

Weiker, Walter F. *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961*. Washington D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1963, 172 pp.

The conventional role of the armed forces consists of protecting the state from external threats; that of preserving the state from internal threats—usually posed by the ruled and directed against the rulers. It may happen, however, that the armed forces, in times of acute civil crisis (to which external factors may also contribute) take over the classical police role, as witness today the situation in South Vietnam. Rare, though, are the cases when the armed forces assume the role of policing not the ruled but the rulers. One such case appears to have been the Turkish military coup of May 27, 1960, whose occurrence and after-effects are the subjects of Walter F. Weiker's book. Acting in the guise of policemen when the politicians in what essentially was a biparty system were resorting to violent methods in their dealings with each other—or, rather, when the party in power was using violence against the Opposition—the armed forces intervened, seeking to act as arbiters and referees between the contending parties and as guardians of threatened democratic institutions. Then, in fulfillment of the promises made at the time of the takeover, the military junta, under General Cemal Gürsel, proceeded to arrange the drafting of a new constitution—duly approved by a referendum on July 9, 1961—and conducted national elections, relinquishing thereafter the reins of rule to civilian leadership—while remaining always in the background, watchful, with Gürsel now as President of Turkey's Second Republic, and Ismet İnönü, the veteran politician of the Republican People's Party, maintaining a balance between the educated political elements who favor planned development, and the party that represents the mass of the people, the Justice Party, an avatar of the late Adnan Menderes's Democratic party.

In this study (which once again testifies to the profound interest of Americans in Turkish affairs), the author, after a brief account of Turkish political developments since the establishment of the First Republic by Kemal Atatürk, analyses the outstanding features of the rule of the National Unity Committee from the time of the overthrow of the Menderes regime until the resumption of civilian government after the elections of October 12, 1961. In separate chapters, he deals with the trial of members of the former regime; the problems of academic freedom and higher education; constitution-making; the new parties; and the character of the Turkish military as rulers. In a concluding chapter he remarks on the impact of the National Unity Committee's work on Turkish political developments, on the revolution as compared to other military revolutions, and on this revolution in relation to United States foreign policy.

While this reviewer has little to quarrel about the contents of this study, he takes exception with the characterization of the coup as

a revolution. It was, rather, in the nature of a *reform* coup under which the military, after taking over power, co-operated with civilian groups and brought about certain reforms primarily in the political and economic set up—not in the social structure, as Weiker himself indicates, somewhat deplorably. Neither land reform nor improved education, as he notes, “got far off the drawing boards” (p. 155). And though the setting up of State Planning Organization appears to be an important step in future economic development, the changes were mainly of a political nature and focused around the constitution—with the introduction, for example, of a bicameral legislature and the establishment of a Constitutional Court which is empowered to review the constitutionality of laws and the By-Laws of the Grand National Assembly—the election law (introducing Proportional Representation for the first time in Turkey), and the party system.

At the core of the whole episode, the author holds, there lies the issue of secularism as against traditional Turkish Muslim values, the revival of which, in a multiparty system stimulating competition for votes among a predominantly agrarian, illiterate and backward population, appeared to loom ever larger on the political horizon, as the Democratic Party sought to entrench itself in power. The Turkish nation, he notes (p. 89), “has not at any time in the past voted for the representatives of rapid reform.” And, though belonging to the school of thought that accepts the view that since Atatürk a tradition has been established for the dissociation of the Turkish armed forces from politics (as against the theory that Turkish officers have never accepted the legitimacy of their separation from politics), he acknowledges (p. 138) that the armed forces—more properly he should have said “officers”—“clearly showed that they are part of that new middle class which values progress, but values political democracy as well.” The criterion of the success of the new regime he sees in economic and social progress. “The non-coercive road to democracy, at least in Turkey, is long and hard,” he points out.

A political scientist will react negatively to the author's loose use of the term “sovereignty of Parliament” as applied to the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, and to the term “parliamentary system” as applied to the constitution of 1924. And the reader will be annoyed by the wrong date (1960 instead of 1961) given for the referendum, in Appendix B. Of interest for the student of international politics is the lack of exogenous factors in the coup—whether this is just a matter of appearance, only later histories might show; the acute bipolarization among Turkish politicians prior to the coup—a bipolarization that did not coincide with worldwide bipolarization between West and East; and the inclusion in the new Turkish Constitution of a definition of that rather elusive though potent factor of international life: nationalism.

Hunter College, New York

STEPHEN G. XYDIS