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## HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ATATÜRK'S ACTIVITY IN MACEDONIA

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**Abstract:** The end of XIX-th century is filled with struggles of Balkan nations against Ottoman rule, with the greatest benefits for: Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia as the most powerful Balkan countries in this period. On the other hand, rebel activities of Balkan nations were supported by powerful Russia and Austro-Hungary<sup>209</sup>. Britain, on the other side, as a powerful European country balanced the levels of power for gaining a dominant role for trading in Balkans. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was born in a period of decline and decay of Ottoman Empire power. This period in world historiography was known with the term Great Eastern Crisis 1875-1878, which in Macedonia and neighboring Balkan countries continues until 1881 year with mass uprisings and revolts of Macedonian population against Ottoman authorities<sup>210</sup>. During entire period of its existence, Ottoman Empire remains a multinational and multi-religious state. Religious communities which existed in Empire are defined as different nations, from which the most dominant role played: Armenian, Greek and Jewish religious community. Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938) was an army officer, revolutionary leader and first president on Republic of Turkey. Ataturk was born in the 1881 year in Solun when Macedonia was under the rule of Ottoman empire.

Main point of this paper are the historical and social aspects of military-political activity of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Macedonia. Ataturk made his first educational steps in Macedonia where he was born. In 1888 Ataturk's father died. He spends some time on a farm of his uncle and then he returns in Bitola to finish the military high school. He finished military high school in the period 1895-1899 and then he continued on military academy in Istanbul which he finished in 1902 year when he is promoted in rank of a second lieutenant, ranked as eight cadet of totally 459 cadets in his generation. In 1905, as a captain, he finished General staff college in which he was ranked fifth from a total of 57 officers. In the rank of captain first class is promoted in 1907 when he was sent on military service in Third Army which was stationed in Macedonia. Ataturk actively took place in Young Turk revolution from 1908, in which the young Turk has members from the General staff of Ottoman army: Kemal Ataturk, Ismet Inonu, M.Fevzi Cakmak, Kazim Karabekir, Fuat Cebesoj and others. With using authentic archive documentation taken from the military-diplomatic archives and museums in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia and other countries we will do our best to explain the historical and social activity of Ataturk in Macedonia.

**Keywords:** Ataturk, Macedonia, historical and social activity, military-political service, Young Turk revolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was born on 19 May 1881, a date that was suggested by Reshit Safet (Atabinen), which during 1932 year sent a telegram to congratulate his birthday. This date later in the 1936 year was passed by the British diplomat James Morgan, who in the name of the British king Edward VIII, also sent him a telegram in which he congratulated his birthday. Later, his mother Haniyeh Zubejde said that a date of birth of Mustafa was written in the form of a note that she kept in one of two domestic Koran, but unfortunately, the note has never been found. The memories of his mother were that Mustafa was born in winter 1880/81, these memoirs later were accepted also from the Turkish historian Enver Behnan Shapoljo. According to the above mention allegations and based on what the world today has an established historiography as the period of birthday of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the most likely date is 19 May 1881 year<sup>211</sup>. The mother of Mustafa Kemal, Zubejde Hani was an old-fashioned Turkish lady and his father Ali Riza Efendi was a customs clerk in Salonika. Family Zubejde Hani came from the western region near Thessaloniki Albania, area in which the Ottoman government settled numerous nomadic (Yoruk) Turkish population in region of Toros mountains in southeastern Anatolia.

Mustafa's mother, Zubejde had a long dark blond hair, blue eyes and soft white skin. The family of his father Ali Riza came from the area of (Söke), southern from the Turkish city Izmir<sup>212</sup>. Mustafa's mother, Zubejde had five children of whom only two remained alive, her son Mustafa and her sister Makbule. Shortly after the birth of Mustafa, his father left the civil service and began working as a wood trader, planning that in the future his son will

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<sup>209</sup> Ценгиз Хаков, Историја на современа Турција, (превод од д-р Драги Ѓоргиев), Скопје, 2010, 7.

<sup>210</sup> Lord Kinross, Atatürk- A rebirth of a nation, London, 1964, p.3.

<sup>211</sup> Uludiz Izdemir, Atatürk'ün Yaşamı 1881-1918, vol.1, Ankara, 1980, pp.160-161.

<sup>212</sup> Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, Atatürk, Hayati ve Eseri, vol 1, Ankara, 1963, p.7.

also follow his steps. Mustafa's mother, Zubejde was a very religious woman, so her only son Mustafa in the future seem as priest<sup>213</sup>. His father with a strong initiative of his mother sent him to clerical school to study Koran. At that time responsible clerical person in that school was Shemsi Efendi. But after a short time, Mustafa was forced to leave school because of the death of his father during 1888 year. The new situation forces his mother to send Mustafa with his sister Makbule in Lozasan, a village near Thessaloniki, a place where lived her brother Hussein Agha. Here, Mustafa two years carried cows, which helped him to strengthen his physical condition but his educational level was weaker. So his mother Zubejde begs her brother to send Mustafa to continue with studying in the school of Shemsi Efendi. With returning to school Mustafa becomes too restless, aggressive, impulsive and in a quick time, he was in bad relationship with his professor for Arabic language. Warnings by his teacher Shemsi Efendi are crucial for Mustafa to leave the cleric school. By nature, calm, disciplined and a fighter person, Mustafa seen his carrier as an army officer. In this context, he said: "In our neighborhood lived a major, named Kadri Bey. His son Ahmed Bey attended military school and wore a cadet uniform. When I saw him, I fell in love with soldier's uniform<sup>214</sup>. After a while, I saw how the officers were walking down our neighborhood and it became clear that my future profession will be as an officer. His mother didn't want her child to be an army officer, because she knew that life in the Army was brutal and difficult and the young officers were treated like animals. Then Mustafa secretly from his mother passed the entrance exam. After this, he explained to his mother that his father Ali Riza, truly seems his son Mustafa as a soldier, which he proved with the sword that hangs over his baby's bed when he was born. On that occasion, Mustafa told to his mother: "I was born as a soldier and I will die as a soldier". At that time his mother fell to her knees and couldn't stop crying. But over time, she often dreamed that her decision was wrong. In the dreams she saw her son sitting on a golden throne on top of the minaret and running through the minaret she heard a voice saying: "If you let your son to attend military school, he would reach the top here, but if you don't let him he would never succeed in his life". After these traumas night, she agreed and signed all the necessary documents for admission to military school in Thessaloniki<sup>215</sup>.

Mustafa's decision to be an officer was personally, relied on his character to be the best future leader with high responsibility towards his people and above a good speaker, which in the future will be reality. So during the 1893 year, he was enrolled in the secondary military school in Thessaloniki. According to the curricula most attention is devoted to general education subjects and languages as: history, literature, poetry, Arabic, French language, Greek, Armenian and Quran (religious traditions), philosophy, history of the civilized world and others. The general military schools were democratic educational institutions which, besides the general military education gave the extensive knowledge in military and social science. With practical classes cadets had the opportunity to travel and to study the world. Mustafa from the beginning of his studies showed a great interest for the given courses in school curriculum.

His favorite subject was math. He was a real talent in solving complex problems in algebra, while his classmates managed to learn simple arithmetic equations. His professor of mathematics, gave him a sincere compliment to his talent for learning, which would later evolve into his nickname, "Kemal" which signifies perfect in something<sup>216</sup>. Young Kemal Mustafa often posing complex questions to their teachers, who were often amazed how a youngster can judge as an adult. His teachers choose him for a demonstrator (a kind of assistant), who was in charge of practical classes in math.

He was methodological and didactic in nature as a real professor<sup>217</sup>. He managed to create around himself a group of senior cadets and friends. This unusual phenomenon of "lone wolf" calm, superior even with a sharp look in his cold blue eyes classify him as a particular species<sup>218</sup>. In the secondary military school almost all branches existed. Engineers were primarily responsible for making and clearing: tunnels, bridges, roads and artillery were used when the enemy was concentrated in the larger group in one place and when they should move into a strong offensive attack. Cavalry was kind of the genus infantry which was used for rapid and sudden intrusive combat and other work in order to facilitate the occurrence of infantry units<sup>219</sup>.

It should be emphasized that military-secondary school in Bitola especially infantry was specialized for border activities. Officers who have completed this military school were sent to serve in border areas and places that were

<sup>213</sup> Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Sınıf arkadaşım Atatürk, İstanbul,1967,p.3

<sup>214</sup> Enver Behnan Papolyo, Kemal Atatürk ve Milli Mücadele Tarihi,Ankara,1959,p.17.

<sup>215</sup> Afet Afetinan, Atatürk hakkında hatıralar ve belgeler, Ankara, 1959, p.3-4.

<sup>216</sup> Atatürk, Seine Leben und seine Werke, Atatürk-Unesco,1981, p.7-8.

<sup>217</sup> Бернд Рил, Мустафа Кемал Атагӊрк, София, 2001, стр. 17.

<sup>218</sup> Lord Kinross, Atatürk- A rebirth of a nation, London, 1964, p.8-9.

<sup>219</sup> Mekâtib-i İdadiyyede Tedris Olunan Ulûm ve Fünunun Müfredat Programı (1325-1326 Sene-i Tedrisiyesine mahsus olmak üzere), İstanbul,1327.

far from the civilized world (desert places, oases) because they specialize in working in this kind of environment<sup>220</sup>. In the secondary military school in Bitola, Kemal studied with cadets from different cities and areas of Macedonia: Ohrid, Krusevo, Skopje, Struga, Prilep and remote areas as: Ioannina, Peja, Shkodra and even from distant regions of Anatolia. The period when Mustafa studied in Bitola on 23.11.1893 year in Thessaloniki was founded Macedonian revolutionary organization and during 1897 year with Vinica affair a growing number of illegal weapons was captured in Vinica. In this chaotic situation a kind of rivalry creates among cadets at the school. But Kemal as a leader of the strongest gang worked reasonably without fights and divisions among cadets. He learned for the Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks who fought against Ottoman Empire to annexing its territory in the Balkans. During the 1897 year Greek War broke out for freedom in Crete. The military in Bitola was fully mobilized. Streets of Bitola were as a battle lines which were moving continuously and the soldiers were fully mobilized. Cadets from the military school in Bitola also marched through the streets with Turkish flags<sup>221</sup>. Ottoman army fought in the mountainous areas of southern Macedonia. One evening Mustafa together with a friend from his school were sent in Ottoman army as volunteers to prevent the rebellion of Greeks in Crete. One of his best friends was poet from Bitola, Omer Naji who often went for a walk on Thessaloniki port. One evening he saw a group of clergymen (sheiks and dervishes), which played "Saber demonic religious firing" when the Ottoman units were preparing to leave the front. The conclusion for Ataturk, about these men of "God", instead to act in the name of divine, justice and mercy they did the opposite things. On 13 March 1899 Kemal successfully passed entrance exams to the Military Academy in Istanbul. After being admitted to the Military Academy in Istanbul as an infantry branch. During his student days his best friend was a classmate from the Military Academy in Istanbul, Ali Fuad<sup>222</sup>. Father of Ali Fuad, Ismail Fazil was a military general. That's way Fuad had rightfully spoke for his father with a great pride. On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal had nothing to be proud because his father died when he was 7-8 years. But deep down Kemal admired the endless desire of his father, who wanted his son to be a great soldier. The family of Ali Fuad lived in the area which was located in the Asian regions of Bosphorus, a place where beautiful houses and gardens of Ottoman princes were besides splendid waterfalls. One day, Fuad brought Mustafa Kemal to his home. The father of Fuad Ismail saw Mustafa's posture, good manners, cultural behavior, as a experienced general it became clear to him that this young boy will be one day a great man. During his education at the Military academy for the subject Tactic, Ataturk learned how to find the solution of tactical tasks, which gave him a sum which strategy to use Ottoman Empire for smaller number of losses in battles<sup>223</sup>. One day before the professor of Tactics, Kemal committed hypothetical interpretation of guerrilla warfare through the example of revolt in the Asian regions of the Bosphorus, which over the years has developed. In 1902 Kemal finished the Military Academy in Istanbul as the eighth-ranked cadet out of 459 cadets that are promoted in the rank of second lieutenant. He was sent to serve in the historic house of Sultan Bayezid I, but because of his political activities with his colleague Ali Fuad, he were removed in Fifth Army, which was stationed in Damaskus, Syria.

## 2. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATURK IN MACEDONIA

The beginnings of the political activity of Mustafa Kemal occurs during military school in Bitola, where his mentor for world politics and diplomacy and close friend was Ali Fetie, Macedonian Muslims who came from Struga<sup>224</sup>. Kemal was familiar with French politics and diplomacy through the works of world-famous French writer and philosopher, August Conte, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Voltaire, Montesquiere, Jean Jacques Rousseau and etc. Political ideas of Mustafa began to receive their completion during Military Academy in 1902. During this period he actively devoted to history, but also not away from poetry and mathematics. With great patience and enthusiasm he was reading books about the legendary career of Napoleon Bonaparte, who became his idol. He was reading the work of John Stuart Mill, where he learned many advanced and progressive ideas. During this period he actively with his friends formed the "secret committee" and started to print a newspaper, most of with written by Mustafa<sup>225</sup>. The inspector of military schools Ismail Pasha when he found out about their illegal activities and prepared to take appropriate disciplinary measures against Mustafa and his friends, he couldn't have a possibility to conduct disciplinary measures because he couldn't have evidence.

On January 11<sup>th</sup> 1905 Mustafa Kemal graduated at Command college, but after was discovered that he is involved in certain political activities, he was arrested and taken to the main Palace where he stayed for some time. As a sort of mitigated punishment for his political action, he had been transferred to the 30th Infantry contingent Damaskus,

<sup>220</sup> Lord Kinross, Ataturk- A rebirth of a nation, London, 1964, p.9-10.

<sup>221</sup> Ataturk, Seine Leben und seine Werke, Ataturk-Unesco,1981.p.9-10.

<sup>222</sup> Lord Kinross, Ataturk- A rebirth of a nation, London, 1964, pp.16-17.

<sup>223</sup> Андреј Илиев,Македонската револуционерна организација и борба, списание Штит,Скопје, 2010, 43-45.

<sup>224</sup> Карахасан Мустафа, Кемал Ататурк и македонското прашање, „Нова Македонија“, Скопје, 1988.

<sup>225</sup> İnönü Ansiklopedisi, Fasikül 26, Ankara, 1949, 88.

where Syria has acquired as great practical experience. During, October 1906 year, along with several of his friends formed the secret organization called "Freedom and Fatherland"<sup>226</sup>. Mustafa Kemal was very active in his idea to expand the activities of their organization in Syria, Libya, and Palestine and later in Macedonia, which was supposed to represent the center of all activities. A year later in the 1907 year, he was removed to the 3rd Army Corps who was in Thessaloniki. Here, Mustafa was active in the activities of his organization "Freedom and Fatherland", now renamed the "Committee for Unity and Progress." The return of Kemal in Thessaloniki was quite turbulent in terms of his military-political activity<sup>227</sup>. During 1908 year, Young Turk revolution broke out as a result of the absolutistic rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II. The Revolution had set of basic program objective to replace sultan's government in the constitution<sup>228</sup>. Young Turk Revolution had many supporters in Ottoman feudal lords, bureaucrats, intellectuals, and even the staff of the Ottoman army, including Mustafa Kemal, Ismet Inonu, M. Fevzi Chakmak, Qazim Karabekir, Fuat Dzhebesoj and others.

Unsatisfied soldiers in the Ottoman army was caused by several reasons such as: long service in areas that were far from their homes, getting irregular pay, poor food, extremely inhumane treatment of soldiers and lower ranks, and other things. Young Turks' influence and ideas are more spread in the barracks of the vilayet Skopje (Skopje, Veles, Stip, Kriva Palanka and other cities). Sultan at the very beginning of the Young Turk Revolution 24.07.1908 year, tried to suppress the revolution but he failed.

The commander of Ottoman army Shemzi Pasha was killed in Bitola. Being in a hopeless situation, Sultan Abdulhamid II was forced to approve the Constitution of Turkey from thirty years ago, which was suspended from himself. The fund: Turkey 156, located in the National Archives on Republic of Germany are included documents relating to press of the young Turks program committee of 13 points, program of Jane Sandanski 14 points, elections in Turkey and other documents which stress good cooperation between the Committee of Young Turks and supporters of Jane Sandanski. With request of Young Turks for a vizier was appointed Hilmi Pasha, for defending their rights. Young Turk revolution culminated in his experiences with counter revolution from 13 to 14 April 1909 in Istanbul<sup>229</sup>. After the beginning of the rebellion, all activists of the Young Turks revolution were gathered in Thessaloniki, where a decision was taken to form the "Army of action." The commander of the Army was Husni Pasha, and his Deputy and Chief of Staff Captain Mustafa Kemal. But, this was very short time, so on 15.04.1909 year, with decision of Central Committee of "Unity and Progress" for a new chief was appointed commander Mahmud Shefket Pasha, and his Deputy and Chief of Staff major Enver Bey. Kemal's removal from the command position is partly from his rivalry with Enver Bey, but the main reason lies in his ideas that the military should not interfere in politics and because he gave up support to Macedonian nation and Jane Sandanski.

On 27-th April 1909 year, the counter revolution ends with departure from the throne of Sultan Abdulhamid II<sup>230</sup>. Sultan Mehmet V, which was set up from Young Turks was essentially a toy in the hands of Enver Bey, minister of defense, Talat Pasha, minister of Police and Chairman of the Committee "Unity and Progress" and Dzemal- Pasha minister and military governor of Istanbul, which were essentially the driving force of Turkey by the end of World War I<sup>231</sup>.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In the end, we want to emphasize that the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's were hard to understand for contemporary people. We can easily see this through the leadership in Young Turk revolution. While the idea was that the military and politics goes together, because politics is supposed to lead the military, but they not interfere with one another<sup>232</sup>. Furthermore, he wanted to establish a separate Turkish nation, because according to him all the nations which are against the Ottoman Empire, when the time comes they will secede from it and they will form their states. His ideas, soon become a reality. Enver Bey who relied on German military instructors and German economic assistance has plunged Turkey in World War I<sup>233</sup>.

Ataturk's popular thought is: Why the wolf has a thick neck? Because he slaughtered his sheep alone. The difference between Enver Bey and Ataturk is very high. Enver Bey during his military career consistently relied on some higher authority, and Cemal road in the army and political life was done by himself. Mustafa often wanted to prove

<sup>226</sup> Kemal H. Karpat. Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System, Princeton University Press, 2015,12-18.

<sup>227</sup> Александар Трајановски, Ататурк и Македонија, " *Битола и Кемал Ататурк*", Битола,1998, 222.

<sup>228</sup> Stefan Ihrig. Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination, USA, 2014, 10-15.

<sup>229</sup> Hamza Eroglu,Atatürk'ün Hayati,Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlıđı Yayınlan,1986, 13.

<sup>230</sup> Afet Afetinan, "Vatan ve Hürriyet"Belleten, Ankara, 1959, vol. I, 289.

<sup>231</sup> Yusuf Akçura. Uç Tarz-i Siyaset, Cairo, 1907, 10-12.

<sup>232</sup> Пандевски Манол. Јане Сандански - Политички стратег и организатор на македонското-револуционерно ослободително движење, Скопје, 1985, 44-46.

<sup>233</sup> Република Германија. Фонд: Турција 156; Акти кои се однесуваат на ситуацијата во Македонија / 1878-1942/,сигнатура: LXXXVII/1043, 10.1908.

his justice entering into verbal arguments with higher authorities<sup>234</sup>. Shortly before the First World War in 1913, British General Henry Wilson in Istanbul visited Kemal and Enver Bey. From Enver Bey the General Henry wasn't delighted, but for Kemal he gave this statement: "I saw a man named Mustafa Kemal, a young Lieutenant, he showed me that he will go further"<sup>235</sup>. Enver Bey is destruction of Turkey, Atatürk's creation of a cosmopolitan Turkey<sup>236</sup>. One of its good ideas, for his rival Enver Bey, was the following: "*I don't act in context of public opinion, I act in context of good for my nation and for my satisfaction*"<sup>237</sup>. Kemal Atatürk was and remains a concept for a soldier, diplomat and statesman. But don't forget that he fought for the dignity of man social living, rights and freedom<sup>238</sup>. So, we couldn't forget that this message represents a mirror of his character: "The most outstanding characteristic of a man is his humanity"<sup>239</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup> Feroz Ahmad. The young Turks- The committee of union and progress in Turkish politics 1908-1914, Oxford,1969, p.5-10.

<sup>235</sup> Clive Foss. Kemal Atatürk: Giving a New nation a new history, Middle Eastern studies journal, volume 50, issue 5, 2014, 830-845.

<sup>236</sup> Salâhi R. Sonyel, Atatürk the founder of modern Turkey, Ankara,1989, 5-7.

<sup>237</sup> Lord Kinross, Atatürk- A rebirth of a nation, London, 1964,34-37.

<sup>238</sup> Ryan Gingeras. Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1922, Oxford, 2016, 285-293.

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