

## Over There

### *Turkey: Ally Under Siege*

Turkey passed the second anniversary of military rule on September 12, 1982. A new constitution was drawn up, submitted to a national referendum on November 7, and adopted by an overwhelming majority. Government officials expect a general election and civilian rule by the spring of 1984. The time has come to recognize not only the achievement of General Evren and his fellow officers, but also the danger with which they were, and are, confronted. For the danger is also ours.

Turkey is the only Middle Eastern state apart from Israel to retain a commitment to parliamentary democracy, and the only Islamic nation to show itself in every particular a friend and ally of the Western bloc—going so far as to send troops to South Korea, and to vote for Israel's membership of the United Nations (thus alienating most of her immediate neighbors). Since Atatürk's extraordinary success in creating a nation-state from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey has modelled itself, both socially and politically, on the West. Parliamentary institutions, secular government, European law, an independent judiciary, and, most recently, a free economy, have been consciously adopted as embodying values to which the Turkish nation aspires, and which no other developing nation has yet been able to realize.

This commitment to the West (for which the West has always shown itself ungrateful) carries enormous risks. Turkey is the only member of NATO, apart from Norway, to share a border with the Soviet Union. Most strategists consider that Turkey lies directly in the path of Soviet expansion. Demands for Finlandization were made by Lenin and repeated forcefully by Stalin; they were resisted with great courage after the last war. The Kremlin has other reasons for being interested in Turkey. Turkish is the second most widely spoken language in the Soviet Union, which has the largest Turkish-speaking population of any modern state. The Kremlin has viewed with alarm the influence that Turkey, through the growing freedom and prosperity of its citizens, might exert. The Soviet empire can survive only if its subjects are kept in ignorance of the world beyond it. The conquest of the Slavic

nations has created an effective language barrier between the northern territories and their immediate neighbors; after Afghanistan, only Turkey needs to be added in order to bring all Turkish speakers under communist control, so adding to the pan-Slavic empire in the north, a pan-Turkish empire along its southern border.

Of course, the Soviet Union has never threatened to invade Turkey. The hope has been that invasion would not be necessary. By bringing about the internal collapse of the country, it would be possible to erect a Marxist government; in due course Turkey might be separated from its allies, and the Soviet army would be "invited" in as protector of the nascent revolution. It might also be possible to separate Turkey from the West, say by fomenting new troubles in Cyprus, or by creating a diplomatic crisis, such as must inevitably ensue if no Turkish diplomat can travel to the West without being exposed to murder by Armenian terrorists. When considering this second possibility, it is necessary to reflect on the likely destiny of an "Independent Armenia" bordering on the "Soviet Armenia," which Lenin created. Possibly the Armenians who were trained in the PLO camps in Lebanon (and who now seem to be founding similar camps in Greek Cyprus) were not Soviet agents. But it is hard to see how any of the existing Turkish Armenians—let alone the Californian and Canadian Armenians who have leapt so delightedly onto this excuse for political sentiment—could benefit from the creation of an independent Armenia in a place from which most Armenians have long since departed, and on the borders of an expansionist state which officially despises all ethnic and religious sentiment, while in reality fearing it. The Western attachment to "Christendom" fosters the idea of the "barbarous Turk," and this in turn lends support to the mythopoeia of Armenian exiles. But this attachment is as foolish and sentimental as the Byronic Hellenism, which leads us to think that Cyprus is *essentially* a Greek territory, and that the Turks who have lived there for centuries *must* be to blame for a conflict in which many of them died horribly for no other reason than their disposition to speak Turkish.

### On the Brink of Anarchy

When the generals took over the government of Turkey on September 12, 1980, the country was in a state of near anarchy. Over twenty-five people were dying each day at the hands of terrorists. Broadcasts from the Soviet Union and East Germany, playing on

the separatist feelings of Armenians and Kurds and on the feelings of the Shi'ite minority, were urging the people to revolt. Guns and munitions from the Soviet bloc and Syria were entering the country at such a rate that, after martial law was declared, over a quarter of a million guns were surrendered in the first two months. For months prior to the takeover, there had been no effective government, and the democratic process was at a standstill. Votes in the assembly were shamelessly bought and sold, while personal ambition and antagonism took precedence over the national interest. Ideological divisions paralyzed every state institution, including the police force. University students and school children were pressured into leftist "protest demonstrations," and those that would not comply were either beaten or shot. Parents lived in constant fear that their children would not return from school, while all officeholders of any importance were regarded as legitimate targets of intimidation and assault. A mayor of a Black Sea township, after having himself elected at gunpoint, declared a "liberated zone" under communist government. Using Bulent Ecevit's left-leaning Republican People's Party as a front, extremists gained control of many important municipalities, including Ankara, where the parks were renamed in honor of terrorists, and local businesses were threatened with closure if they did not subscribe to revolutionary organizations named by the council. Fanatics of the right were also active, and the notorious "Grey Wolves" pursued their campaign of assassination with equal ruthlessness. The terms "left" and "right" should not be taken too seriously: both sets of terrorists received their training through the PLO or similar organizations, and it was a "Grey Wolf," Ali Ağca, who was subsequently trained in Bulgaria, as the evidence now suggests, for the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II.

General Evren took control only after repeated efforts to persuade the two main parties, the Republican People's Party under Mr. Ecevit and the conservative Justice Party under Suleyman Demirel, to form an effective coalition. Their efforts were hindered by many factors, not the least being the character of Mr. Ecevit, the darling of many European social democrats, a self-dramatizing demagogue, and an articulate defender of the human rights of terrorists, or at least of left-wing terrorists. After the generals had taken control, the daily quota of assassinations fell overnight from twenty-eight to two, and within a few days the streets were safe, businesses were functioning, and life was normal. The whole nation breathed a sigh of relief—the whole nation,

that is, apart from those who had hoped to profit from its collapse. The principal losers were the Marxist parties; having polled only 5 percent of the vote in the previous general election, they could expect to control the country only by first destroying it.

Atatürk made the Turkish army into a symbol of enlightened patriotism, and it has remained so. The officer corps forms a significant part of the Turkish intelligentsia. It is recruited by open competition from every class of society and receives a thorough and liberal university education at the Ankara Military Academy, which consciously furthers Atatürkist principles of secular and democratic government. Conscription ensures that the ethos of the army impinges upon every family. There is really no doubt that the average Turk welcomed the military takeover as an expression of the national unity—lying above and beyond politics—for which he craved. General Evren was chief of staff, and his colleagues of comparable rank. The government has removed the atmosphere of terror and corruption and has begun to initiate long-needed reforms, of which the new constitution is the major symbol. Besides reaffirming the principles of secular government laid down by Atatürk, the constitution aims to strengthen the executive arm of government and to create a form of democratic representation more nearly suited to the conditions of Turkey than that created by the old, and, as it turned out, ineffective, constitution of 1961. Bicameral government is abolished, the presidential powers increased, and trade unions compelled to seek arbitration before any strike. At the same time individual rights are elaborately specified and protected by clauses that guarantee (as in previous constitutions) the existence and operation of an independent judiciary.

Opposition to the new constitution has come, in the main, from those powers that had exploited previous constitutional loopholes in order to claim, as a “right,” the activities that had brought the country to the brink of civil war. It remains to be seen whether the new provisions will be more effective in reconciling the many and varied requirements of “democracy,” with the tensions experienced in every “developing” nation. But the generals were aware, in any case, that politics alone would not solve Turkey’s problems; it was necessary to achieve economic stability, and to encourage the development of a free economy. Measures first introduced by Mr. Demirel’s government in January 1980 were finally implemented, involving the liberalization of interest rates, the encouragement of exports, and the reallocation of resources to

industrial projects. Inflation, which stood at 130 percent in March 1980, had fallen to 40 percent by March 1981, and fell further to 30 percent by May 1982. This fall in inflation was realized remarkably, together with an increase in the rate of growth of the GNP, from a negative 1.1 percent in 1980, to a positive 4.3 percent in 1981. For the first time in many years, businessmen feel confident that Turkey is on the road to economic recovery, and that there is better reason to invest at home than to hoard in Switzerland.

### Popular Support for the Government

The generals have been cautious in their public pronouncements and have made few promises, but those that they have made they have also tended to fulfill. People have come to see them as symbols of truth in a country made wretched by lies and manipulation, and most Turks share General Evren's opinion that the country's near collapse was not the result of economic weakness only, but also, and more especially, of willed subversion. After speaking to many Turks in all walks of life over the summer, I feel confident that there are few modern political leaders who enjoy such wholehearted support as General Evren. Why, then, should his government have been subjected to a sustained campaign of vilification in the West? This campaign is received by most Turks as an insult to their pride and as an act of near treason to an alliance that they have done much to sustain. As one Izmir businessman expressed it:

We are a loyal ally, a member of NATO, an associate member of the EEC. We sincerely believe in Western democracy and its values. We consciously join with the West in all its concerns and commitments. We have set about solving our problems in the only way that remains to us, and we should never have accepted the present regime if we did not believe that it truly intends to restore the conditions of democratic rule. Yet when we turn to the West for help and encouragement, we find only abuse. We ask ourselves, are the Western countries sincerely our allies and our friends? And if not, do they have a clear perception of their interests?

One problem, of course, is that the generals have had to exert emergency powers, including restrictions on reporting and a measure of censorship. This naturally leads to a bias against their rule among Western journalists, since everyone is of the firm con-

viction that those rights most necessary for his own livelihood are also most fundamental to the well-being of mankind. However, as one Istanbul journalist, by no means a conservative, declared: "I value the freedom of the press and look forward to an end to the present restrictions. But what freedom did I have before they were imposed, when everything I wrote was followed by a threat of assassination, and when I had to be guarded day and night by frightened policemen, not knowing which eighteen-year-old boy was about to riddle me with bullets, or for which of my opinions?" The point applies, of course, to all political freedoms and was made in similar terms by a student from Ankara. "What is academic freedom," he asked, "when the so-called Revolutionary Council of students orders you at gunpoint not to attend lectures, not to laugh or sing, to sit all day in the refectory discussing Marxism, to attend and initiate protests? When that happens, the purposes of academic freedom have been thwarted, and you must start again."

But there is a deeper cause, I believe, for the hostility shown toward General Evren's government by the armchair humanitarians of the West. The left-liberal consensus in intellectual circles has suffered much in recent years from the perception that "actually existing socialism" is brutal, unpopular, and maintained by force. It has been necessary to hang on to the belief that this state of affairs is somewhat accidental or transitory. True socialism will always be humane; what we see are merely perversions of socialism, brought about by power falling into the wrong hands, and against the people's will. To sustain this view it has been necessary to search the world for right-wing dictatorships, in order to show that the evil lies precisely in dictatorship, and is compounded when the dictatorship is inspired by that "conservative" or "reactionary" ideology against which the "struggle" must be waged. Thus, through all vicissitudes, socialist doctrine can be made to retain its moral purity.

The fact is that Turkey has had a succession of conservative dictatorships. All of them have been established in emergencies, in order to re-create the conditions for constitutional government. These dictatorships have, on the whole, been popular. They have all succeeded, both in achieving order *and in renouncing power*. The case contrasts so radically with the universal experience of socialist "revolution" that it causes embarrassment. According to *bien-pensant* ideology, such a state of affairs is not merely unlikely: it is *impossible*. It simply *must* be the case that the generals are "fascists"

or “tyrants” or men lusting for power. In order to uphold their crumbling convictions, therefore, leftist thinkers try to paint the generals in the blackest colors, to exaggerate their every failing, to read violence into all their acts. In seeing the generals so, such ideologues express (and not for the first time) their indifference to truth and their lofty contempt for the real feelings of the “people” whom they pretend to serve.

*Roger Scruton*

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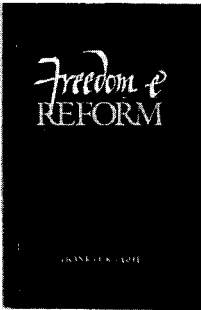
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# TV News: The Shock Horror Welfare Cut Show

FRED BARNES

It starts with some background material from the network anchorwoman in the studio. "On July 4, 1776, there were about a half-million blacks in America, one-fifth of the population," she says. "Almost all of them were slaves . . . black Americans had no reason to celebrate that first Fourth of July. It would be years before they received their inalienable rights of life and liberty. Now there are twenty-five million blacks in America, and many of them are brooding about the third part of that promise, the pursuit of happiness, wondering if 205 years after the Declaration of Independence they're ever going to catch up."

There then follows a correspondent's report from Cleveland. "They celebrated the Fourth of July in some parts of Cleveland more than in others," she says. "That's normal. Black people in America's big cities don't make a big deal of Independence Day. And anyway, the blacks we met on Cleveland's east side this week didn't feel much like celebrating." Then, President Reagan pops on the screen, vowing that he "will not retreat on the nation's commitment to equal treatment of all citizens."

But, the correspondent insists, blacks in Cleveland were not mollified by this assurance:

What worried the black poor in Cleveland was not what the president was saying, but what he'd been doing. . . . The talk of the projects was all about the president's cutbacks in social spending, the lifeline of so many black poor. Four out of ten black Americans live below the poverty level. They live with the help of aid to dependent children and Medicaid and food stamps and public service jobs programs—precisely those kinds of programs the Reagan administration plans to cut back or cut out. . . so you'll understand if there were some folks in America who couldn't quite get into the spirit of the glorious Fourth. There are still a lot of black people who don't understand what the whites are celebrating.

For breathtaking simplicity of analysis, it is hard to top this piece, broadcast on the CBS news show "Sunday Morning" on July 5,