provided its workers with proper housing, schools, health care, a social and cultural environment. In other words, the functions of populism and welfare state were also thereby fulfilled. Until 1980 statism performed important functions - not only in Turkey but also in some developed capitalist countries as well. The French automobile manufacturing firm Renault, for instance, has been for many years a successful state enterprise. In the 1980's a world-wide campaign was launched against the idea of state enterprises. The collapse of the Communist system further enhanced this campaign. Not only in former Communist countries, but also elsewhere, the privatization of state enterprises has become the order of the day.

As regards Turkey, this can be said. Though the Turkish capitalist class has made great progress, it is not possible to say that it is as developed as in most industrial countries. Thus, statism will necessarily continue to have a function to perform in Turkey. Further, I don't believe that state management is intrinsically unproductive. If governments, in other words, the political will so decide, they can make state enterprises profitable. But if they unnecessarily plunge them into debt, if they refuse to make new investments for renovation, if they are filled with workers who are not needed, if qualified managers are not appointed, it means that such governments do not wish state enterprises to thrive. Today if the State Monopoly in Turkey can provide the whole country with three different brands of raki (a distilled alcoholic drink) but is unable to produce enough beer and matches, this is because it is so desired. The manufacture of beer and matches has been opened to private initiative and for the beer and matches of private firms to sell as much as possible, it is necessary that the state should produce a small amount of these, that it should not care to maintain their quality etc.

Another point. However well-persuaded people may be of the iniquities of public enterprise, they are also aware that they provide employment. Public opinion polls show this. Thus, it is very likely that a party which is more prone to privatization will receive less votes. This means that the electors will tend to cast protest votes that will strengthen extremist parties. This is something which is unhealthy for any democracy. As far as Turkey is concerned, at least, until Turkey attains European levels of development, it seems necessary to maintain statism on the
agenda. An all-out privatization drive seems to me to fit very badly with a democratic multi-party system.

Another principle is **secularism**. This is the separation of religion and state affairs. No religion or sect can interfere in state affairs, and cannot claim any privileges **vis-a-vis** the state. The state’s laws and policies cannot be affected by a religion or sect. The state should be impartial towards all religious groups. On the other hand, the state should not interfere in religious affairs. This is the rule, but the state may sometimes be in the position of interfering in religious affairs. For example, if a religious group calls its members to practice human sacrifice or wants them to commit suicide, the state should interfere. In the USA, the group called Christian Scientists believes that faith is the cure for illnesses and they therefore refuse medical care. If a child in that community is suffering from appendicitis and the parents refuse medical care, I think the state should intervene and save the child. In Turkey, there is an official Directorate of Religious Affairs that looks after the religious affairs of Sunnite Moslems. This is an intervention by the state, but I think it is necessary. This has two advantages. By supervising the majority (the Sunnis), it can prevent anti-secularist movements amongst them. Secondly, if the Directorate were to be abolished, there would be a great scramble among Sunni groups to control the mosques. In every case that a group or groups would be left out, they would be forced to construct their own mosques. A large portion of the national wealth would have to be mobilized to build new mosques. Whereas now, mosques are under the jurisdiction of the Directorate and, as such, are open to all groups.

Some advocates of the **sheria** (religious legal system) perceive secularism as a wrong done against Islam. It is impossible to agree with this view. The **sheria** was a chain which tied Islam to the Middle Ages. The breaking of this chain in Turkey has given Islam the opportunity to become a religion of the modern world, of the advanced countries. Medieval Islam can have little attraction for modern people. Besides, the abolition of the **sheria** is for Turkey and other Moslem countries as well, a question of development and progress. The **sheria** and those who favour it, call for the seclusion of women. This means that, for instance in Turkey, half the population will be pushed out of the universal race for development and progress. One cannot take part in a race using only one leg. Countries that seclude women can entertain little hope of becoming one of the advanced countries of the world. Furthermore, the seclusion of women generally means a regression of their cultural level. Male children learn their language (mother-tongue) from their mothers, not from their fathers. Our most important cultural instrument is our language, and the teaching of language by mothers is the most basic education. The basic education of a boy whose mother knows, say, only 500 words will be very different from the basic education given by a mother who knows 1500 words. In other words, the seclusion of women will negatively affect the quality of the men too.

Another advantage of secularism is that since it provides for the impartiality of the state before all religious groups, it is a guarantee of domestic peace. In Turkey, traditional enmity between Sunnis and Alevts can be ended only by secular policies. Failing this, we will witness, as we did.

Some people in Turkey, unfortunately including some statesmen, are of the opinion "the state
can be secular, a person (for instance, a Moslem) cannot be secular". I disagree with this view.
A person who accepts secularism, is, for me, a secular person. Such a person can also be a
believer (Moslem, Christian etc.). Thanks to the Turkish Revolution, there are many secular
Moslems in Turkey, Moslems Who accept secularism. Naturally, many of them fully perform
their religious duties. As enlightenment spreads, the number of secular Moslems can be
expected to increase.

Islam is a religion which has spread to many corners of the globe. It is to be expected that
Islam, like all other great religions, should include many branches or sects. They are all
Moslem, but they have their differences. Otherwise, they would not form separate groups.
Respect for other groups is necessary for peace and brotherhood in Islam. Secular Islam in now
one of these groups and other sects owe respect to Secular Islam and vice-versa.

5. The Necessity for the Kemalist Revolution:
From time to time one comes across certain observers who seem to assume that the Kemalist
Revolution was a sort of personal program of Ataturk, imposed on an unwilling nation by a
victorious leader who had saved it from disaster. If this were the case, the Revolution would not
have survived him for long. It would have been soon dismantled and Turkey would have gone
back to its old ways. Whereas it is now 60 years since his death and even if the Revolution has
been dramatically slowed down since 1950, the edifice of the Revolution is in many ways intact.
Thus, we have to come to the conclusion that the Revolution was an objective necessity, not the
whim of a dictator. Let us now see what that necessity was.

The Turks, within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, had achieved the feat of conquering
South Eastern Europe up to "the gates of Vienna". With the treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, began
the process of pulling back from Central Europe and the Balkans. It lasted more than 200 years,
the result of successive military defeats. Since Balkan nationalism practiced from the very start
what has lately been called "ethnic cleansing", this process was very painful for the Turks, for
very many of whom the Balkans were their homeland. Throughout this ordeal, the Turks had
one last consolation: in the last resort they could live with dignity in Anatolia, from where they
had come centuries ago. On the eve of World War I, the Ottoman Empire still held on to a
relatively small piece of territory in Rumelia, namely, Eastern Thrace, including Edirne.

World War I was another disaster for the Ottomans. However, the peace treaty that the Empire
had to sign at Sevres in 1920 was a traumatic shock of gigantic dimensions for all Turks. They
now realized that just as they had been pushed out of Rumelia, now they were being pushed
out of Anatolia. The Empire thereby lost not only Eastern Thrace, it was to lose the northern half
of the Aegean to Greece, and East Anatolia to Armenia. There was no question of ascertaining
the ethnic composition of these territories. These dispositions were purely based on the
principle of "historic rights". A thousand years earlier there were no Turks in these territories, so
the victorious Powers had no qualms about giving them out, whatever the ethnic composition of
the time. The Turks were thus being pushed out of Anatolia, or else being reduced to some kind
of abject subjection. It must have appeared obvious to many Turks that this process would not
stop with Sevres, but that it would - as it had in Rumelia - continue its inexorable progression.

Thanks to the War of Independence, this disaster was averted, and the Treaty of Lausanne replaced that of Sevres. But it became clear that to make the Treaty of Lausanne permanent, the backward social, political, cultural conditions of Turkish society had to undergo radical revolutionary change. That is precisely what the Kemalist Revolution set out to do. It is also the reason why the Revolution has stood fast for so long. If the Revolution had not been launched, it was very likely that the Treaty of Sevres, or something similar would have reappeared on the first occasion. The aim of the Revolution was to give the Turks as much education and culture as was received by Europeans and to make them as productive as Europeans, or in other words, to make Turkey a European country.

6. The Partial Counterrevolution:

In order to better understand the present position of Kemalism in Turkey, it is also necessary to explain the partial counterrevolution of 1950. Already in the time of Ataturk, counterrevolutionary elements were at work within his party, the Republican People's Party (RPP). As I indicated, the counterrevolution in question was a partial one. Probably no one among Ataturk's followers wanted to go all the way back. The trauma of Sevres prevented that degree of reaction. What the conservatives wanted was to freeze or slow down the Revolution, while preserving the main body of revolutionary achievements. The end of World War II gave them their chance. Turkey's isolation, the result of non-participation in the War, pushed Ismet Inonu, successor of Ataturk, to establish a multi-party system. To make sure that the main opposition party should not question the Kemalist Revolution, Inonu partly forced and partly persuaded his rivals within the RPP to create such a party (called the Democrat Party). They were mostly rightist, conservative elements.

This rightism was reinforced by two developments. Soviet Russia's repudiation of the 1925 Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression in 1945 and its attempt to establish control of the Straits and to gain territory in East Anatolia became the pretext for a strongly anti-left, McCarthyist movement, Inonu greatly reinforced this movement by banning socialist parties and socialist publications. This strong swing towards the right also affected the RPP itself. Hasan AN Yucel, the successful Minister of National Education, who was one of the foremost architects of the famous Village Institutes and truly a man of the enlightenment, had to abandon his post. His successor set about to denature these 'miraculous' Village Institutes. When the Democrat Party came to power in 1950, these tendencies became a general movement. In 1951 the People's Houses (478 of them) and the People's Chambers (numbering 4322) which were all-around cultural centers, were closed down. In 1954 the Village Institutes shared the same fate.

Gone was the enlightenment program of the Revolution. The integral model of development naturally suffered terrible blows by this development. The Kemalist Revolution was frozen. To conceal this fact, great emphasis was placed on "ceremonial Kemalism". Kemalist anniversaries were commemorated with increasing fervour and Ataturk's iconography filled every corner of public life. The RPP somehow was unable, or unwilling to conduct an opposition based on the demand for a return to the Kemalist Revolution. Its often very strong opposition was mainly based on a demand for greater political freedom. After the military intervention or coup of 1960,
which brought a new constitution and a great measure of freedom to the political system, intellectuals were attracted by socialism and social democracy, rather than by Kemalism. However, the fall of communism, the rapid rise of fundamentalism in Turkey, the heavy criticism of Kemalism gave rise to the renaissance of Kemalism to which I referred to earlier.

Notes:


7. 16 March 1923. M. K. Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, II.*

8. Speech delivered on the 10th anniversary of the Republic (1933).