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Book Review

İSMET İNÖNÜ AND THE MAKING OF MODERN TURKEY

**by Faruk Loğođlu, Ankara: Ajans-Türk Basın ve Basım AŞ,
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İsmet İnönü and the Making of Modern Turkey is the outgrowth of Faruk Loğođlu's Ph.D. dissertation drafted at the University of Princeton, USA, under the supervision of Professor Manfred Halpern. Mr Loğođlu cuts a broad swathe through the history of twentieth century Turkey in pursuit of a man who was absorbed in the major national and international questions of his day. This survey is, at its core, a personal and political profile of the eminent statesman İsmet İnönü (1884-1973). At the beginning of the Third Millennium, the image of İnönü, considered the co-founder, along with Kemal Atatürk, of Republican Turkey in 1923, remains largely untarnished. This work is a blending of the portrait of İnönü and historical background. It is the first full-length scholarly evaluation of this unique figure's life and career to appear in any Western language. As the author explains clearly in his foreword (p. v), the purpose of this research is twofold: "to analyse the role of İnönü as a political leader and his impact during a span of more than half a century on the direction taken by Turkey and its people" and "to pin down those contributions by, or threads in, the evolution of Turkey that are specifically attributable or traceable to İnönü."

Individuals are important in political history, and especially in the history of international relations. Politics and diplomacy are, to a considerable extent, to be seen in terms of individual statesmen and the established political élite. This is particularly true in the Turkish case following the First World War. It was the individual who counted; his background, personal belief and character were all of great significance. These individuals are to be judged by their actions. Statesmanship consists in being strong and straight forward. İnönü was such an individual. For almost five decades, he was at the centre of Turkish politics, first as soldier and diplomat and then as executive and politician. Historians have long regarded İnönü as one of Turkey's great presidents. But, it is only within the last few decades or so that they have fully appreciated İnönü's extraordinary complexity and profundity and his continuing importance in terms of foreign as well as domestic affairs. Therefore, Mr Loğođlu's biography of İnönü is most welcome.

Biographies are rather problematic studies. The author should get drawn into the subject if he is to excite the readers' interest, yet the result often tends to one extreme or the other. Drawing the right balance in biographies is not easy. If the author is too sympathetic then the biography is seen as tame and uncritical, while if the work tends to the opposite extreme it is often regarded as unnecessarily hostile and aimed at those interested in improper details. Too often analysis becomes invective, although this can be a good way of increasing sales of a biography. Having said this, Mr Loğođlu has

written a reasonable and critical account of İnönü. Mr Loğođlu's book makes no attempt to hide its vigorous approach to the subject. The author has achieved in this book what has eluded other scholars, both Turkish and non-Turkish: a truthful depiction of İnönü that is neither hagiography nor condescension. This is an enormous success. Mr Loğođlu shows both İnönü's strengths and shortcomings and, above all, allows us to understand his dedication, his courage, his tenacity and his vision. These are the characteristics that the Turks needed to survive the last tormented century.

Every biographer is tempted to place his subject at the centre of the universe, with consequent distortion of the roles of other actors in the scene. Mr Loğođlu does not make this mistake. He resists this temptation for the most part in his treatment of Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes. The author has built on and has given credit to the many biographies of the past, notably Őevket Sűreyya Aydemir's and İbrahim Artuđ's, and has assimilated the exegesis offered by many others with judicious balance. For example, he appreciated without fully accepting the personal insights of Haldun Derin's *Çankaya Őzel Kalemimi Anımsarken* (1933-1951) as he developed İnönü's special relations with Atatűrk and Bayar. But this book is no synoptic essay. It is indeed a fresh interpretation of a magisterial subject. Moreover, it is an authoritative work against which future efforts will be measured.

İsmet İnönü and the Making of Modern Turkey takes the form of an analytical narrative. The organisation of the book is sensible and clear. It is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion. The chapters are arranged thematically within broadly chronological framework.

Mr Loğođlu begins, appropriately enough, with a chapter on the theoretical examination of the relevance of the challenge of change and the role of national leadership in today's society. He then explains the importance of the relationship between the two concepts and relates it to the Turkish case. The author points out İnönü's part in laying down the foundations of modern Turkey, in keeping the Turkish nation out of the Second World War and in bringing democracy to the country. Chapter II gives a fine summary of İnönü's life and career. The book then proceeds in an interesting and sophisticated fashion to analyse İnönü as a soldier, diplomat, executive, statesman and politician in five closely focused chapters.

First, the military stage of his life is discussed. Answers are sought to such questions as to why he chose the military profession, whether he was a good soldier and how it prepared him for his succeeding careers. Next, the period he spent under Atatűrk as the second man in the early years of the Republic is dealt with. The writer refers to his role as the executor and custodian of Kemalist reforms as well as his relationship with the chief of state. This is followed by the stage in İnönü's life where, after successfully keeping the country out of the Second World War, he introduces democracy to Turkey and makes it take root. What the reader encounters in the final chapter is the investigation of İnönü's career as an opposition leader and his efforts to protect parliamentary democracy in particular and enhance Turkish political culture in general. In a brief conclusion, general observations about various aspects of the personality and character of İnönü are outlined and, finally, a succinct description of his deeds and achievements is given.

Without doubt, İsmet İnönü and the Making of Modern Turkey is a work of quite exceptional stature. In just two hundred and thirteen pages of text, Mr Loğođlu accomplishes a remarkably scholarly feat. He treats İnönü as a realist and pragmatist whose actions derived from convictions that did not vary much throughout his long career. Caution and moderation were the watchwords. This portrayal draws on an extensive use of extant primary sources and secondary literature of great diversity,

coupled with the author's own personal interviews with İnönü. The analysis of the themes is well documented, for Mr Loğoğlu has explored in depth the voluminous official statements and speeches of İnönü. Apposite references to contemporary books and articles complement the impressive use of government publications. In a far-ranging but deep probe of an enormous body of material, the life and times of this exceptional personage are studied closely. Mr Loğoğlu's work is based on solid foundations. No stone, it would seem, has been left unturned. Yet still the reader is left to wonder whether there might have been a significant difference in his perception of the subject had the writer resorted to important European and American archival sources.

In the foreword to the volume, Mr Loğoğlu notes that at the time of preparing his doctoral thesis he had been inadequately aware of all the accomplishments of İnönü and their implications (p. vi). This updated, carefully researched and even more carefully argued work successfully remedies those omissions. In the process, it dispels a number of myths and misconceptions about İnönü's foreign policy during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, in particular the incorrect idea that he failed to capitalise on the opportunities to gain control of the Eastern Aegean islands that the Germans vacated. Mr Loğoğlu encounters the delusions by demonstrating that the Germans were not in a position to offer the control of these islands to Turkey. He is almost certainly right in stating that even if a deal had been struck, the victors after the war would surely not have consented to Turkish sovereignty over these islands (p. 77). The author has also taken care to clear away some of the rhetorical clouds of previous generations of historians, abandoning notions, for example of İnönü's 'rancorous' character.

Full of helpful insights, this valuable study provides a summary guide for further inquiries into a host of important and fascinating subjects. At several points, for example, the author calls for more attention to the personality and outlook of İnönü and his role in shaping modern Turkish life. The volume will certainly serve as a stimulus to later undertakings. Political scientist Mr Loğoğlu has produced a book of wide interest to historians.

Mr Loğoğlu offers no fundamentally new or revolutionary ideas. He makes no astonishing revelations. The material gave no scope for such, though throughout an independent and individual judgment is maintained. They are invariably measured and fair-minded. His opinions and interpretations are in general sympathetic and sound. Of course, they will not please every reader. There is always room for differences, especially of emphasis. Perhaps a more critical analysis of the earlier research might have produced more substantive findings. Also, there are some aspects of İnönü's life that one would like to see further elucidated. For instance, his battle performance as a military commander during the First World War can thus bear further scrutiny. In addition, one would like to know more about the second man of the Republic as a patron of the arts.

The limitations of the monograph may be briefly mentioned. The most significant is Mr Loğoğlu's heavy reliance on İnönü's recollections, letters, and his official statements and speeches. This, together with the author's ample use of material from İnönü's family might cause scholars to question the objectivity of the approach of the study. But in the present reviewer's opinion, Mr Loğoğlu received and treated these sources carefully. In a few instances, technical problems distracted me. The book includes a selected bibliography, though there is no index or chronology, and nor are there any maps, illustrations, prints, cartoons, charts or documents, which as appendixes would have greatly enhanced its value. The bibliography is impressive and warrants only a few minor critical observations. It is a pity that the author did not list the old book by Franz Weber, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War* or the

much more recent study by Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: a Modern History*. İsmet İnönü's *Turkey: Ten Eventful Years, 1938-1947* is also absent in Mr Loğoğlu's bibliography. Besides, the book contains a number of misspellings and typographical errors that the attentive reader would immediately recognise. The author is not to be blamed, but the same cannot be said for the editor he thanks so profusely. Still, these minor criticisms do not mar the scholarly worth of the work or its usefulness to those who seek a concise study of İnönü and his attainments.

Mr Loğoğlu's vintage survey is a most significant effort and is the result of many years of unremitting research and thinking on three continents. It is an informative, enlightening, stimulating and thought-provoking first-rate book, written in a spirit of intellectual inquiry that should - but, alas, only rarely does - animate such work. The author has given a lively and erudite account of İnönü and his service to Turkey and we will probably learn little more until the Turkish archives are available. Whether one agrees with most of Mr Loğoğlu's interpretation or not, his opus is a most valuable addition to our understanding of the second President of the Republic of Turkey and a real contribution to our knowledge of the recent Turkish past. This book is a fruitful and formidable achievement with much value in it and the İnönü Foundation is to be congratulated for having published it. It is also safe to say that this tome will take its place as an indispensable source for all future studies of İnönü.

This is not only a notable distinction in the producing of biography but a significant contribution to the literature on Turkey since very few works in English have appeared in recent times on Turkish contemporary history. A political scientist, the author has written an excellent political history of Turkey between 1923 and 1973 that no scholar of Balkan and Middle Eastern affairs in the twentieth century can ignore. It is, in fact, the best available source in English for anyone desiring to learn about İnönü and the making of modern Turkey. The book also performs a great service in putting this major Turkish statesman in his rightful position in history.

This interpretative essay deserves a wide-reading audience, both among those concerned with the life and career of İnönü and those interested in Turkey of the period. For the historian of twentieth century Turkish politics, a close reading of Faruk Loğoğlu's worthwhile book will prove richly rewarding. Undoubtedly, this standard work will remain the definitive study in English on İnönü for years to come.
