

Ataturk and Inonu – Every Stamp is an Adventure

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A large plastic bag full of foreign stamps had been given to me some years ago. There are well over 1,000 stamps and none appear to date after the 1970s. The bag came to light during a “clean-out” and I decided to go through them one-by-one and view them with a large illuminated magnifier. The stamp illustrated here came up and it amused me.

Obviously an early photograph had been used for the design. The stamp itself was issued in 1943, but the photo was taken much earlier; probably 1914 or so. I imagined the photographer asking the two individuals to sort of stand still. It’s a very sterile photo, and hardly a good image for a stamp. Time, however, has a way of giving things a totally different “value” and such was the case with this photo.

The men shown on the stamp are Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881–1938) and Isomet Inonu (1884–1973). They were both officers in the Turkish Army. Ataturk went on to become the first President of Turkey (term 1923–1938); and Inonu the second (term 1938–1950). Both men are held in great respect in Turkey and volumes have been written about them.

It is believed that Ataturk was a Freemason; initiated in 1907 in Lodge Vents, Salonica, Turkey (warranted by the French Grand Orient). We are told that some member of his cabinet were also Freemasons, and during his term as president, some sixty Members of Parliament were Masons.

In looking at the life of Ataturk, I was surprised, and actually pleased, with one of his quotations:



I have no religion, and at times I wish all religions at the bottom of the sea. He is a weak ruler who needs religion to uphold his government; it is as if he would catch his people in a trap. My people are going to learn the principles of democracy, the dictates of truth and the teachings of science. Superstition must go. Let them worship as they will; every man can follow his own conscience, provided it does not interfere with sane reason or bid him against the liberty of his fellow-men.

Keep in mind that having no religion does not preclude belief in a supreme being; it just points to a disbelief in organized religion. Taking that into account, what we have here is precise Masonic philosophy. CLM