

THE LEADERSHIP OF MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATATURK: TURKISH INDEPENDENCE WAR

A. Baran Dural, PhD

Associate Professor, Trakya University

Abstract

Although the Sevres Treaty was a pathetic document of submission, these heavy conditions benefited the national leadership. First of all, it proved to the whole country that the independency of the Ottoman State could not be mentioned any more. The Ottomans had officially admitted their difficulties in representing Anatolia and the people. The people felt that this treaty was full of injustices; and the people finally understood the indifferent attitude of the Allied States toward Turkey and that everything that had been told to the people by the Istanbul governments were all lies. Now even intellectuals who had seemed determined not to anger the Allied States had started to see the hope in the Anatolian movement. The angry voices rising throughout the country had given Ankara, who had been waiting for this moment, a great opportunity.

Mustafa Kemal had proven to be right once more. Mustafa Kemal had told his friends that France, England, and Italy had suffered great losses in the Great War and would not want to engage in an Anatolian adventure full of uncertainties; these states could not send even one extra soldier to Turkey. The war would be limited with Greece, who could not ignore the one million Rums living in Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal was confident that he could thwart the Greek military measures. All these factors proved that the Sevres Treaty had no validity from the beginning. Likewise, the national movement's struggle, amid many troubles, would confirm this fact; the allied bloc would fall into disagreement and disband, and the occupation forces would have to give up their goals about Turkey.

Keywords: Sevres Treaty, Turkish- Greek War, nationalist leadership, Mustafa Kemal, Turkey

Introduction:

On May 19, a whole new page opened in Turkish history, as the first steps were taken in the War of Independence. Mustafa Kemal recounts that he was impatient in the Bandırma ship, as he was looking forward to reaching Samsun. The leader was aware of his responsibilities and the difficulty of the task he undertook, but he was also confident of the final victory. During his first days in Samsun, Mustafa Kemal tried to determine the general situation and showed the utmost care not to have any conflicts with Istanbul. The government in Istanbul saw no drawbacks in granting his requests and even raised his salary. In Samsun, the Rums were the majority in the city center, but the Turks outnumbered them in the whole of the province.

The Rums had gained strength from the English troops' landing in Samsun. Nearly forty Rum gangs were creating an atmosphere of terror in the vicinity of the city, and thirteen Turkish gangs formed to counter them. Mustafa Kemal, who frequently communicated with Istanbul, used İzmir's occupation well. He ordered the local administrators that he contacted countrywide for protesting the occupation severely, and he organized large public demonstrations. The Allied States did not see the Turks as a nation and deemed the national forces "*pillager gangs.*" So this resistance of Allied States had to be broken. The first goal of Mustafa Kemal, who knew that a permanent solution could not be achieved through demonstrations, was to prevent unfair obstacles such as the occupancy of İzmir by daunting the Allies. But the real aim was to remind the Allied States that the Turks were a nation by organizing national demonstrations in every region of the country.

The Sevres Treaty

The years of 1920–1921 was a period in which the Anatolian movement carried on the struggle under hard circumstances and many troubles, even though they gained several successes. During this same time, Istanbul was strongly displaying their dislike against the Anatolian movement with the countrywide disorders they created and almost giving control to the occupation forces. Istanbul's submission would reach its peak with the Sevres Treaty. The treaty was signed on August 10, 1920, and consisted of 433 clauses and 150 pages. The Ottoman delegation consisted of Hadi Pasha, Dr. RızaTevfik, and ReşatHalisBeys. Representatives among the Allies, mainly England, France, and Italy, formed the other side of the treaty. English Prime Minister Lloyd George (he was not the official signer) played an important role in the treaty; the minister of the exterior Millerand represented the French wing of the allied delegation; and the state of emergency ambassador of Paris, Count

Longare, represented the Italian wing. Japan was deemed an Allied nation, and Belgium, Romania, Serbia, the Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom, Armenia, Poland, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, and Greece were among the nations that signed the treaty. The main characteristic of the treaty was that virtually all of Europe was uniting to cast the Turks out of Europe, transforming the Turkish State into a small Anatolian emirate without a future. (DURAL,2007:43)

According to the treaty, Istanbul would be left under Turkish possession and the sultan could live in Istanbul if he so wished. Yet how freely could the head of the Ottoman State live in a city under occupation? The Thracian lands were completely given to Greece. The straits would remain under the control of the Allied States, and the Armenian and Kurdish States would make the Turkish lands even smaller. The vicinity of İzmir, from Ayvalık to Menderes, would be given to Greece. On the regions that were determined as the Turkish lands, the Allied States would enjoy great privileges; the Turkish State would be dependent on the Allied States economically, politically, and commercially because the administration of the straits and the presence of Greece at Ege harmed the sea and railway transportations respectively.¹ (DURAL:78-80)

Although the Sevres Treaty was a pathetic document of submission, these heavy conditions benefited the national leadership. First of all, it proved to the whole country that the independency of the Ottoman State could not be mentioned any more. The Ottomans had officially admitted their difficulties in representing Anatolia and the people. The people felt that this treaty was full of injustices; and the people finally understood the indifferent attitude of the Allied States toward Turkey and that everything that had been told to the people by the Istanbul governments were all lies. Now even intellectuals who had seemed determined not to anger the Allied States had started to see the hope in the Anatolian movement. The angry voices rising throughout the country had given Ankara, who had been waiting for this moment, a great opportunity.

Ankara's reaction came without much delay. The parliament assembled under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal and stated that the Sevres treaty could not be taken seriously, and that this treaty had no legitimacy for the Anatolian government. Even France, who had

¹Those who wish to see detailed information about the Sevres Treaty can refer to Reşat Ekrem's work *Osmanlı Muahedeleri*, which was published in 1934.

engaged in armed skirmishes against the Anatolian movement in the south, realized that this treaty would not last long. Italy, who had previously grabbed great privileges in Anatolia, felt uncomfortable about the rights granted to Greece, and became unwilling to send soldiers to support the treaty. England, who was defending the heaviest sanctions against the Turks, was hesitant. A wing of the English parliament focused on the financial-economical fault of sending even one soldier to Anatolia, and the government was, unlike France, avoiding skirmishes against the Anatolian movement.

Mustafa Kemal had proven to be right once more. Mustafa Kemal had told his friends that France, England, and Italy had suffered great losses in the Great War and would not want to engage in an Anatolian adventure full of uncertainties; these states could not send even one extra soldier to Turkey. The war would be limited with Greece, who could not ignore the one million Rums living in Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal was confident that he could thwart the Greek military measures. All these factors proved that the Sevres Treaty had no validity from the beginning. Likewise, the national movement's struggle, amid many troubles, would confirm this fact; the allied bloc would fall into disagreement and disband, and the occupation forces would have to give up their goals about Turkey.

The Turkish-Greek War

The Turkish-Greek War is mainly examined in the context of three main Axes. In the first stage of the war, in 1920, the Greek army had successfully achieved results, as the organized Turkish army was still being founded. Turkey even lost Bursa after Istanbul, İzmir, and Adana. The second stage took place between 1921–1922. This stage was a defensive war. The Turkish army, even though they had suffered strategic land losses, managed to resist the endless Greek attacks and caused a dense hopelessness in the Greek army. The Greek army acted indecisively, lost its morale, was abandoned by its allies, was struck with terror against Mustafa Kemal's superior abilities, and was scattered in the third phase of the war, which took place in 1922. They paid the price of their unjust and irrelevant invasion by being driven to the sea at İzmir. The most important common factor of all three stages was the unity of the Turkish people and their determination to end the subservience to the foreigners, and the army's success at every area in spite of negative conditions. However, the article will focus on the war beginning from Kutahya- Eskisehir battles because Mustafa Kemal has decided to get in charge of the Turkish army after Turks were defeated by Greek army at Kutahya and Eskisehir.

The Kütahya-Eskişehir Wars and Mustafa Kemal

Three months had passed since the Second İnönü War. Greece had declared a general mobilization and had reinforced the front. However, the Ankara government was not in a position to make a call for general mobilization because of the inconveniency of the domestic conditions. The front could not be reinforced enough, and the sub-armies and divisions fell into a weak state (Martino: 108). The Greek forces realized that they were superior to the Turks in condition and started a general offensive on July 10. The situation was bleak for the nationalist leadership on July 17. The enemy not only caused heavy losses on the Turkish side but also pressed toward Eskişehir from four directions. The Turkish army was routed so badly that the people fled to the inner parts of Anatolia in a panic. Even İsmet Pasha was affected by this panic and hopelessly thought that the war had been lost.

Mustafa Kemal understood it was time to take back the situation. He immediately went to İsmet Pasha's headquarters. İsmetBey was truly depressed; Mustafa Kemal thought that every difficulty had a solution. He knew they had to think of a solution instead of falling into despair. Mustafa Kemal would show that he was the true leader of this war very soon, but first he boosted his comrade's morale: *"Good job, İsmet, see, you already won. I want to congratulate your victory before the end the fight."* (ATAY,1998: 293) Although he said this, Mustafa Kemal also knew that they were defeated. There was now a price to be paid. The pasha presumed that the people would want to declare someone responsible -someone to punish- for this rout. The easy way would have been to lay the burden of defeat on İsmet Pasha, but Mustafa Kemal did not like easy ways. He immediately ordered for the retreat of the army by giving a directive, that he took full responsibility of to İsmetBey. Mustafa Kemal explains this hard decision as follows:

"After gathering the army at the north and south of Eskişehir, it is necessary to leave a big gap with the enemy army for being able to regroup and strengthen the army. You can retreat as far as the east of Sakarya for this. If the enemy keeps advancing without a break, they will get far away from their base and will have to establish reinforcement organizations again; in any situation they will face unexpected difficulties. On the other hand, our army will be gathered together and under better conditions. The biggest drawback of this action would be a possible spiritual shake in the public opinion because of leaving important locations and lands as Eskişehir to the enemy. But these drawbacks would automatically vanish with the successful results we could achieve in the shortest time. We have to execute the necessities of

war without a hesitation. We can manage facing the other kind of drawbacks.” (ATATURK-II, 1999: 813–815)

“The Leader Should Have Faith in His Cause under Any Circumstance”

This was a hard decision to make because the collaborators in Istanbul were seeing every step the Kemalist movement took backward as a victory. Also, the occupation forces had not yet recognized the Ankara government, and they were losing their desire for contact, which was already weak, when they saw the failures of the Anatolian movement. Most important of all, there was conflict inside the Anatolian movement now.²Some deputies accused Mustafa Kemal of wanting a dictatorship. Withdrawing from his position would obviously be used against him. Mustafa Kemal could at least be rid of the third danger by pointing İnönü as the one responsible for the defeat, but he knew he had to share the routs with his comrades along with the victories.

All of the above-mentioned dangers broke out at once. The Greek government claimed that the war was about to end and that the Kemalists would vanish into history. Moreover, some Greek newspapers claimed that they could reach victory without the help of the Allies. While the Istanbul newspapers stated that retreating had become the fate of the Turks, that Mustafa Kemal was destroying his supporters by fighting a losing battle, and that the Greek victory overshadowed the former so-called victories. Inside the Anatolian movement, the opposition had already created a disorder. Some nationalist deputies had become depressed because of the claims of their opponents. The first internal reactions were directed toward İsmet Pasha. It was loudly stated from the lectern of the parliament that İsmetBey had not won a victory, and the former skirmishes had to be deemed as minor events. The ones responsible had to pay. In fact, the opposition indicated that the responsible party was Mustafa Kemal, not İsmetBey. In speeches, these internal grumblers accused Mustafa Kemal of sending İsmet Pasha to the battlefield and of avoiding responsibility. At that moment, the deputy of Mersin, SelahattinBey, came to the lectern and offered Mustafa Kemal command of the army. The proposal gained support, but some did not want to give Mustafa Kemal an opportunity. This wing strongly opposed the proposal. (DURAL, 2008:313-330)

²For detailed information on this subject, the related section of the second volume of *Nutuk* and the second volume of ŞevketAydemir’s work *Tek Adam* can be reviewed.

The opponents concluded that the struggle was lost. If Mustafa Kemal was at the helm of the army, the inevitable disappointment of the defeat would also destroy Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal would be defeated and forgotten; he could not achieve success with the ruined. And then the wish of the opponents within the Anatolian movement would come true, and the country would make a peace treaty with lighter conditions than the Sevres Treaty. Moreover, the Allies were eager for this treaty. Another group also did not want Mustafa Kemal to take command of the army. According to this group, the command of Mustafa Kemal would mean that all hopes were lost, and the national struggle was in need of a miracle. Preserving public opinion would only be possible by keeping Mustafa Kemal for the future. However, Mustafa Kemal felt that it was the perfect opportunity he had been waiting for. He was eager to accept being the commander-in-chief, but the responsibility could lead a man to the gallows. He had to be given concrete authority over the nationalist leadership, which would be equal to the burden he was taking.

He had one more thing on his mind. If he avoided taking over the command, it would be the true end of the national struggle. He stated loudly—to his friends and enemies alike—that he was confident of victory. Avoiding this ordeal would mean that the leader himself did not believe in his cause, and this would not befit the character of Mustafa Kemal. He accepted the ordeal. His demand was as follows:

“I am accepting the position of commander-in-chief due to the general wish and demands of the esteemed members of the parliament. I am taking over the authorities of the Turkish National Assembly with the condition of actively using them, in order to quickly achieve the benefits which will rise with this act, to increase and strengthen both the spiritual and physical force of the army, and to strengthen its administration even more. I also wish this authority to be limited for a short period like three months in order to display that I am a true servant of the national sovereignty as long as I live to the nation.” (ATATURK-II: 81)

Major Battle of Sakarya

The tactic was successful. Every word had been chosen carefully. First of all, he had proved that he would not avoid hard duties and he would take the greatest risks in the most dire situations. He also realized that some of his opponents wanted to send him to the front to gain control in Ankara in his absence and to overthrow him at his slightest failure. Leaving the administration to his opponents was not something he enjoyed. But he had undertaken both military and political leadership. And now his opponents would humiliate him by

accusing him of being a dictator. He had to set a short limit for the state of emergency and direct all weapons of his opponents toward them. Mustafa Kemal achieved all this in his speech of six or seven lines.

Mustafa Kemal arrived at the front with Fevzi Pasha on August 12, 1921. The Greek army started their assault on August 23. The battle occurred in a hundred-kilometer area. The enemy was making heavy assaults toward the left flank of the Turkish forces. This wing retreated fifty kilometers south of Ankara; the defensive lines were broken from time to time, but Mustafa Kemal confused the enemy with his sudden decisions to move the army in different directions. The skirmishes were carried on in constant motion. The Greek commanders present in this battle would later narrate the hard conditions they had faced during this battle: *“How were those positions fortified, that the battle continued for such a long time and a wide scale? How much force had the Turks separated for the defense of these positions? Why could not the main forces of the Greek army be able to scatter and defeat them?”* (AYDEMİR-II,1999: 449)

In fact the ridges of Sakarya were neither dug nor fortified. It seems that the enemy was not able to perceive the Turkish tactic once again. Mustafa Kemal had deployed the plan quickly after seeing that the defense was being broken; the army had to continuously change its position, as it was being attacked from all directions. He gave the following order: *“There is not a defense of lines but there is the defense of an area, and that area is the whole country. Even a single inch of the country can't be left before it is wet with our citizens' blood. Therefore, small or large any part of the whole can be driven away from its position. But, small and large every part of the whole will form a front against the enemy again and continue the fight on the first spot they can stop. The parts which see that a nearby part had to retreat cannot act similarly. They are obliged to persevere and resist at their positions until the end.”*

The Battle of Sakarya started on August 23 and continued for twenty-two nights and days without a break. During the battle, Mustafa Kemal fell from the horse and broke his ribs. Sometimes he had to watch the battle from a stretcher. Mustafa Kemal's victories could not be stopped by any fever, shrapnel, or horse. One problem the Turks faced was difficulty supplying ammunition to fronts that had split up during the battle. Mustafa Kemal ordered the lines without ammunition to continue fighting with bayonets and even the knives in their pockets, and his orders were carried out by the heroic soldiers. Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü were aware that the enemy had moved far from their base and made plans considering this fact. During the first days of the battle, the Turkish army struggled not to be

completely encircled and destroyed. The Greek forces moved even farther away from their bases, chasing the retreating troops, and their communication network weakened and their ammunition decreased. The result of this would be depression and fatigue. The Turkish army waited for the enemy's vulnerable moment, and then they would land the final blow.

On the eve of the Sakarya Battle, which is counted among the bloodiest wars in history, İsmet Pasha met with Mustafa Kemal and distributed the army. According to this distribution, the Turkish army would stop the enemy with seven divisions and would leave seven divisions and five cavalry divisions as reserves. Two cavalry divisions would move behind the enemy and would ruin the order and supplying conditions of the Greek army. The cavalry units had already made countless raids against the Greek forces, had roughed up the enemy forces, and had put lone units to the sword. (MARTINO,1998: 120–121)

The bloodiest skirmishes took place on August 25. The Greek army started an incredible offensive to capture the peak of Çaldağı and succeeded in capturing the mountain, but Mustafa Kemal's battle plan had worked. The Turkish front did not split against the attacks. The Greek soldiers, who had gone too far from their base, started to wear down by August 31. Even though they had considerable food and equipment, they were not able to make the coordination. The power of the offensive was declining. By the first days of September, the Greek forces were acting indecisively and were making fruitless attacks. General Papulas gave the order of general retreat to the enemy army on September 10, which had started to slowly retreat on September 8. The enemy had been left in a weak and demoralized state, and the expected time had come. But Mustafa Kemal was still cautious. The cavalries had caused the enemy incredible losses. The Turkish forces gained the control of Kartaltepe, Duatepe, and Beştepe on September 12. The Turkish assault forces managed to drive the enemy back at the cost of vanishing. Ankara received the telegraph of victory on September 12 and learned that the enemy was completely cleared from the east of Sakarya on September 13, 1921. Toynbee, who wrote the foundation story of the Republic of Turkey, interpreted the Battle of Sakarya as follows:

“This time the Turkish Army was commanded by Mustafa Kemal and his assistant was İsmetBey. The battle lasted for 3 weeks without a break with heavy skirmishes. The leader of the Turks was frequently in the middle of the battlefield; and once he was severely wounded. The Turks and Greeks were fighting face to face. This was a horrible skirmish between almost equal powers. This was indeed the battle for supremacy of the East and the West, of a Westernized state and the new Turkey. After three weeks, the Greeks could not break the

resistance of the Turks and they first had to give up their hopes of advancing further and then had to retreat against the Turkish nationalists, whom had started a counter-offensive.

The Greeks had become depressed. The order of general retreat was given on 16 September.³ The defeated Greeks were continuously burning down the villages on their way while retreating. On the 23rd of the month they had retreated as far as their old positions on the Eskişehir-Afyon line. They had been unsuccessful in achieving their goals and the Turks had won their second major victory. Nevertheless, this was not a decisive one, as the Greek Army had not been destroyed; but it had given the necessary boost of morale to the Turks. The situation in the Turkish-Greek war had changed totally with the Battle of Sakarya. It can be said that this war was one of the greatest battles in the history of the current century.⁴ The one year period that followed this war, gave a quite long time for the Turks to regroup and strengthen their forces.” (TOYNBEE-II, 2000: 15–16)

According to the Greek records, 5,227 Greek soldiers were either dead or lost during the battle. Mustafa Kemal had confronted his enemy with a brilliant tactic and stopped Greece's plans to seize Ankara, saving the capital of the new Turkey too, after having saved the capital of the Ottoman State. Mustafa Kemal thus silenced the ravings of both the Istanbul government and his opposition in the national movement and reduced the assault power of the Greek forces to nothing. Greece, who had attempted an unjust invasion because of the occupation forces and especially England, could only wait for their inevitable end without any offensive capability.

After the Battle of Sakarya, Mustafa Kemal was met with a great enthusiasm at TBMM. He was given the titles of “*Marshal*” and “*Gazi (victorious fighter for the Islamic faith)*.” Meanwhile, mediators from the occupation forces informed Ankara that Greece was ready to withdraw from Anatolia, but this could only be done in return for some concessions at Thrace. It was unthinkable for TBMM, who for the first time had the upper hand against

³Most historians state that the order of general retreat was given on September 10. *Nutuk* also emphasizes that the region was completely cleared on September 13.

⁴Here, Toynbee attributes this to Price's book *The Rebirth of Turkey*.

the Greek army, to make any concessions to Greece. However, the best result of the Battle of Sakarya had been the recognition of the Ankara government by France.

France felt uneasy about both Gaziantep and Çukurova. FranclinBauillion, a former minister of this country, had arrived in Ankara on June 9, 1921. France wanted to come to an agreement with Ankara. This result could only be achieved after the Battle of Sakarya, which had officially started on July 13. Without even informing England France abandoned their intentions for Anatolia, even though they were aware that this country would react harshly, with the Treaty of Ankara, which was signed on October 20, 1921. France withdrew from Gaziantep on October 25 and Adana on January 5 (Koçu: 273–291). The other occupation force, Italy, had given up the Anatolian adventure before France. For the nationalist leadership, it was now time to end the problem of Greece, which had already fallen into a difficult state.

The Great Attack

The conditions of the general mobilization were hard. In fact, some countries formed relations with Mustafa Kemal's Turkey. The Indian Muslims had helped from time to time, and the relations with the USSR had been friendly, but nevertheless Ankara was introverted and excluded from the rest of the world. Mustafa Kemal knew the importance of the final blow. He did not have any intention of hurrying and getting stuck at the front. The parliament had calmed down after the Battle of Sakarya but had started to get agitated when the order for attack did not come and the list of preparations for the battle extended. Some deputies asked why the final blow still had not been delivered to the Greek army. According to this group, every single day that passed meant that the enemy was digging new trenches and taking defensive measures. However, since the Çanakkale War, Mustafa Kemal was aware that victory would not be won by weaving barbed wires,

Another factor that caused difficulties for Ankara was the insufficiency of transportation. The records of the front displayed the number of soldiers who died in hospitals were much greater than those who died on the battlefields. The army struggled against a pneumonia epidemic. According to the Department of Health datum, the number of infected had raised to 247.988 in 1922, while it had been 151.783 in 1921. Medicine could not be dispatched to some units. The railway started in Istanbul and ended at Ankara. The national forces controlled only a small proportion of the railway, which started east of Eskişehir, while other lines were inconvenient for the battle plans. During the İnönü battles, transportation from Eskişehir to Ankara took more than twenty hours. A dispatch from

İnebolu to Ankara could only be completed in a week. It was necessary to be cautious while preparing for the final victory under such heavy conditions. Mustafa Kemal considered this datum and carried on preparations for the battle, even with negative signals coming from the parliament.

The calculations showed that it was necessary to concentrate at least 100,000 armed soldiers, 4,000 machine guns, horses for the cavalry, foddors for the horses, and ammunition that would allow the firing of the guns for days at the front (Kerim: 177). Mustafa Kemal told the Russian General Fronze, whom he had met in Ankara in early 1922, that if they could not overcome the shortages in two or three months, the only option would have to be a diplomatic solution. Turkey had started preparations immediately after the Battle of Sakarya, but, although they were expected to be ready in a relatively short time, it was not for the above-mentioned reasons.

The Leadership of Mustafa Kemal Is Being Discussed

Mustafa Kemal had undertaken the commander-in-chief duty under extraordinary conditions, but he was frequently criticized because of the amount of power he commanded. Every parliament session about the extension of “*Supreme Military Command Law*” was a major event. The most exciting one occurred on May 5. The opponents had managed to secure the rejection of the extension of the commander-in-chief law without the necessary majority. The decision started an official discussion concerning Mustafa Kemal’s leadership. Moreover, some deputies disdained the army and verbally attacked the national leadership—and the words of these opponents met with applause. However, Mustafa Kemal was determined to keep his authority at all costs. The parliament would assemble again the next day, and Mustafa Kemal would inform the deputies.

Mustafa Kemal’s explanations to the complaints against his leadership were quite harsh. The opponents had showed their teeth; now it was Mustafa Kemal’s turn. He started by stating that some people who spent their time creating disorder in the parliament had started to do it again. Mustafa Kemal reminded them that the opponents found the existence of a commander-in-chief on duty, due to state of emergency laws, unnecessary and emphasized that the current deputies and TBMM itself worked under extraordinary conditions. The most interesting parts of Mustafa Kemal’s speech can be summarized as follows:

“No gentlemen, our most important and basic duty is not making politics. Today, the sole duty of us, the whole country and nation is discarding the enemy from our lands with our

bayonets. As long as we have not done this yet, politics will remain meaningless. ...I am not one of those who accept the theory of keeping our army's existence and strength balanced with our fortune. 'We have money, so we can build an army; we are out of money, let's disband the army...' there is no such a thing for me. Gentlemen, we can either have money or not; but no matter we have the money or not, there is an army and there will be. Let me recall a memory at this point. When I started this work for the first time, some so-called wise and intellectual people asked me: 'Do we have money and guns?' I said: 'No.' Then they said: 'What are you going to do then?' and I replied: 'We will have money, we will have an army, and this nation will save its independence.' As you see, all of these became and will become true.

And some gentlemen had said that: 'The Commander-in-chief is forcing the nation to do unpaid obligatory work; however this is forbidden by laws in the country.' Gentlemen, this is true; but it is necessity and danger that what shows everything as legal to us. If the shortages of the army is forcing us to make the nation do unpaid obligatory work, we are doing so, and this is the most rightful law. I will not hesitate because of the 'limitations of law' in taking the necessary measures for avoiding the defeat of the army and the nation. ... Vasıf Bey had said in one of his speeches that: 'After the Battle of Sakarya, we could not even move until now, and we are not still able to.' This phrase was met with 'Long live' shouts and applauds of some.

Gentlemen, I felt a great sorrow and bitterness because of this; I felt ashamed. Applauding the words of a heedless who claims that the army is standing still and is unable to move is really very weird. Please, let this die here, no one shall hear of it!

You see gentlemen, the major phrases said for proving that the position of commander-in-chief is unnecessary are these. You have also heard my answers against these words. Now, it is the parliament's duty to think and come to a decision. But, I have to display a truth. Even though there is no doubt about the parliament's belief about the necessity of the commander-in-chief position, the baseless activities of the opposition caused an unwanted parliament decision to come to force. Gentlemen, do you know the result of this? The position of Commander-in-chief is remaining in suspense and uncertainty for two days. The army does not have a commander right now. If, I am not leaving the command of the army, I am doing it illegally. I would want to withdraw from the command immediately according to the votes

given in the parliament. I have also informed the government that my commander-in-chief duty was over. However, I faced the obligation to cause an inevitable evil. Our army, which is facing the enemy, could not be left without a leader. Therefore, I did not leave my position, I cannot leave it, and I will not be able to.” (ATATURK-II: 877–883)

Mustafa Kemal acquired the results he wanted with this harsh speech. He had examined the declarations of his opponents, prepared the necessary answers against them, and had gained control in TBMM before the voting in a very short time. Likewise, the voting resulted with the extension of the commander-in-chief law by 177 votes, with 11 against and 15 abstaining votes. The next step would be removing the Greek army from Anatolia.

In the Great Offensive, the front’s width was 600 kilometers. Mustafa Kemal had warned the Turkish forces not to spread too much. He did not want to fall into the same trap the Greek armies had in former battles. Between the battles, the mood had lightened in the Greek posts, and duties were being neglected. Nevertheless, the Turks could only gather an army of 103,000 men against the enemy’s military force, which reached 130,000 men. The Turkish army had more than 200 cannons, and 50 of these were heavy cannons. The Turkish committee of command depended mainly on an offensive that would start with the support of heavy cannon fire (MECHIN, 2001: 191).

On the Road to Victory

Even the parliament was unaware of Mustafa Kemal’s offensive plans. The commander-in-chief kept even the smallest bit of information from Greek intelligence. The operation plans were only known by İsmet, Fevzi, and Kazım Pashas. The front would be organized without the enemy’s notice, and the raid would be executed instantaneously. The sub-army and divisions began marching toward the given concentration points on August 13. They reached the concentration points on August 25 by secretly moving at night; the soldiers rested after sunrise.

Mustafa Kemal thought of focusing the main force of his army on one wing of the enemy front. The goal was to destroy the enemy with a field battle. The main forces would gather at the AkarÇay-Dumlupınar zone near Afyon and strike the enemy wing at this zone. Mustafa Kemal went to Akşehir on the night of July 23, with the excuse that he was meeting General Townshand, who had come to Konya. The football match, which was organized for July 28, was camouflage for a meeting with the commanders. They decided that preparations for the offense would be conducted until August 15. Mustafa Kemal returned to Ankara after

the principles of the offense plans were set, and secret orders were sent to the units on August 6 to be ready for the assault. On August 13, the army chief of staff FevziÇakmak arrived at the front. Mustafa Kemal delayed his departure from Ankara to make a final evaluation of the situation. Mustafa Kemal secretly left Ankara. He noted in the newspaper that he was giving a tea party at Çankaya on the day he left to keep his movement secret. The preparations were so secret that Mustafa Kemal had gone to Konya overland instead of by train, and he had the telegraph office workers under surveillance as soon as he arrived in the city. No one would learn where he was until the offensive started. On the evening of August 20, he met 1st and 2nd army commanders, the front commander, and the army chief of staff. They reviewed their strategy on a map. On August 24, the headquarters of the front had been moved to the town of Şahut from Akşehir. And it had reached Kocatepe on August 26. The offensive would started at 5:30 AM with heavy cannon fire support.

The skirmisher units had advanced in the darkness and had come as close as four or five hundred meters to the enemy trenches. The Turkish army entered the enemy positions at KalecikSivrisi and west of it at 5:30; they had taken TınazTepe within an hour. However, there were problems at Belen. Some units had retreated. The 23rd Division had been too slow to act. Mustafa Kemal reproved the division commander. Nevertheless, the hill fell at 9:00. Mustafa Kemal sent the news that the Turkish army had launched an attack to Ankara at 10:00 AM.⁵

The enemy's resistance was still strong, even though some important hills had been taken on August 26. The Greek army had not split up. On August 27, Mustafa Kemal's operation plan was executed perfectly, and the first targets fell. The enemy was driven to the Sincanlı Plain, and the cavalry forces entered Afyon. However, the 57th Division commander, Major ReşatBey, who had been ordered to seize control of Çiğli Hill, made his failure a matter of honor and committed suicide. On August 26–27, the enemy's fortified lines that extended for fifty kilometers on the south and twenty to thirty kilometers on the east of Afyon were left out of war. The Greek army had executed some successful actions but nothing decisive. On August 28, the enemy tried to retreat to İzmir, but the Turkish army carried on in encircling and destroying the Greek forces with even greater strength. August

⁵Aydemir claims that the famous photograph of Mustafa Kemal at Kocatepe, was taken while he was going to reprove the 23. Division's commander.

29 passed with constant skirmishes. The Greek forces could not carry out the counter-offense order they had received, as they were immobilized.

While the Greek forces that scattered were destroyed by the Turkish cavalry before they could regroup, the Greek commander Trikopolis's maneuvering area was also being constricted by the systematic attacks of some Turkish forces. İsmet Pasha was about to finalize the encircling movement when Mustafa Kemal arrived at Adatepe on the night of August 29. İsmet Pasha had attacked the middle part of the Greek front at Afyonkarahisar on August 16, according to the battle plan. The Turkish army had advanced forty kilometers until August 29. The scattered Greek forces tried to resist at Dumlupınar, but they failed and were scattered again. The plan that Mustafa Kemal had made with Fevzi and İsmet Pashas on August 29 was successfully executed the next day. The Greek forces fled. The Greek forces would try to hold on at Uşak as a last resort, but they would not be able to escape their destiny (Toynbee-II: 20). Mustafa Kemal examined the battlefield on August 31. He made a final evaluation of the situation with İsmet and Fevzi Pashas and then gave his famous order:

“The armies of the Turkish National Assembly!

On the great field battle of Afyonkarahisar-Dumlupınar, you have proven worthy of our great and generous nation's sacrifices, by destroying the main elements of a tyrannical and conceited army in an unbelievably short time. ...I ask from all of my friends to keep in mind while they advance that there will be more field battles fought in Anatolia, and from everyone to continue displaying their mental power, braveness and patriotism as if we were in a competition.

The Armies! Your first target is the Mediterranean. Forward!” (YDEMİR-II: 487–488)

It was impossible for the Greek army to keep Uşak in their current state. When the Turkish cavalries entered the Greek headquarters at Uşak on September 2, they had left too few moves for Trikopolis. The Turkish army had taken General Trikopolis and the general staff committee prisoner, and the final fragments of morale were replaced by hopelessness. The Greek soldiers fled toward İzmir. setting the villages they passed ablaze. Martino claims that

the Greek losses reached 68,000 during the war, and 17,000 Greek soldiers were taken prisoner by the Turkish forces (Martino: 138).

Conclusion: Mustafa Kemal at İzmir

The Turkish army advanced without serious resistance after Uşak. On September 4 the proposal came for a truce—in return for the evacuation of the Greek soldiers from Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal Pasha sent the Turkish response to the president of executive deputies, RaufOrbay. He wrote that there was no need for a truce over Anatolia anymore, as the Greek army had already been destroyed. The army reached the Mile line on September 6 and Manisa on September 8. The Turkish army took İzmir on September 9 and liberated Bursa on September 10. Meanwhile, the İtilaf states at İzmir had sent a message to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, negotiating the handing over of the city to the Turks. Mustafa Kemal accepted the proposal. They would meet at Kemalpaşa on September 9. Mustafa Kemal mockingly describes the event in *Speech*:

“On my answer, I had informed him that we could meet at Nif on 9 September 1922. I was indeed present at Kemalpaşa (Nif) on that day, but the ones who wanted the meeting were not. Because, our armies had reached the first target I had set for them, Akdeniz (the Mediterranean Sea), on the quay of İzmir.” (ATATURK-II: 903)

Upon entering the city, he toured the waterfront part of İzmir and then he visited the Kramer Hotel. The war had been won, and this victory was worth celebrating. Mustafa Kemal lived a colorful life and knew how to live at war and at peace. Thereon the Turkish will begin to think about the peace process and the revolutions period which will come afterwards in order to form a modern state.

References:

- Atay, FalihRıfki, Çankaya, Bates, İstanbul, 1998.
Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal, Nutuk-II, TTK, Ankara, 1999.
Aydemir, ŞevketSüreyya, Tek Adam-II, Remzi, İstanbul,1999.
Dural, A. Baran, Atatürk’ünLiderlikSırları, Yenyüzyıl, İstanbul, 2008.
Dural, A. Baran, His Story, iuniverse, Lincoln, 2007.

Martino, F. Perrone De San, ÖnAsyaDiktatörü Mustafa Kemal veZaferleri, Kamer, İstanbul, 1998.

Mechin, Benoit, Kurt ve Pars, KumSaati, İstanbul, 2001.

Toynbef Arnold J., BirDevletinYenidenDoğuşuTürkiye-II, Cumhuriyet, İstanbul, 2000.