

National myths and self-narrations: Mustafa Kemal's Nutuk and Halide Edib's Memoirs and The Turkish Ordeal.

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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National Myths and Self-Narrations:

Hülya Adak

Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), the commander-in-chief of the Nationalist Army in the Independence Struggle of Turkey and the first president of the Turkish Republic, delivered his seminal speech entitled *Nutuk* [The speech] in 1927 in Ankara to the Congress of the Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası (Republican People's Party).¹ *Nutuk* was epic in proportion and content. Delivered by Mustafa Kemal over six days for a duration of thirty-six hours and thirty-one minutes (October 15–20, 1927), *Nutuk* described the heroic accounts of the Independence Struggle of Turkey against the Allies (1919–1922), particularly the military leadership of Mustafa Kemal during the Struggle, with much hyperbole. The speech foregrounded the role of its narrator in Turkish history at the expense of defaming or ignoring the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph, the roles of the leading figures in the nationalist struggle and the establishment of the republic. Such figures included former leaders of the Terakkîperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (Progressive Republican Party), the opposition party to the Republican People's Party, such as Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Refet Bele, Caffer Tayyar Egilmez, Hüseyin Rauf [End Page 509] Orbay, and Dr. Adnan Adıvar. *Nutuk*, a vindication of the closing of the Progressive Republican Party and the establishment of Mustafa Kemal's single-party regime, was also a justification of the acts of the Independence Tribunals, which, in 1926, ordered the arrest and/or execution of former PRP members (and prominent surviving Unionists) after the attempt to assassinate Mustafa Kemal, regardless of whether the accused were plotters or not in the assassination.

Immediately after the delivery of *Nutuk*, a number of letters of defense and alternative autobiographies were written by some of Mustafa Kemal's political opponents, including Kazım Karabekir Pasa, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Dr. Rıza Nur, and Halide Edib Adıvar. After 1925, however, not only the political opposition but also its press was silenced, so that these articles did not enjoy publicity in Turkey. Some of the autobiographies were not published in Turkey until the 1960s, while some were published only recently.² With alternative accounts of the history of the period silenced, for decades *Nutuk* monopolized the writing of the history of the Independence Struggle of Turkey as well as the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

One autobiography written as a response to *Nutuk* was by a prolific woman writer and political figure, who, at the time *Nutuk* was delivered, was, with her second husband Dr. Adnan Adıvar, in self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom. This woman writer, Halide Edib, had been influential in the Turkish nationalism movement a decade before the Independence Struggle. In 1910, Edib, who had embraced Turanism, was called "The Mother of the Turk" among the pan-Turanistic organizations Türk Ocakları (Turkish Homelands). Her early novels—*Raik'in Annesi* [Raik's mother] (1909), *Seviyye Talip* (1912), *Yeni Turan* [New Turan] (1912), *Handan* (1912), *Son Eseri* [His/Her last work] (1913), *Mev'ut Hüküm* [The decree] (1917–1918)—some explicitly narrating her Turanist ideology (*Yeni Turan*), others dealing with different facets of women's issues in Ottoman society, such as polygyny, had been received with wide acclaim.³ At the end of World War I, Edib vouched for the American mandate for the Ottoman Empire, arguing that this was the only solution if the territories held by the Ottoman Empire were not to be compromised. Further, the American protectorate would entail, according to Edib, siding with a stronger power than Europe, which would protect Turkey from the threats of the Christian minorities who were being empowered by the Allies.

In March 1920, Adnan and Edib, convinced that the only solution for [End Page 510] the salvation of the Ottoman Empire lay in armed resistance against the Allies, secretly escaped...

Hülya Adak

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