# TURKEY FACES WEST

THIS VOLUME IS BASED ON LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE Institute of Politics, Williamstown, Mass.

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By Ewing Galloway, New York

### MUSTAFA KEMAL PASHA PRESIDENT OF TURKEY

An intimate photograph of the head of the Nationalist Government.

# TURKEY FACES WEST

## A TURKISH VIEW OF RECENT CHANGES AND THEIR ORIGIN

### By HALIDÉ EDIB

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#### With a Preface by Edward MEAD EARLE

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> WE COME FROM THE EAST, WE GO TOWARD THE WEST ZIA KEUK-ALP



### NEW HAVEN • YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS LONDON • HUMPHREY MILFORD • OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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It is a fundamental tenet of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence that any man, however great his guilt and however long his criminal record, shall be given an opportunity to speak in his own defense before a judge or jury that has not already made up its mind. This proud boast has not always been observed by Americans when they have formulated their opinions about the Turks. Time and again the American press, the American pulpit, and American historians have indicted the Turkish nation, have pronounced a verdict of guilty absente reo, and have demanded summary execution by the armed forces of the civilized world. The principal witnesses for the prosecution have been missionaries and relief workers, politicians under the spell of the Gladstonian tradition, Armenian and Greek refugees and immigrants, and others whose impartiality and knowledge of the whole truth have left much to be desired. The witnesses for the defense have been practically nonexistent-the Turks in the United States being few and pitiably inarticulate. That the verdicts of public opinion thus arrived at have been unjust and sometimes grotesque is, of course, obvious. No student of Near Eastern affairs will deny that the record of the Ottoman Turks during the past century is unpleasantly stained with tyranny, stupidity, and innocent blood. But it also cannot be denied that the picture of the Ottoman Empire presented to the American reader has been almost invariably incomplete and hence misleading. Prejudice, unenlightenment, and malevolence have been conspicuous characteristics of much that has passed as authoritative writing on the Near East during the past century in the United States. Now that the Ottoman Empire-an impressive scrap-heap of superannuated institutions, some inherently absurd and some essentially vicious-has gone the way of many other pre-war anachronisms, it is perhaps time to reëxamine some of our hoary opinions concerning the Turks and give them a day in court.

Madame Halidé Edib attempts in this book to tell the truth and nothing but the truth in frank and unashamed defense of her countrymen. In view of the complicated character of the Eastern Question she could hardly be expected to satisfy all varieties of opinion. But her intellectual and moral integrity as a witness is above dispute. She is a prophet not without honor in her own country, where she has had a distinguished career as a teacher, journalist, author, statesman, social worker, and soldier. The first Moslem Turkish graduate of the Constantinople Woman's College, she has been for more than three decades a just cause for pride on the part of that outpost of American education. As one of the leaders in the movement for the emancipation of Turkish womanhood, she deserves high rank among the distinguished women of the world. Although with characteristic modesty she has put herself in the background in the pages of this book, Madame Halidé Edib played a prominent rôle in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908-09 and a still more prominent rôle in the Nationalist Revolution under Mustafa Kemal Pasha from 1919 to 1924. In the politics of her own country she has always been a liberal; in her outlook upon world affairs she is an internationalist. Hers is a voice to which Americans can listen with sympathy and confidence.

Although Madame Halidé Edib writes frankly from a Turkish point of view and in defense of the Turkish people, her book is no *apologia*. The old Ottoman Empire had no lure for her; she describes it as a nuisance to its neighbors and an abomination to its own nationals. She is rightly concerned over the "staff-officer" mentality of the present dictatorship. Although she was a Turkish Nationalist—embracing nationalism as the only emotional and moral force capable of saving the Turkish people from complete domination by Allied and Greek imperialism—she is of the opinion that "political nationalism is as ugly as any other creed which tends to make men exterminate each other." Her fundamental interests are not in politics, but in the cul-

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tural heritage of the Turkish nation. Her sympathies are not with the army or the bureaucracy or even with the middle class but rather with the Anatolian peasantry, whose qualities of forbearance, courage, determination, and industry arouse her profound admiration. Where she is sharply critical of the West in its relations with the Turks, one feels that she speaks the truth, however unpleasant. The policy of the Great Powers toward Turkey has consistently been one of "betting on the wrong horse," and as the author wisely observes "what it means to gamble with human beings is known only to those who have been the pawns in the game." Madame Halidé Edib cites as indicative of the state of western opinion concerning Turkey the widespread and sensational emphasis placed upon the so-called "Hat Law" (prohibiting the wearing of the fez)a pathetic commentary on our superficiality and interest in the bizarre where Near Eastern affairs are concerned. In short, the American reader will find in this book much that will challenge his prejudices, much that will shed new light in dark corners, and not a little which will make him question the omniscience which so many of us have arrogated unto ourselves. He will not, and should not, however, find refutation of those fundamental criticisms of the old Ottoman Empire and the new Turkey which have been offered by liberals and democrats without regard to their nationality.

Preface

Madame Halidé Edib is not new to American readers. She has already published a volume of personal memoirs which present a unique and charming picture of life in Turkey before the War. She is also the author of The Turkish Ordeal, a history of the Nationalist Revolution based upon her own observations during the bitter years of struggle under Mustafa Kemal Pasha for the emancipation of Anatolia. Her present volume is supplementary to both of its predecessors. Its account of the Nationalist movement, for example, is more detached, objective, and reflective. It shows how deep-rooted in the past are some of the revolutionary reforms of 1908-1909 and 1919-25. It makes persistent and salutary distinction between things essentially Ottoman and things essentially Turkish. It views modern Turkey in world perspective-attributing the present dictatorship, in part at least, to a general post-war reaction against democracy as a means of getting things done. Its historical sketch of the Ottoman Turks is unique in many respects, even though it is of questionable validity to speak of innate national characteristics and even though the use of the term "Turanian" has unpleasant associations with Edward August Freeman's The Ottoman Power in Europe, a thoroughly unreliable book, which in its day was a devastating influence in support of Gladstone's Turcophobia. Whatever differences of opinion one may hold as to some of

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Madame Halidé Edib's conclusions, however, one must be profoundly impressed with her sincerity of purpose and with the catholicity of her interests.

As a liberal Turkish appraisal of new forces at work among the Turks this book will possess high value for students of contemporary Near Eastern affairs. It is to be hoped that it will receive a sympathetic reading on the part of those Americans who wish an honest statement of a point of view all too seldom heard in the Anglo-Saxon world.

### Edward Mead Earle.

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