ISLAMIC DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE AND THE
CHALLENGE OF POWER SHARING IN
TWENTIETH CENTURY TURKEY

ABSTRACT

Thesis Submitted for the award of the degree of
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(POLITICAL SCIENCE)

by
Ms SHAFQAT ARA SIDDIQI

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
Dr. S. SHAMIR HASSAN

CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

Modern Turkey emerged out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, which was famous for its grandeur and which extended over on three continents. Religion was the cohesive bond, which cemented different ethnic entities and religious groups together. However, during the 19th and 20th centuries diverse people, who were influenced by the ideas of the French revolution and to some extent dissatisfied with the Ottoman administration struggled to carve nation states out of the Ottoman Empire.

In the early and mid 19th century a rising Muslim Intellectual class attempted to respond to the European threat to the Ottoman Empire through internal, westernizing reform. This was the beginning of Tanzimat. The reforms of Tanzimat in the sphere of civilian and military bureaucracy, education and the judiciary aimed to strengthen the central state and arrest its decline and disintegration. At the same its secularizing influence did weaken the religious establishments and caused a serious split within the state between the Ulema and the bureaucratic elements.
Its impact was that on the one hand, battles with insurgent nationalities encouraged a sense of cohesion among the remaining peoples and territories while on the other hand, at the end of 20th Century, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to mainly Turks and other Muslims and this culminated in the fierce Turkish nationalism.

The World War I, destroyed the Ottoman Empire and set in motion the events that ended the Osmani Sultanate and Caliphate. The only major Turkish military victory of the war occurred at Gallipoli in which the Turkish commander, Mustafa Kemal, emerged from the war as the only victorious Turkish general. Thus after a period of more than a century of violent struggles, the Ottoman Empire, though deprived of its Arab and European provinces rose again in the form of legitimate nation state.

In fact, after the successful termination of the War of Independence (1919-1922) the task of Kemal and his followers was to transform Turkey into a modernized, industrialized and secularized nation state. They did not feel the need to maintain elements of traditional culture as has been the case with the most nationalist leaders of developing countries. Neither was religion used to mobilize the masses in Turkey
as has been and is still the case in such countries as Iran, and Libya. Here Kemalist idea of a national community ran counter to the Islamic conception of a community, which is essentially religious. Kemal and his colleagues viewed the inherent characteristics of Ottoman culture as impediments to nation building and to the assertion and development of Turkish culture. The reforms undertaken involved the liberation of the nation from foreign control and influence, religious control and theocratic allegiance. These reforms were aimed at strengthening the nation, as well as to secularize the Turkish state and society along with the realization of political participation and bringing about changes in the socio-economic structure of the country.

They had already perceived the exploitation of religion, Islam by the Ulema to foster their own corrupt and retrogressive establishments. They saw these establishments as a link to a discredited past and as a barrier to economic progress and modernization. The Ottoman era and everything associated with it, except a few glorious moments of conquest and imperial grandeur, was condemned or discounted in history books and official parlance.
In addition to Kurds who are forced to come to urban centers, large number of peasants leave the countryside in search of better life in cities. They mostly bring with them Islamic customs. The absence of infrastructure and job for these uprooted peasants is reflected in the shantytowns spreading in major Turkish cities.

These problems have led to create an atmosphere of crises and have led to an enormous vacuum into which Islam and the Welfare Party accommodated well, promising the dispossessed the social justice and an opportunity for a better life. The growing failure of Turkey’s ruling military and other political parties who are mainly accused of corruption and nepotism have failed to solve these problems and did not come with some concrete economic policies, which would redress the grievances of these masses. This is the main reason causing more and more Turks to seek salvation in Islam and particularly Erbakan’s Welfare Party, which has promised to mitigate their sufferings. In the process, the masses of dispossessed turned to Welfare Party as the only alternative to express their aspiration and grievances.

Welfare Party came to power after 1995 general elections not through revolution of Turkish politics but through ballot, contesting elections. It
has stirred the Western countries who think Turkey had gone in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists. At the domestic front also, military too did not approve of its policies and intervened once again in Turkish politics in 1997 and forced the Welfare Party out of the power which mostly think is an undemocratic way.

The rise of political Islam in Turkey has its impact on national and international affairs. Turkey’s relations with West were thought to get strained and apprehensions were expressed that Turkey, which has till then friendly relations with United States, might not be its ally any more. Furthermore Turkey’s application for membership of European Union was viewed in the perspective of religious revivalism.
Soon after the Republic was proclaimed with Kemal as its President, the republican regime began a concerted attempt to create a secular state along European lines discarding religion almost for private use.

They undertook many administrative reforms to change society and facilitate secularism, which however, remained basically limited to urban centers, which contained only twenty percent of the Turkish population at the time. Until the 1950’s the bulk of Turkey’s rural population remained untouched, isolated and traditional, while in the cities modernity permeated most aspects of social life. This change created a volatile social fabric where the new and old, the modern and the traditional and the secular and the anti-secular, lived side by side.

The expectation of the secular ruling elite that the policies of the 1920’s and 1930’s would diminish the role of religion in public life did not materialize. As early as 1925, religious grievances came to the forefront which was one of the main reasons of the rebellion of Sheikh Said, an uprising in Southeastern Turkey that may have claimed as many as 30,000 lives before being suppressed.

With the onset of multi party system and the relaxation of authoritarian political control in 1946, large numbers of people began to call openly
for a return to traditional religious practices. During the 1950's certain political parties found it expedient to join religious leaders and bring to some extent Islamization of society and advocated adjustment of religion and religious precepts along with the state affairs.

The demand for restoration of religious education in public schools began in the late 1940's. The government initially responded by authorizing religious instructions in state schools for those students whose parents requested it. Under Democratic Party rule during the 1950's, religious education was made compulsory in secondary schools unless parents made a specific request to have their children excused. Government also setup secondary schools (Imam – hatip Okullari) for the training of imams and preachers. Initially these schools grew very slowly but their numbers expanded rapidly to more than 250 during the 1970s, when the pro-Islam National Salvation Party participated in coalition governments.

After the 1980 coup, the military although secular in orientation, viewed religion as an effective means to counter socialist ideas and thus authorized the construction of ninety more imam hatip high
schools. Thus military regime also favoured the use of religion to be taught more widely in schools.

In short during the 1970’s and 1980s, Islam experienced a kind of political rehabilitation because right-of-centre secular leaders perceived religion as a potential bulwark in their ideological struggle with left-of-centre secular leaders.

The state’s more tolerant attitude towards Islam encouraged the proliferation of private religious activities, including the construction of new mosque and Quranic schools in cities as well as the establishment of Islamic centers for research on and conferences about Islam and its role in Turkey besides the establishment of religiously oriented professional and women’s journals.

Despite strong control over politics, populist nationalism and religious revivalism started to emerge during this time. Religious organizations, which had surfaced in the 1960’s mushroomed in the 1970s. Different Tarikats and Sufi orders remerged. The role-played by Tarikats and other religious orders in the revival of Islam cannot be ignored and disregarded. The two mentionable committees Nurcus and Fethullahci are well known. The Fethullahci, which have a broad network of
religious schools in Central Asia as well as in Turkey, help in disseminating religious affairs in the Turkic region.

The revival of Islam in contemporary Turkey has questioned the legitimacy of secularism. It is still not interested in reconciliation with the forces of modernity. In essence, the Islamic idea of legitimacy negates both secular legitimacy and secular authority. In these religious groups an aversion to Kemal Ataturk can be easily discerned. The modernizing and secularizing policies of the Kemalist era and Turkey’s Westernization process during his presidency are viewed as having been contradictory to the interests of Islam and to have alienated the Turks from their Islamic Ottoman heritage by bringing Turkey closer to the West.

These religiously oriented groups sought salvation in political Islam. For these groups, the nation should not be a secular political entity but rather a community of believers. Because of the highly religious nature of these parties, they have usually been banned once they gained any sort of popularity. But these are an important force as they continue to rise under different guises. The first such party, the National Order Party, was closed down for becoming too aggressive and vocal. It
emerged later as National Salvation Party and was subsequently banned by military government after the 1980 coup. Then again it emerged under the name of Welfare Party.

The record is quite clear that it is the country’s armed forces and their security agencies, which are the ultimate arbiter in politics. The militia regards itself as the constitutional protector of the state, so exercises substantial but indirect influence over government policy and actions of politics.

Since the installation of the multiparty regime in 1945, the military, as the guardian of the Ataturkian principles intervened in politics three times (in 1960-61, 1971-1973 and in 1980-83) to ‘clean up the mess created by politicians’ in general and to safeguard the principles of republicanism and secularism in the Turkish policy in particular.

Turkey’s population is predominantly Muslim, which constitutes 99% of the total population. There is a population explosion with a massive unemployment with 4 out of 10 people unemployed. Its 70% population is under 30 years of age. Inflation is about 35%, which eats away the income of the workers.
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This is to certify that work in this thesis entitled “ISLAMIC DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE AND THE CHALLENGE OF POWER SHARING IN TWENTIETH CENTURY TURKEY” is an original work of Ms. Shafqat Ara Siddiqi.

The present work is suitable to be submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in West Asian Studies, (Political Science), Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India).

Dr. S. SHAMIR HASSAN
(SUPERVISOR)
Dedicated
to my
Beloved Mother
CONTENTS

Preface  i-vi
Maps     vii-viii

CHAPTER:
I  Ottomans and the awakening in the
   nineteenth century: a prelude to the republic  1-29
   Tanzimat
   Hamidian Absolutism and
   the Young Turks Movement

CHAPTER:
II  Turkish Nationalism and its Significance  30-80
   Evolution
   Ziya Gokalp and the Theory of Turkish Nationalism
   Nationalism and The Republic
       Nationalizing Education
       Republican Nationalism and the Religious Ethos
       Nationalizing Language
       Importance Given to Family Names

CHAPTER:
III  Secularization of Turkey Under  81-120
     Mustafa Kemal
     Abolition of Sultanate
     Abolition of Caliphate
     Abolition of the Office of Sheik-ul-Islam
     Impact on Religion and Society
     Abolition of Millet System

CHAPTER:
IV  State and Islam in Post Kemalist Turkey  121-177
   State and Religion in Multiparty Period
       The Democratic Party (1950 – 60)
       The Military Regime (1960 – 61)
       The Justice Party Period (1961 – 80)
       The Islamic Parties of 1970 – 80
       1980 Military Coup and Post 1980’s Period
   Secular Vs Islamic
CHAPTER:
V The reassertion of religious institutions and parties in Turkish democracy 178-228
The State and Religion
The Sufi Orders, Tarikats and other Communities
The Turkish Democracy
Welfare Party: Rise and Demise

CHAPTER:
VI Conclusion: Turkey at the Crossroads 229-243

Bibliography 244-257
Preface
More than 75 years after the foundation of Turkish Republic, the Kemalist legacy has been challenged from within and without. The rise of recently banned Welfare Party to power in 1996, had attracted worldwide attention towards it. It was thought that Turkey where the most radical secular revolution of any state in Muslim world had occurred is facing an Islamic fundamentalist challenge to its secular basis.

This study is an attempt to analyze the changes and events occurring in the twentieth century Turkey, which has its antecedents in Ottoman Empire where Islam was the cohesive bond between its different entities. Its transformation to the secular republic founded by Kemal Ataturk and then again the revival of Islamic sentiments has made Turkey’s politics an interesting subject to study.

In order to discern the nature of Ottoman-Turkish continuities, this study initially deals with a brief account of the basic structure of Ottoman Empire and the process of its disintegration, which was, hastened by the influence of Western ideas and modern education
which in turn led to social and cultural awakening of the Turks. The social transformation, Europe was undergoing in the nineteenth century, as well as the compelling reforms in the Ottoman Empire undertaken during Tanzimat, to modernize the Empire in order to combat the internal and external threat is also discussed in the first chapter of this study. The Young Turks revolution, which is characterized by its fierce national movement in the period, when three ideologies namely Islamism, Ottomanism and Turkism co-existed, has also been brought to light in this chapter.

Thus chapter one provides the setting for the next chapter that deals with the study of Turkish Nationalism, which as a dynamic concept has flourished in Turkey and shaped its destiny. Its development can be seen clearly inter-twined with the social, political, ideological and linguistic forces, which culminated in the synthesis of this concept with nation building. In this regard Ziya Gokalp’s thinking and ideology that provides the intellectual base for Turkish nationalism is also dealt with in chapter second.

After establishing the Republic, the concept of nationalism gained momentum. The nationalization of the Republic and its various aspects,
under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is deliberately included in this chapter, in order to make our analysis pertinent.

Chapter three of this study focuses on the Kemal’s secularizing and modernizing reforms which saved Turkey from total annihilation after dissolution and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter four analyzes the re-emphasis of Islamic sentiments which began with the transition to the multiparty period and the contribution made by various political parties in accommodating religion with the state. It also highlights the arguments of the supporters and opponents of Kemalism which has come to light ever since Kemal pursued his Westernizing and modernizing policies.

The recent rise of political Islam in Turkey which is examined in terms of a complex interplay between four major processes: the policies of the parties on the center right towards religion, state sponsored religious activities and education, the consolidation of establishments of Islam, the impact of Sufi orders and communities, and the growing organizational strength and electoral base of the Islamist Welfare Party. The study of all these factors is elaborately dealt with in chapter five.
The political confrontation between secularists and Islamic forces, the corruption scandals of its political elite, the accusation of wide spread nepotism, the high budget deficit and rising inflation happen to be the characteristics of the present political system of Turkey.

Both domestic conflicts and international changes demand a re-orientation of Turkey’s policies. The revival of Islamic sentiments and the Islamist Welfare Party had its impact and implication on the Turkey’s domestic policies in general and on foreign policies in particular. In the last and sixth chapter an effort has been made to sum up the impacts of all these internal and external upheavals. Further more, study of each chapter has given rise to some conclusions, which have also been incorporated in this chapter in a cumulative way.

While working on this study I had unstinted and encouraging support of my supervisor Dr. S. Shamir Hassan. I wish to thank him profusely for his able guidance.

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My source of inspiration has been my *Taaya*, late Mr. G.H. Inqilabi, the man with the slogan, ‘spread the light and dispel the darkness’ and whose campaign was against intellectual starvation.

At this juncture, I fondly remember my late beloved mother who tried to inculcate in us the precious combination of undaunted intellectual courage with the sense of reality and responsibility.
I also express my thanks to my father and other family members for their moral support and sustained encouragement, which enabled me to carry out my work uninterruptedly and harmoniously.

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Shafqat Ara Siddiqi
Map 1. Turkey at the beginning of the 21st Century
Expansion of the Ottoman Empire

Map 2. The Ottoman Empire 1683
Map 3. The Ottoman Empire 1914
Chapter - i
OTTOMANS AND THE AWAKENING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A PRELUDE TO THE REPUBLIC

Ottoman Empire, which extended over three continents, was famous for its grandeur. There are different versions of the origin of Ottomans but it was usual to trace their genealogy to the tribe of Kayi Khan, a branch of the Oguz Turks, in turn according to legend, descendants of Japhet, son of Noah. It is generally believed that they were forced to migrate under Mongol pressure, from their home in Central Asia to eastern Anatolia, and after turbulent years of raids and wanderings, their settling was under Ertugul, in the domains of the Seljukid ruler, Ala al-din. It was Ertugul's son, Osman who was the actual founder of the Ottoman state.

The Turkish people, according to the writers, was not a newcomer to the family of nations. It was rather a very old race, which had since ancient times spread under different names in large areas. They had close relations with the ancient Iranians, and were known to the

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Greeks and the children of Israel. Thousands of years before the Islamic era they had already conquered the regions of India, Turan, Iran and Babylonia.¹

Being in close contact with the centers of civilization, they served as intermediaries between the cultures of different people. While they inhabited Turkestan they constituted the link between China and Iran, and served to transmit the fruits of civilization of each to other. They rendered the very same service in Western Asia by acquainting the Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians with one another.²

Similarly their contribution to Islam was also great. According to history writers the Turks are credited with the spread and defence of Islam, as well as its internal revival especially since decadence and disintegration began to threaten the Islamic world in the later centuries of Abbasid rule. No doubt, Islam originated with Arabs and it was the Arabs who conquered vast lands of the Islamic Empire and spread Islamic civilization. But the Arab Caliphate eventually grew weak and powerless, and it was the Turks who stepped in at a moment of crisis

² Ibid
to Islam, and who ruled and protected the Islamic countries and peoples in the East and West ever since.

According to Midhat, the first pure Turks to appear in Islamic history were the Seljuks and the Seljuks are to be credited with the spreading of the Turkish race throughout the Muslim world, they strengthened once again the Abbasid Caliphate, after it had disintegrated and grown incapable of upholding the position of Islam in the world. The same author adds that they blocked the expansion of Byzantium, which had taken advantage of Muslim weakness, and they stood up to the challenge of the crusaders.¹ However, the services of the Turks to Islam reached its highest degree under the Ottomans. The Ottoman’s expanded the domain of Islam to new territories and created the strongest and most stable Islamic state the world had ever known and a major achievement of the Ottomans was their success in uniting the Sultanate and the Caliphate, which had long existed as separate institutions.

The Ottoman Empire was a polyglot, multiethnic state governed by a remarkably cosmopolitan though profoundly Islamic ruling elite. Until the eighteenth century, a majority of the Sultan’s subjects were non-

Muslims. The organization and administration of the state centered around the classic Millet system in which each religious community was legally recognized through its own character, governed by its own religious law, and led by its own religious leader. The religious leaders of each Millet acted as judges for their own people and intermediaries between them and the state.¹ Turks, Kurds, Arabs and other Muslims belonged to the Muslim Millet, while Jews belonged to the Jewish Millet and so on. Taxation varied for each Millet. Non-Muslim were always taxed at a higher rate than Muslim, and the religious leaders generally performed the function of tax collector.²

S. Mardin perceives that this segmented Ottoman society served to retard the growth of secondary structure, thereby reinforcing the dominant role of religion in society.³

There was yet another basic social stratification of the Empire which divided its people in two main groups. The first group, called askeri (military) represented the Ottoman state elite to whom the Sultan had

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delegated religious or executive powers and this class included army, civil servants and Ulema. This class was privileged and was entirely exempt from taxation.¹ The second group was reaya, comprising the bulk of Muslims and non-Muslim who were taxed.

The Ottoman state was a military encampment for the propagation of Islam. The Sultans had not only expanded the daral-salam, the territory of Islam, but they had become powerful because of victorious campaigns and had enriched the empire through tribute and booty. But the Empire was gradually shocked because of the steady defeats in the later part of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.²

This made Ottomans feel insecure and threatened on three fronts: economically, because of loss of revenue; politically, because of loss of power; and psychologically, because of their inability to expand the realm of Islam.

Furthermore, when the Empire entered into early nineteenth century, it was undergoing the process of decaying. The increasing feudalisation of the Ottoman administration, the military defeats and weak internal

¹ Inalcik, H. 'Turkey, The Nature of the Traditional Society', in Ward and Rustow (eds.), Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey, Princeton 1964, pp. 43-44.
security was weakening the empire from within. Moreover the European economic transformation and revolution had a considerable impact on the traditional order\(^1\) of the Ottoman Empire. During the nineteenth century the regional leaders monopolized the political and economic power resources at hand and initiated processes of regional state formations and from the Ottoman perspective, we may perceive the feudalisation of the Ottoman Empire as a process of monopolization which was one of the driving forces for the modern state formation in West Asia and the Balkan’s.\(^2\) The emergence of the modern political landscape of West Asia was substantially due to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

The de facto independence of Egypt under Mohammad Ali (1805-48) and his occupations of Ottoman provinces in Syria and Cecilia (1831-40), the search for autonomy of the Lebanese Emir Bashir Shihab II (1788-1840) and the modernization and formation of an Independent Tunisia under Ahmat Bey (1837-55) are some examples of it. Besides there were dramatic events in Empire’s European provinces which included Serbian revolts of 1804-6 and 1815-17, the Greek War of


Independence (1821-29), the rebellions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1857 and 1875 and the subsequent uprising in Bulgaria 1876.

Thus during the nineteenth century, Turkey’s international and internal situation was steadily deteriorating, for the Empire was dragged into a multilateral power struggle among political entities that is states, proto states, local principalities, ethnic and religious groups all of which were fighting for independence.

These events may be also attributed to the social and political change in the outlook of the Ottomans which was brought by Westernization into which the Empire entered in the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century. This shook the very foundations of the Ottoman Empire. The contacts with the West resulted in the culmination of the concepts of nation, freedom, homeland, and equality.¹ Thus beginning with the successful Greek uprising in the 1820’s the Ottoman Empire was no longer facing only threats of

¹ These contacts were established through Ottoman embassies abroad, student missions to Europe and foreign instructors and teachers invited to Turkey to manage and staff new schools. Kushner, David Op.Cit; p. 3.
encroachment from the outside, but also threats of disintegration from within.¹

**Tanzimat**

There was profound effect of Western ideas on the Christian peoples living in the Empire who were becoming now increasingly restless and were demanding rights of freedom and equality, which hitherto had been denied them. Since the Empire was weak and also the struggle against it was backed by foreign powers, so it saw itself beset by external conspiracy and internal betrayal². Thus to combat the internal and external threat, some reforms especially in the military were carried out. These reforms materialized in the form of Tanzimat; which were initiated in the last decade of reign of Sultan Mehmood II (1809-39). Thus, it is obvious that the prime reason, that the rulers of the Ottoman Empire in the early and mid nineteenth century wanted to bring reforms in almost all spheres of Empire was an attempt to

¹ Ibid
safeguard the integrity of the Empire in a world that was becoming increasingly dominated by European powers and Western civilization.¹

Mehmood II the greatest of the Turkish rulers since Suleiman the magnificent annihilated in one bold step stroke the corps of Janissaries,² whose influence had become detrimental to the welfare of the Empire. Hence then a series of internal reforms including military and administrative organization followed.

Thus, during this period of turmoil and tribulations, the reforms of the Tanzimat not only aimed to modernize society but also were rather determined by the political events of the day. However, its military reforms were insufficient to enable it to face external threats, and the modernization of the Ottoman administration was unable entirely to contain the internal feudalisation of the state.³

¹ Kushner, David Op.Cit; pp 5-6
² A new military force composed of ‘slaves of the Porte’ was organized by Murad I. These men came to the ruler as his pencik or one one-fifth share of booty captured from the enemy, when these youths came to the Sultan, they were educated in Turkish language, Islam, Arabic and other characteristics of the Ottoman way. Then they were given military training and organized as infantry called ‘yeniceri’ new force, or Janissary corps or as cavalry, called sipahis. Shaw S.J. & Shaw, E.K. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Cambridge, 1976, Vol. I, p. 26.
³ Jung and Piccoli Op.Cit; p. 40
Sultan Mehmood II had appointed a commission to work out comprehensive reforms under the leadership of his minister of foreign affairs, Reshid Pasha considered in many ways the real architect of the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms. Only a few months after the death of Mehmood II, the Hatt-i-Sherif was promulgated by his son and successor, Abdulmecit I (1839-61) in November, 1839. The period after the accession of Abdulmecit I (1839-1861) witnessed many reforms which mainly initiated many of the Mehmood II’s programs and plans and were carried through under the leadership of Mustafa Reshid Pasha, epitome of the men of Tanzimat (Tanzimat Cilar) a group that he created to assist and succeed him eventually in the effort, to transform Ottoman state and society. Reshid Pasha after residing in Paris and London for many years had returned with clear ideas of European progress.

The major political administrative trends of the Tanzimat can be summarized as:

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• the abolishment of the patrimonial system of tax framing and the creation of a monetized and rationalized system to levy taxes;
• the secularization and formalization of education and of the administration of justice;
• the functional differentiation of branches of government;
• an increasing division of the powers of government leading to the establishment of an Ottoman parliament and an Ottoman constitution;
• a differentiation of the means of physical force according to the separate realms of internal and external security;
• the introduction of a new system of provincial administration.

This brief summary of Tanzimat reforms clearly indicates that they wanted transformation from a traditional system towards a legal system of domination. Yet it cannot be denied that these reforms caused massive changes in the social fabric of Ottoman society and these new social forces whose foundations had been laid by the reforms of the administrative, military and educational institutions of the Ottoman state, later played an essential role in the formation of Turkish Republic.

The policy of modernization and reforms designed in this respect was mainly to fill the most conspicuous gaps between the Ottoman Empire
and the West. This policy was a victory for the modernist intelligentsia—chiefly army officers and government officials in the foreign services whose influence expanded further and who found themselves engaged in a struggle with the conservatives.¹

In the *Hatt-i-Sherif* of Gulhane, were enumerated certain measures which would bring the structural changes in the political and economic foundations of the traditional order. The reforms to be carried out may be summarized as: to establish the legal order of a modern state; a guarantee of property and civil rights for all subjects of Sultan irrespective of their religion or sect, the introduction of universal conscriptions and the reduction of the term of military service to four or five years; the reorganization of provincial administration, based on functionaries with fixed salaries and on a clear division between private property and the means of administration. However, in this decree, the reaffirmation of the rights of minority did not materially change the picture.²

Provinces were reorganized according to the French model along with the initiation of a number of other legal transformation. Also in 1850's and 1860's state courts and new secular penal, commercial and maritime codes were introduced alongside the religious Shariat courts based on Islamic law. However, new trade laws enacted were modeled on European examples.

In the second Tanzimat period, Sultan Abdulmecit confirmed the reform measures of the Hatt-i-Sharif of Gulhane and the Tanzimat in general, with a strong emphasis on religious liberty and equality for his non-Muslim subjects. This period is mainly associated with the decree and the promulgation of Hatt-i-Humayun edict of 18\textsuperscript{th} February 1856. This edict guaranteed religious freedom, equal rights for admission to public employment and public schools, generally applicable tax regulations and property laws and laws against corruption, extortion and torture. It also emphasized to take steps to improve the infrastructure of the empire regulations to guarantee unimpeded commerce and trade.

\footnote{Lewis Bernard, Op.Cit; pp. 106-128. Also see Hurewitz, J.C. Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1535-1914, Vo. I, Princeton, 1956, pp. 113-116.}

\footnote{Hurewitz, J.C. Op.Cit; pp. 149-53.}
Thus one essential feature of the second Tanzimat period was the opening of the Ottoman Empire to international trade and foreign capital. Free trade agreements were extended to many European states. Thus opening the Ottoman lands to foreign investment and the Ottoman market freely accessible for the sale of European commodities, depriving Ottoman government of mercantile instruments such as monopolies, taxes and tolls that could have been used to stop a further deterioration of the financial situation of the state.\(^1\) In fact, Ottoman government had already begun borrowing abroad in order to meet the financial difficulties created by the Crimean war (1853-56). Its impact was that only 16 years later, the Empire found itself completely dependent on foreign loans, while debt servicing consumed one-third of its treasury income.\(^2\) As these terms of trade were to extreme disadvantages of the Ottoman economy, and the failure to reform the financial administration of the Empire, led to national bankruptcy in 1875.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Ibid, pp. 67-68.
\(^3\) 45 Percent of the gross amount of money borrowed between 1854 and 1914, was used to liquidate previous debt of the Ottoman governments. Issawci, C. Op.Cit; pp. 362-63.
Thus, *Hatt-i-Sherif* of *Gulhane* and the subsequent *Hatt-i-Humayun* aimed at complete reconstruction of the Ottoman state along Western lines. These reforms virtually abolished absolutism and brought the validity of principles and laws beyond individual caprice and laid the foundation for a constitutional state of modern type. These reforms, deemed as a return to the real spirit of the *Sharia*, canon law of Islam, guaranteed individual liberty for all subjects promised security of person and property and the equality of all Ottomans, irrespective of religion.

Educational programs were developed by specialized committees within the legislative bodies of the time. As a result hundreds of plans reports and programs emerged, pointing towards the creation of a system of secular and utilitarian education to train all Ottomans from the elementary to the most advanced stages. The new system of education, which developed slowly, was opposed by many Ottomans out of reverence for the old or the quite justified fear of what the new schools might bring. So the reforms brought about by the Tanzimat were met with great resistance in the orthodox circles.

This was the time when a new spirit was creeping into the Turkish intelligentsia. Constitutional reforms at this time gave impetus towards
an intellectual renaissance. On the line of the Russian Revolution this intellectual movement remained confined for years among the enlightened aristocrats and officers under European influence. In addition to the reforms introduced by the Sultan, changes were effected on a more widespread demand. The political and the intellectual transformation, the latter expressing itself chiefly in the literacy sphere were two aspects of a single process, as the both sprang from a single source. As the students were sent abroad for studies and Western languages were taught in Turkey, this imbibed a new sprit in the rising literate class.

The literate figure responsible for the transformation of the first intellectual stimulus to positive achievements was Sinasi Effendi. He returned to Constantinople in 1859 after a years study in Paris and published a translation of French poets, which was the first purely literary translation from a Western language into Turkish. In 1960 the publication of first unofficial Turkish newspaper entitled *Tercuman-i-Ahval* (The Interpreter of Circumstances) began, both of these marked an epoch in Turkish literature.
The great increase in Ottoman publications, and especially the development of the press, contributed considerably in disseminating ideas and the aspirations of the common people in a simplified language. Sinasi Effendi was the initiator of this new simplified language through his translation and his newspaper.¹

Not only a new language but also a new world appeared on the horizon in these translations. Matters related to the scientific discoveries and inventions of Europe, which reveal the man’s inquiring spirit, were published. This offered a comparison with the existing conditions in the East and for the first time venerable traditions were judged in a critical spirit.

A new kind of educated bourgeoisies grew in number and kind with the reform process and demanded further participation in state and society. This class emerged out of the modern education, carried by the reform efforts of the Ottoman state, which depended upon the professionalization of the administrative system and therefore modern education. Because during Tanzimat period there was a dramatic

¹ Kushner, David Op.Cit; p. 58.
change in the literacy campaigns as contrast to the traditional lack of interests shown by the Ottoman rulers towards literacy.¹

As Kushner puts it, the expansion of state activities into new spheres, which included the building of a new educational system required that Turkish became an all purpose language, easy to learn and easy to understand² and an effective and clear means of communication between the government and the people.

Thus modernization of the Ottoman state gave rise to a literate public especially in the urban centers of the empire. These Ottomans were generally concerned with the social, cultural and political questions posed by the modernization of Ottoman Society³ and influenced much by the thoughts of Western Europe, which were more liberal. In 1865, a group of these young intellectuals along with the Westernized bureaucrats, journalists and some modern oriented Ulema, began to

¹ Before 1830 the number of books printed did not exceed one hundred even though the first printing press for the dissemination of papers and books among Muslim population came as late as 1927, for the Jewish community was allowed to introduce a press as early as 1493-94, but on the condition they did not print in Turkish or Arabic. See Karpat, Kemal H. ‘The mass media’, in Ward and Rustow (eds.), Op.Cit; 1964, pp. 255-571.
² Kushner, David Op.Cit; p. 56.
³ Mardin, Serif 'Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century', in Benedict et al., (eds.), Turkey, Geography and Social Perspectives, Leiden, 1974, p. 403.
spread their ideas among the literate public.¹ These young intellectuals known as ‘Young Ottomans’ tried to synthesize Islam with the ideals of the enlightenment.

These Young Ottomans were the fore runners of a new brand of young men who were not satisfied with modernizing the machinery of the state only but wanted to establish a constitutional monarchy and revitalize Islam.² Among these the most important intellectual, theoretician and writer of the Young Ottomans was Namik Kemal (d. 1887). He was an effective critic of Tanzimat, which in his opinion had achieved a degree of modernization but had not freed the individuals from internal tyranny nor freed the nation from foreign domination.³

According to Kemal H. Karpat, their thoughts can be divided into three categories. Firstly, the constitutional ideas of the young Ottomans concerned the introduction of a constitutional order and representative institutions, which were to be based on Islamic principles, secondly, they supported the concept of a strong central state and finally, they promoted the idea of a new political identity in which the traditional

³ Ibid.
loyalty to the Millet, the religious community, was to be replaced by the Vatan the fatherland, which is above religious, ethnic or regional divisions.¹

The Young Ottomans were perhaps the first ideologists of Islam in modern times who tried to take best from the West and graft it onto Islam. Together with a group of bureaucrats and officers under the leadership of the former Grand Vezir Midhat Pasha, they formed the core of the Ottoman constitutional movement backed by diplomatic pressure and parts of the Ottoman army, achieved the promulgation of an Ottoman constitution and the establishment of a representative assembly.² Even though the Young Ottoman failed to graft Western ideologies to the body politics of Islam, they were successful in introducing new values to the Turks.

Thus Ottoman society under the impact of modernization became much more diversified than under the traditional social order, for modern forces which evolved during the Tanzimat played progressively major roles in economic, political and cultural sectors of the Empire and there were internal fragmentation among the individual social groups

² Jung & Piccoli Op.Cit; p.45.
such as the Ulema, the bureaucracy of the army, all of these having different interests and committed to either modern or traditional values.

Halide Edib, sums up the impact of reforms in this way, 'The new West had entered the Ottoman world as a method in thought. Institutions were changing, but in accordance with the spirit of the old tradition. The rights of man were regarded as an interpretation of Moslem ideals, and the state did not now observe any distinctions or discriminate in favour of any community in the benevolent institutions it tried to create... Thus one by one-new Western ideas and forms were interpreted, assimilated and incorporated in what Turkey had inherited from the old East, without the old or the new upsetting the balance in its favour'.¹

Nevertheless, Tanzimat inaugurate and endorse an era of reform in the Ottoman Empire, however, it was as much the result of upheavals in the eighteenth century as it was the cause of change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹ Edib, Halide, Conflict of East and West in Turkey, Delhi, 1935, p. 60.
Hamidian Absolutism and the Young Turks Movement

The period of the reign of Abdulhamid (1876-1908) is usually referred to as a period of absolutist or despotic rule. During that period power shifted more and more in the hands of the Sultan and his close entourage in the palaces. Abdulhamid adopted not only a rigid policy of centralization, but came to govern as an autocrat, with his own system of surveillance and spying to safeguard his personal rule. As a result many members of the ruling class were excluded from power and often punished either because of their disloyalty or suspicion thereof.

However, he continued the attempts of the Tanzimat reformers to modernize and centralize the administration and to enforce central state control over the provinces. Educational reforms were extended and empire's communication facilities enhanced the dissemination of newspapers, periodicals and books, though under heavy state

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1. For a brief period after Abdulhamid's ascension, the forces of reform seemed victorious. On Dec. 23, 1876, Midhat Pasha succeeded in including the new Sultan to proclaim a constitution, which guaranteed civil liberties and provided for parliamentary government on general representation but this turned out to be a brief liberal interlude. Jealous of his power, Abdulhamid soon reverted to repressive policies and dismissed and banished Midhat Pasha, and in 1877 prorogued the newly created parliament, suspending the constitution. There after for thirty years he ruled as absolute monarch, Lenczowski, George Op.Cit; p. 44.

censorship and so did the influence of Western ideas, though owing mainly to members of the literate public in exile.\(^1\)

It may be more appropriate to say that the reforms under Abdulhamid served the mobilization of the administrative power of the state, which helped the state to monitor its populace more closely and to secure the Sultan’s domination through enlightened despotism.\(^2\) Moreover, Abdulhamid adopted Islamist policies as an ideology of unity and allowed himself to be influenced and surrounded with Ulema and Sufi Sheikhs notably leaders of religious orders.\(^3\) Thus, with the economic wealth already falling heavily into the hands of Europeans and non-Muslims even the traditional occupation of government now seemed to elude the reach of the elite group. As a matter of fact this elite comprised new groups as the military personnel, lawyers and journalists and gradually they started to voice their grievances and call for a search for new ideological and political answers. There emerged many protest groups of varied manners both within and without the empire having same ideology, which were soon bound to each other throughout Europe. They came to be called ‘Young Turks’. They took

\(^2\) Jung and Piccoli Op.Cit; p. 47.
\(^3\) Zurcher, EJ Op.Cit; p. 83.
up the task of shaking the Empire out of its lethargy. This party drew its inspiration from the West and wanted to remodel the Empire into a liberal constitutional monarchy.¹

From the very beginning of this movement it attracted both Muslim and non-Muslims. Turks and non-Turks, who were united in their opposition to the personal rule of the Sultan but there was no unity in their programme.² While non-Turks were more inclined towards far reaching liberalization and decentralization, their Turkish partners for the most part shared with their adversary, the Sultan, the basic concern for the preservation of a strongly unified Empire. It was this group of mostly Turkish officials and professionals centered around the Committee of Union and Progress, which later, came to dominate Ottoman politics after the 1908 revolution.

The Committee of Union and Progress, the organization behind the Young Turks movement, gained much strength and was increasingly able to rally support within the ranks of the armed forces. At the turn of the century the centre of internal opposition had moved from Istanbul to Solonika from where a group of young officers, civil

¹ Lenczowski, George Loc.Cit.
servants and intellectuals controlled the activities of the opposition in the Empire.¹

With the mutiny of the Ottoman troops posted at Macedonia, which was triggered by the discussions about a Russian, British intervention there, gave a chance to the young Turks movement to start a campaign in July 1908, demanding restoration of the constitution.

Sultan Abdulhamid’s attempt to crush the insurrection failed as the troops he had dispatched refused to do their duty. This compelled the Sultan to give in and thus the imperial master was deposed by the group of new educated professionals in the military and civil service.

The Young Turks revolution of 1908 had the objectives of curbing the autocratic rule of Sultan Abdulhamid as well as preserve the integrity of the three immediate problems. First concerned the nature of the Ottoman government, now that Abdulhamid was deposed. Second was that of defining the identity of the citizen – subjects of the Empire, and the third was regarding the territorial integrity to be

¹ Jung and Piccoli Op.Cit; p. 53.
defended and frontiers to be stabilized. These three problems were increasingly intertwined.¹

Constitutional government was established, after the elections were carried out freely and the representatives of all the races in the Empire were indeed representative personalities. The words liberty, equality and justice was the cry of every heart.

As Halide Edib puts it, 'the new regime came into existence without blood shed even when one of the most tyrannical and violent of regimes had been changed into a brand new constitutional one.²

The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) became increasingly involved in politics though it was not yet a political party and one of its own members Sait Pasha was appointed premier. As Committee of Union and Progress went to the elections held in 1908 and won an over-whelming victory to the house of deputies, Sultan Abdulhamid II was replaced by Mehmet V (1909-1918).

An important ideology that developed during the young Turks period was that of nationalism. It originated in literature and history and had

¹ Karpat, Kemal H. Turkey, Policies, p. 19.
² Edib, Halide, Turkey Faces West, Yale, 1930. pp. 125-128.
the beginning of a purely cultural character and the man who became
the philosopher and major journalistic exponent of Turkish nationalism
was Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924).¹

The process of Westernization was stepped up and consequently there
emerged political parties, parliamentary forms and above all, an
increasingly important role of the press.

Attention was also given towards economic reforms. European
advisers were invited for finance, customs, administration, irrigation,
law and of course military and naval training and organization.²

However, the greatest achievement of the regime was in the
educational field where a complete change was affected. Increase in
the number of the Mosque, schools, the establishments of a
considerable number of normal schools and lycees, the enlargement
and the better organization of the university with the help of German
professors are some of its achievements.

¹ A detailed study of Ziya Gokalp’s, life and works has been written by Uriel
² Davison R.H., Turkey, New Jersey 1968, p. 114.
The ideology of secularism started to gain popularity. Islam could be more openly discussed. The press began to discuss women's rights\(^1\), who were now given equal chances of education as men.

The Young Turks regime immediately after its coming to power got involved in a series of wars. After its defeat in Tripoli and Balkans it enjoyed a brief period of peace which ended when it entered the great War 1914-1918, where Young Turks era ended in the chaos of defeat. However, its contribution to the institutional, ideological and social development that underlay the emergence of the modern Turkish nation and the Turkish republic was really great.

Although the Ottoman monarchy formally existed until the proclamation of the Turkish republic in 1923, the young Turks revolution marks the end of the imperial order and with the collapse of the Empire in the wake of World War I, it was this same group, which produced the leaders of modern Turkey.

This elaborate discussion reveals that the reforms of nineteenth century, made in the spheres of civilian and military bureaucracy, education, and the judiciary aimed to strengthen the central state and

\(^1\) Ibid.
arrest its decline and disintegration while weakening the religious establishments for the Tanzimat’s secular modernization caused a serious split within the state between the Ulema and the other bureaucratic elements. And the social and political dynamics of the reform process eventually destroyed the foundations of the Sultanate and put an end to more than 500 years of Ottoman rule. One can see it as an incipient step towards democratization and later on secular ideals cherished by the coming generation, which was finally led by the brilliant hero of the Turkish nation, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.
Chapter - ii
TURKISH NATIONALISM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Evolution

The ideas of nation, language and fatherland which constituted the basis of nationalism did not undergo a uniform line of development in Turkey but varied constantly according to changing internal and external conditions. Turkish nationalism appears as a series of successive movements with different and often conflicting ideological foundations and goals. For example; the adjustment of the pan Islamic Universalist concept developed under Abdulhamid II (1876 - 1909) to the Pan Turanian ideas of the Young Turks (1908 - 18) and eventually their rejection in the war of liberation (1919 - 22) and the Republic (from 1923) gives a limited concept of Turkish nationalism.

The development of Turkish nationalism took place primarily within the framework of a nation state. It was secular movement, which aimed at creating a nation with an identity of its own based on the specific cultural characteristics of Turks. Within the Ottoman Empire nationalism developed at first among the non-Muslim minorities who

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were successful in establishing independent nation states during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the World War I (1914-18), the Arab revolt resulted in the emergence of Arab nation state; the Turks were the last to become nationalists.¹

In fact, if we try to trace the origin of nationalism in Turkey, we will find the nationalism as a political philosophy and slogan was for the first time raised by non-Muslim communities who lived in far-flung areas of the Ottoman Empire. This idea was a byproduct of the increasing influence of the European power in eastern countries. It is therefore the earliest slogan of nationalism and was heard immediately following the French Revolution. The Ottoman concept of a Pan Ottoman philosophy, which the state attempted to pursue to achieve legal and political equality and form a homogeneous Ottoman society, was unable to prevent the newly emerging political philosophy of nationalism nor could the Pan Islamic movement prevent the spreading of these ideas among the non-Muslims.²

Though Turkey's relations with modern Europe developed much later, yet the Turkish thinkers were quick enough to study the nature of the change affected in Europe and the Turkish nationalism followed as a consequence which of course, was more marked than any other movement in the Near and Middle East. Turkey copied European institutions more closely than any other westernized country in the Middle East. She abandoned everything Oriental and medieval that still survived, only to stand at par with the contemporary Europe. It became indifferent to her traditional character, perhaps it may have been due to the fact that Turkey did not boast of any great past civilization of her own that the Turks were willing to be fully Europeanized. The constitutional reforms in Turkey also owned its origin though partly, to Mohd. Ali, who through his victorious campaigns in Syria and Asia Minor and his exemplary modernization of Egypt's government made Turkey feel, the necessity of transforming from an oriental absolute despotism which she experienced unchanged since centuries into a modern constitutional state. Sultan Mahmood II (1808-39) was the first of the Ottomans to realize the necessity of creating an army trained on European lines and a modern absolute administration. This was the beginning of the Tanzimat.
The reformers of the Tanzimat sought to appeal to the loyalties of non-Muslims by advocating a doctrine of Ottomanism. It was a design in which a shared sense of Ottoman nationality would link members of all the Millets. Unfortunately, Ottomanism never had much impact beyond a narrow circles in Istanbul for most Christians, especially those in the Balkans, rejected it for their own nationalism and most Muslims saw it as a threat to their divinely ordained way of life.¹

However, contradictions in the statements of the exponents of Ottomanism and difficulties in practicing it were unavoidable.² Although many statesmen and officials were sincere in their attempts to apply Ottomanism a totally secular outlook, but a totally secular outlook had yet to develop among them and old religious allegiances were still too strong to be dismissed overnight. While some found the new doctrine a good means by which to ensure the internal security of the state or please foreign powers, the others were eager to maintain the position of Islam and their own predominant position as Muslims in the multi-religious, multi-national Empire.³

³ Kushner David, Op.Cit; p. 3.
The contribution of literature and literary figures already discussed in chapter first, too culminated in the nationalist sentiments among the masses.

Sinasi's pupil Namik Kemal (1840-1888) was considered even better than his master in poetical power. During the Tanzimat period, the term *vatan* underwent a major transformation, assuming the meaning of the French *patrie*. It came to be applied to the territory of the Ottoman Empire as a whole, to which as advocated by Ottomanist doctrine, all citizens were to hold allegiance. Namik Kemal was one of the leading exponents of this ideology. He was responsible for the propagation of the new concept, emphasized the role of Islam as the real bond between the Ottoman Muslim and his homeland.\(^1\)

Namik Kemal's play *Vatan Yahut Silistre* (The fatherland or Silistre) was first performed in Istanbul and evoked powerful emotional reaction from the audience.\(^2\) It spoke of the defence of Silistre, on the Danube against the Russians during the Crimean war, and was imbued with an intense patriotic spirit.

\(^{1}\) Lewis, Bernard, p. 333.
\(^{2}\) Ibid. p. 154.
There was an upsurge of patriotic feeling in Turkey once again in 1897, around the time of the Turkish – Greek war, and it found expression in yet another celebrated literary work, Mehmed Emin’s *Turkce Siirler* (poems in Turkish). Mehmed Emin (1869-1944), trained as civil servant, showed an early interest in writing, particularly poetry, and was greatly influenced by folk tales and the movement towards a popular literature, expressed in simple language. In his poems, which are written in simple and relatively pure Turkish, the Anatolian peasant, suffering but devoted to his faith and homeland became the hero.

The most famous of these poems, ‘A voice from Anatolia’ or going to the Battle’ is worth quoting in part:

I am a Turk; my faith (din) and my race (cins) are mighty,

My chest, my essence, is filled with fire,

A man is the slave of his fatherland,

A Turkish son will not stay at home, I shall go.

I shall not let the Book of Muhammad (PBUH) be removed,

I shall not let the banner of Osman be taken,

I shall not let the enemy attack my homeland,

The house of God will not be destroyed, I shall go.

These lands are the home of my fathers,

My house, my village, are the corner of the place,

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1 Cited in Kushner, David Op.Cit; 53
This is a homeland, this is the arm of God,
A son will not destroy the home of the father, I shall go.

Mehmed Emin’s poems were imbedded with an intense religious spirit, but it was as strong as his patriotic sentiments.

The period between 1870 and 1876 saw the rapid development of the Turkish Press, which also played a significant role in the transformation of Turkish life and thought, as it promoted a practical spirit, people no longer accepted what came with oriental submissiveness and fatalism as the decree of destiny. For the first time in the near East a public opinion and public spirit came into being.

The circulation of the papers, reached a wide circle in social life as the papers were circulated in coffee-houses and bazaars. These papers gave a wide coverage to the international happenings. In this way the press contributed to the removal of long standing barriers between the Ottomans and the outside world. The educated reader could acquaint himself with some facets of Western culture, customs and tastes as well as about the European political movement. This helped in arousing people’s desire to follow the West’s lead and Westernize their own country. Thus under the cover of historical and cultural discussions,
Turkish national sentiment found expression, anticipating the Turkish movement of later years. These expressions were found in almost all Turkish periodicals, of which the most important were the three major dailies of the period, *Sabah* (morning), *Tercuman-i-Hakikat* (interpreter of truth) and *Ikdam* (effort). These enjoyed the highest circulation and stability of all newspapers.

This period of progress was speedily followed by an era of corrupt and unbridled tyranny, for the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid (1876-1908), is referred to as a period of despotic rule. As a matter of fact while the Tanzimat were characterized by the growing power of the bureaucracy and the rise of constitutional forces, Abdulhamid II dissolved parliament and suspended the Ottoman constitution in 1878. He could not tolerate any kind of opposition to his rule.

However, he continued the attempts to modernize and centralize the administration and to enforce central state control over provinces.
Although under heavy censorship\(^1\) the dissemination of newspapers, periodicals and books increased further, as did the influence of Western ideas owing mainly to members of the literate public in exile.\(^2\)

The autocratic rule of Abdulhamid resulted in a rebellion against him, there the Sultan yielded to some of their demands, but at the same was alerted and alarmed because the liberal ideas had taken roots on a wider scale which aimed against Sultan. He was opposed to the nationalist movement and considered it a challenge to his absolute authority as well as to the Ottoman Empire as a whole. To him Islam was the force that had consolidated the Empire and enhanced his own prestige both within the European powers as well as in the Orient. He therefore became the most zealous supporter of Pan Islamism.\(^3\) He wished to confirm the supremacy of religion in political life as was during the medieval period as that it might withstand all the assaults of modern thought.

\(^1\) Jung & Piccoli Op.Cit; p. 47.
\(^3\) Ibid
Thus, it will be pertinent to say that in the Hamidian despotic rule, Ottomanism was replaced with a somewhat manipulative though emotionally potent Pan Islamism.¹

After the end of this despotic rule and the coming of young Turks to power in 1908, nationalism developed as a moment supported by a three interrelated ideologies. While Islamism lent support to the conservatives, Ottomanism by the bureaucracy and younger generation stood as a bulwark for Turkism. These ideologies attached importance to Islam in their own manner. The conservatives and Ottomanists since backed by Abdulhamid viewed it as the basic principle of state, whereas the Turkists regarded it as an element to go into the making of a nation. But none had fully classified the vital relation between the nation and the state. The Ottoman state, still a multinational structures, was deeply entrenched in its own traditional philosophy of government whereas the nation proper did not yet exist.²

After the Young Turk revolution of 1908 deposed Abdulhamid II, voices of a purely Turkish nationalism came to be increasingly heard. At the same time, a highly romanticized variant called Pan Turanism

began to be expressed by a diverse group of intellectuals and publicists, many of whom were Turkic émigrés from Russia. Thus the decade of the young Turks rule only intensified the progress that was leading the Turks towards political nationalism. In fact, the period of young Turks rule was marked by continuous warfare and rebellion, and the Ottomans, by the end of the World War I, had lost all their remaining possessions with the exceptions of Anatolia and a small part of Thrace with the capital Istanbul. This loss of Turkey’s cosmopolitan character, together with vast chunks of territory left its imprints on Turkish political culture. Thus fear of partition and subversion constantly haunted this Turkish elite and bred growing suspicion of foreigners and their sinister domestic collaborators who wanted to divide up the country and undermine its national unity. These pressures both at the periphery and at the centre itself could not but increase the sense of isolation and unity of the Turks and accelerated their conversion to Turkish nationalism. So the Young Turks committed to get the Turkish nationalism intensified was quite clear from their activities and policies adopted.

As Uriel Heyd puts it, the leading Turkists, including Semseddin Sami, Necib Asim, Veled Celebi, Mehmed Emin and others seem to have
constituted a circle of intellectuals professing Turkish nationalism of a cultural character. Further the restoration of freedom made it possible to resume discussions and debates with intellectuals of other streams of thoughts. In 1908, the Turkish society (Turk Dernegi) was established, aiming at studying the history and culture of all Turkish peoples. However, due to its intellectualism and extreme approach to language reform, the society failed to enlist the support of wider circles. Its place was largely taken by a new society, or club, formed in 1912 and called Turkish Hearth (Turk Ocagi) aiming to advance education and raise the scientific social and economic level of the Turks who are the foremost of the peoples of Islam, and to strive for the betterment of the Turkish race and language. Also many journals notably the Istanbul Yeni Mecma (New Review) and the Genc Kalemler (Young Pens) appearing in Solonika were playing a similar role in dissemination of Turkist ideas.

As a matter of fact, Solonika became a Turkist center of its own, characterized by a group of writers and intellectuals who sought a national revival in all spheres of life, among them Ziya Gokalp

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(1876-1924) who was to become the main theoretician of Turkish nationalism is worth to mention here.

A number of scholars have contributed to this investigation to consider Turkish nationalism as a Phenomenon of modern age emerging in the nineteenth century out of the political situation inside the Ottoman Empire. Hans Kohn believes that the genesis of Turkish nationalism can be traced to the first constitutional reforms in Turkey in 1826 (1769 - 1849) due to the victories of Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt in Syria and Anatolia. These reforms brought a chain of events, the Young Turks revolution, and the participation of Ottoman Turkey in world war I (1914 - 18), and the strong nationalistic tendencies of the Committee of Union and Progress which reached their climax during first world war, in the form of Anwar Pasha's Pan Turkish attempts.

Lewis, V. Thomas asserts:

When the Western idea of nationalism was first explained to Ottoman society the word for nationalism did not exist in the Turkish language. The phrase 'Young Turks' was

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coined in Paris by a few young westernized Ottomans, when it was translated into the language of the Ottoman Empire, it did not read Gene Turkler (Young Turks) but Gene Osmanlilar (Young Ottomans). The Young Turks movement does not on all counts deserve to be labeled Proto Turkish nationalism. It was the defeat of 1918 and its consequences that created the deep nationalist sentiments which gave rise to modern Turkish nationalism. Here is the source of the existence, henceforth of a Turkey which was Turkey of, by and for Turks, and for an most part, only Turks.

Uriel Hyed observes that Turkish nationalism evolving between 1911 and 1913, when the first signs of nationalism could be seen in the works of the young Turks.¹

Max Hilldebert Boehm believes even the religious phenomenon may be understood as a source of primitive forms of nationalism. It appears through a close analysis that in the sphere of the Christian religion at

¹ Heyd, Uriel Op.Cit; pp. 32-34.
least, there is a starting point for nationalism and it is only the dogma which is strictly supranational.¹

Their viewpoint towards the difficulty in identifying the origins of Turkish nationalism with recent history and divert is for the manifestations of nationalism in the remote past of the Turks in Asia Minor. However, if we look in the remote past of the Turks in Asia Minor, we find a very interesting phenomenon, i.e. Turkification of Anatolia, which occurred in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries during the conquest of Anatolia by the Turks. This process of Turkification was not achieved by massacre of native populations. It came as a result of the assimilation of the local population and their acceptance of the Turkish language, Turkish religion, i.e. Islam and its culture. The question remains however, regarding linguistic phenomenon of the Turkification of Anatolia, an expression of Turkish nationalism. In an excellent report by a group of scholars there is an enlightening explanation of the equation between culture and language in the early

stages; Culture follows language and the literature written in that language will form one of the proudest part of the national heritage.\(^1\)

The ties between language and nationalism helped rather convincingly the Turkification of Anatolia in the four centuries from the eleventh to the fifteenth, and had some of the characteristics of modern nationalism with its aggressiveness and aggrandizement plus its denationalization of minorities and conquered peoples.\(^2\)

The Turks were already devout Muslims at the dawn of their conquest and Turkification of Anatolia was paralleled by Islamization of that country. The Turkification of Anatolia leads us to think that the Islamization of the Turks (which preceded Turkification of Anatolia) did not denationalize them. The Turkification of Anatolia from eleventh to fifteenth centuries was wider in scope and in its impact than that of the Kemalist period. Hence, it is possible to trace a general line of Turkish national policy that continued through eleventh, thirteenth and fifteenth till the twentieth century and it is quite clear that Turkification is a continuous and intrinsic element of the Turkish national policy and lies at the heart of Young Turkists and Kemalists.

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\(^1\) Study group of members of the Royal Institute of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, ‘Nationalism’, London, 1939, p. 15.

The ten years from the revolution to the end of the World War I though not happy ones for Turkey were vital to the growth of Turkish nationalism.

The spirit of the new nationalism, which ousted the earlier Turkish patriotism of the romantic poets and reforming statesmen under European influence, was summed up by Halide Edib in her great political novel She had received European education in the American women's college at Scutari. Even in 1921 a Turkish statesmen said of her book “That is our national ideal”. In it she wrote of the new nationalism.¹

As I listened (to the speeches at Pan Turanian gathering) my soul was profoundly moved and I felt how deeply the aspirations of the new Turkey are rooted in our forefathers' very being; the music welled up from the innermost source of our Turanian blood and carried me away, so that to this day I still seem to hear it and I realized that we must learn to descend to the springs of life if we would breathe into our political aim the power of inspiration to win the people for its accomplishment.

¹ Quoted from Memories of Halide Edib, New York, 1926.
Thus the movement forged links with ancient traditions. There was nothing to be discovered of a cultural heritage. All Turkish culture had been borrowed from Persia or Arabia. What survived of the past were the customs and songs of the primitive nomad tribes and the cruel war like deeds of victorious barbarian hordes. But it was precisely to these memories that Turkish nationalism reverted. They began to distinguish three period in the History of Islam, an Arabian and Persian era, both past and a Turkish era now dawning. The ancient customs of the steppes were to be revived. Instead of calling children by the customary Muslim names, long forgotten Turkish names were restored.

Similarly festivals that had never been observed before in memory of past events, such as the anniversary of the capture of Constantinople, were celebrated, and the government decreed that they should be observed as school holidays.

This new nationalism found political expression in endeavours that were particularly active during the World War I, one of the most important task was that of strengthening the economic position of Turks, who had played no part hitherto in trade and manufacture, but
had left them to the Greeks and Armenians.¹ The boycott of the Greeks and the establishment of Turkish co-operative societies and Turkish banks in the larger cities of Anatolia all served this end, and over all these particular activities hovered the nationalist spirit, the ideal adopted by the Turks from modern chauvinist Europe with all its variety and false interpretations of history. True, the Turks refused to admit as much as may be seen from the words of Ziya Gokalp,² "Turan is no illusory fatherland. The Turkish tribes living together in Asia will gather around the Turkish flag and form a great Empire. Turks ought not to live like mere conglomeration of men without reason or purpose; they should unite as a single whole creating an eternal life formed of all the transitory lives of the individuals".

Ziya Gokalp and the Theory of Turkish Nationalism

Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924) recognized as the father of Turkish nationalism, was the theorist of the nationalist movement and one of the greatest Turkish thinkers. He is regarded as author, poet,

sociologist, historian, philosopher, man of public affairs and ideological slogan maker.\(^1\)

Ziya Gokalp, an introvert genius, led the checkered life of an intellectual, a scholar and a political revolutionary who heralded the renaissance of modern Turkey. Actually his influence over the Turkish intelligentsia came through his writings, which were to propagate his ideas of nationalism, the dream of Turkish youth. The debacle of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent emancipation of Turkey from the military influence of the British Empire, and the clear realization of the road to progress in fact, vindicated the ideas of Ziya Gokalp. The urge of the Turkish youth and the intelligentsia to restore the real vigour in the sick Turkish nation synthesized with the sentiments of Ziya Gokalp.

The ideas of Ziya Gokalp created an atmosphere and a parallel that provided the inspiration needed for a change in popular mentality from monarchy to democracy, from religious orthodoxy to free thinking and from the traditional East to the progressive West. The rapidity of the reforms succeeding one after the other that followed, from 1913\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Shaw and Shaw Op.Cit; p. 202
through the first decade of the Republic, were reinforced, and in many ways made possible, by the ideological basis and support that the writings of Gokalp provided. Thus changes accepted and represented previously as indispensable to the survival of the nation were transformed into goals that were considered desirable by the people at large. At this time Ottoman Empire seemed to be decaying, but, instead of lamenting the loss, his ideas provided inspiration for building up a new nation with firm roots in the past and trust in the future. This optimism and constructive approach was the light (Turkish Ziya) that favoured the building of a new society.¹ The inherent limitations of Ottoman nationalism, since it had grown out of reaction against Christian minorities, began to defeat its own end through reaching into conflict between the concept of nation (Millet) Which only encompassed the Muslims for Christians and minorities were treated as different Millets. Ottoman nationalism with its concept of fatherland could not succeed because it has its roots only in the sentiments of Muslim Turks, who believed that defending their territory was as necessary as to defend Islam and thought it as their religious duty. But to intelligentsia, a more sophisticated interpretation of nationalism was

¹ Ibid.
needed for they were concerned with the fate of the state. Literary figures like Ibrahim Sinasi had inspired the people and the intelligentsia with the zeal and love for fatherland. As already discussed the real beginning of Turkish nationalism came through the linguistic movement initiated by the Young Ottomans like Ziya Pasha and Namik Kemal. Through this movement they wanted to reach the greatest number of people who could understand only a simplified Turkish language.

Gokalp was in favour of modernization through the ability of using all the instruments and weapons produced by the most progressive nations. According to him “...modernization does not mean similarity to Europeans in appearance and living only”. Gokalp’s synthesis of Turkish nationalism, Islam and western civilization is rested in his book *Turklesmek, Islamlesmek Ve Muasirlasmak*. He believed the religion and nationalism were not mutually separate but co-existent so “this approach seems to be the expressive of a mind which without seeking to cease to be essentially Islamic tries to widen its bases and extend

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1 The young Ottoman Ziya Pasha (1825-80), Ibrahim Sinasi (1826-71) and Namik Kemal (1840-88) are credited with being the pioneers of the new literary movement.

the limits of its horizon to nationalist ideology". His aim was to establish modern Islamic Turkish state. The need of the time was that the Turks should be well at western arts, sciences and technology. Regarding their spiritual requirements, they would not borrow anything belonging to European religion and nationalism.

During his lifetime Ziya Gokalp witnessed three turning points in Turkish history. Abdulhamid II's reign (1876 - 1909), the second constitutional period (1908-9) and the formative year of Mustafa Kemal's Turkey, which was the period of a remarkable change in the political and social set up of the Turks as well as of the Ziya Gokalp's intellectual evolution. The changing patterns of society, the new modes of thought and the resultant conflicts arising from it, these all factors conditioned and moulded the thoughts of Ziya Gokalp.

Nationalism was the most important aspect of westernization as formulated by Ziya Gokalp. His writings on Turkish nationalism centered around Turkification, Islamization and modernization. He was a firm believer in that a synthesis of these three intellectual currents could be made through a groundwork for the modern Islamic Turkish

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culture. He has set forth three steps in order to achieve this programme. The first step being the secularization of the Turkish national state, this will modernize the Turkish society through absorbing the knowledge and techniques of the West and at the same time also preserve the Turkish and Islamic elements of culture. Secondly, Turkey would gain importance in the Muslim world by unifying the Oguz Turks living outside Turkey. The final step would be that Turkey would become a source of inspiration for the cultural unity of all Turkish-speaking peoples.¹

Gokalp's religious outlook was conditioned and moulded by the social conditions i.e. traditions customs art, folklore and language of that time. As Rosenthal puts it, "the central idea of his social philosophy is evolution, both of society and of the factors, including religion that determine it."² Rosenthal further writes, nationalism for Gokalp is a spiritual value, just as cultural nationalism at par with religion, is another spiritual value. He is conscious of the difficulty to delimit national against religious education, since Islamic traditions belong to

Islam as a religion and also to the nations that contributed it, the Arabs, Persian and Turks.¹

Gokalp rejected racism and blind sentimental attachment to the past. The past traditions and the Islamic background could provide the Turks with a stable base for participation in contemporary western civilization. Turkification, Islamization and contemporarization were thus compatible with each other, all joining together and strengthening both state and society.²

Gokalp was not against Islam but he favoured what was essential and beneficial for the society and wanted to discard the things, which hampered the progress of Turkish society. To Gokalp Islam was most important, as a source of ethics and it was fully capable of being modified to meet the needs of the time.³ He opposed the concept of an ‘Islamic civilization’ under which the Turks had mistakenly accepted the cultural values of other peoples. At the same time he regarded

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¹ Ibid, pp. 59-60.
Islam as an important factor in stimulating patriotism and a basis for solidarity and cooperation with other Muslim peoples.¹

Gokalp emphasized the need for a complete reorganization of the educational system in Turkey and stressed the importance of the threefold purpose of Turkish education i.e. it had to be Turkish, Islamic and modern. These three elements were must and complementary to each other, otherwise he said, they may become inconsistent and mutually contradictory, because if secular education went beyond its limits it would encroach upon the Turkish and Islamic ideas. Thus he wanted the modern educationists to demarcate the boundaries between national and religious education and this required extensive research so as to differentiate the real Islamic traditions from Persian, Turkish or Arab traditions. According to him, education had to be nationalized and teaching was to be modernized.²

At the same he wanted legislation to be rescued from the limitation of the religious law, and the religion left to the Ulema. The Sheikhul Islam himself was supposed to be as independent from the control of the state as the legislature would be from him. He was in favour of the

² Berkes, Niyazi, Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization (Selected essays of Ziya Gokalp), London, 1959, pp. 245-247.
elimination of the religious endeavours as according to him they consumed much of nations wealth. On integral progressive policy he writes, “the religious schools and courts had to be abolished to end the long standing dualism between secular religious elements that existed in Ottoman society and the religious law had to be supplanted by secular law”.¹

On the status of women the Gokalp asserts that the position of women had to be restored to the high place it had enjoyed in ancient Turkish society. However, much Islam had developed its produces towards women to save them from discrimination, its modern manifestation had held them down, prevented them from taking their rightful place in the Turkish Nation. Women should be given the same education as men, they had to be allowed to earn their living in the same way as men; they could no longer be subjected to the degradation that was inherent in polygamy, which was allowed by traditional Islam. The family had to be developed as a basic unit in society, and towards this end family names had to be adopted as was done in Europe.²

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid. p. 302.
Supporting the Turkification of Islam Gokalp wanted to replace Arab traditions by Turkish traditions. The rituals and prayers to be carried out in the Turkish language and in the Turkish manner and the 'Quran' to be taught in Turkish so as to make it easier to understand the religion and appreciate God for more than they could, when reciting phrases in a foreign language.\(^1\)

In fact Gokalp wanted a modernized Turkish nation having the religion of Islam as the source of its ethics and an "up to date Muslim Turk" having his sentiments focused on the nation and national dignity. He wanted Turkey to develop into a powerful and progressive state with nationalism as a sentiment, a guiding spirit and as an ideal.\(^2\)

Nonetheless, it was Gokalp's theory of Turkish nationalism that inspired the Kemalist regime. Gokalp actively supported the people's party founded by Mustafa Kemal. The first constitution of Turkish republic has been largely upon Gokalp's views. Even after Gokalp's death, his ideas continued to be a source of inspiration to the leaders of Kemalist regime.

\(^1\) Ibid. p. 304.
Nationalism and The Republic

Turkish nationalism grew out of the two conditions: on the one hand, battles with insurgent nationalities encouraged a sense of cohesion among the remaining peoples and territories. On the other hand, at the end of the 20th century the Ottoman Empire was reduced mainly to Turks and other Muslim.

This Turkification process had already begun during the period of the Young Turks in the latter years of the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks learned the power of nationalism from the struggle of Ottoman peoples whom they fought against to keep the remaining parts of the Empire together. Thus, by the end of the World War I and the Turko-Greek War that lasted from 1919 to 1922, there were few non-Muslim peoples left in Anatolia that subsequently became the Turkish motherland. The majority of Turkey's two million Armenians were deported to Syria and Mesopotamia in 1915 by the Ottoman Young Turk administration, so that they could side with advancing Russian troops and declare independence in Eastern Turkey. These deportations continued until 1918 and it has been estimated that as many as 1.5

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million Armenians died or were killed. The remaining Greeks, who had not fled after the Turko-Greek war, were exchanged for Turks (in fact, Muslims) in Greece under a treaty that went into effect in 1924. This homogenization of the populations helped the republican elite declare the rest of the population Turkish.

As a matter of fact it was not the initial aim of the founding elite to create an ethnically 'pure nation' which was rather fashioned by the ongoing events. Anatolia was still more cosmopolitan than was officially recognized and that they were the heirs of multinational, multicultural empire. They accordingly named the country the state of the Republic of Turkey.

The efforts of the ruling elite were to substitute Turkish identity for Ottoman identity. However, Ottomanism was a supra identity that allowed sub or cultural and ethnic identities to coexist with it. One cannot ignore that Ottoman (the house of Osman) was the name of the ruling dynasty, which gave its name to the all-encompassing state. Hence, it was ethnically neutral; in contrast, Turkish identity was

\[2\] Ibid.
Decades of indoctrination and a heavy dose of nationalist education created a deep sense of pride in being a Turk.

Nationalism was one of the three basic ideas, which emerged during 1923-25 as the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic. It, in its simplest meaning claimed Turkey for the Turks. Nationalism was the step for attaining independence and for establishing a Republic. The Ottomanism turned into Turkish Nationalism because of the territorial losses and the refusal of the minorities to renounce their national aspirations in favour of a multinational Ottoman state. Further, the exodus of minorities in 1927 made Turkey ethnically and culturally homogenous which enabled it to fulfill the aims and goals of Turkish nationalism.

In this regard various branches of government, through the Republican Peoples Party and the Turkish Hearth organization inherited from the Young Turks, played a great role to expound the doctrines of nationalism. To achieve this purpose was very difficult because of the century old influence of the Ottomans and foreigners alike on the Turks.

\[1 \text{ Ibid} \]
Agreements were signed to guarantee the territorial integrity and independence with a number of neighbouring countries. Trade and friendship treaties signed with Britain, Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and other enabled Turkey to re-enter into the Concert of Nations and later into the League of Nations on July 18, 1932. The Kemalist tenets successfully inspired the masses by asserting that these trade and friendship treaties with various countries were signed which helped to resolve the conflicts with those countries which paved the way for economic and social development of Turks.

The nationalism of Turkey involved a self-imposed isolation of individuals from the world and an entirely self-centered view of Turkey. It is clearly manifest from the fact that Western institutions, practices and ideas were accepted, but the instruction in foreign languages and non-Turkish history was reduced in the schools, partly in reaction to over emphasis of foreign languages and history.

So as the nationalist ideal found its way into the hearts of the Turkish people it was attended by the same social developments elsewhere. Of these three may be distinguished as peculiarly characteristic, the rise of a new language, a new attitude towards religion, and the entry of

\[1\] Ibid.
women into public life. At this time the attitude of the new nationalism towards religion was not so marked as ten years later.

The republic of Turkey was born from the ashes of Ottoman Empire and accepted nationalism, by necessity as its main ideology to replace the broader concept of Islamism and Ottomanism. In Turkey, however, nationalism was identified with and represented in the form of a political state almost from its inception, and its identification gave to it both exclusiveness and cultural political absolutism in all fields of human activity.\(^1\) Because the idea of nationalism also served as an outlet for expressing all the bitterness and pain caused by the downfall of an Empire, which had stood for centuries on equal footing with the major powers of the world.\(^2\)

However, nationalism in Turkey did not remain immune to the social and economic transformation. The rising middle classes used nationalism to protect themselves against social currents. The historical-cultural aspect of nationalism described above were bound to lose intensity as the goals, which, they served, were attained. But socioeconomic considerations, growing in importance, let the middle

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classes to maintain the intense, all embracing character of nationalism, either by insisting on old slogans or when these became obsolete, by finding new ones, supposedly for maintaining national solidarity against social currents disruptive of unity.¹

In internal affairs, nationalism became the supreme force dominating all activities in the society, visualizing problems and moulding ideas in the light of its own conceptions. Idealistic Turkish intellectuals had viewed nationalism,² cleared of Islamic influences, as an avenue leading to the creation of a national culture and universal understanding. The Republic was to start a new life under the aegis of nationalism. Consequently it tried to dissociate itself from the past and all that it entailed.³

Mustafa Kemal's definition of Turkish nationalism was, “The Turkish people forming the Turkish Republic are called the Turkish nation”.⁴

The doctrine of Turkish nationalism was expounded by the state

³ It is for this reason that history was written in the Republic in order 'to destroy what remained of Ottoman and Islamic feelings of identity, and replace them by one that was purely Turkish' and to restore national self-respect, which had been badly undermined in the past by the west's own biased anti-Turkish history. See Lewis, Bernard *History Writing*, pp. 224-25, See 'Relation of Turkey'. *Near Eastern culture and Society*, pp. 179-187.
through various media channels, through press, schools and other various institutions of government. Kemalist ideology highlighted that Turks had played an important and leading role in the developments of world civilization, and that it were the Turks who had contributed most to what had been achieved in the Ottoman Empire.

Turkish nationalism had cultural as well as humanist aspects. The ideologies of the Turkish nationalism tried to make it a point that Turkish nationalism was not based on Turkish race. It was rather based on Turkish language, that is Turkish nationality is for the people who speak Turkish, who are brought up with Turkish culture, share Turkish ideals and who live on Turkish soil. These people are Turks, regardless of race and religion.

The Turkish nation regards itself as a prized and honourable member of the human family. Turks loved all humans and have no feeling of hostility unless the country’s national pride or interest is violated. Turkish nationalism became a symbol of peace at the time when extreme, racism was identified with imperialism.¹

In search of a unifying myth, long forgotten roots of the pre Ottoman, pre Islamic era were re-introduced. However, this process was adopted to act as an ideological glue for national cohesion. In the absence of a medieval high culture that could be labeled Turkish, the nationalist elite found their glory in its history. The search for and consolidation of new national identity were carried to extremes. The Turkish Historical Society was founded in 1925, in order to highlight the role of Turks in history. The theories like ‘Sun Language Theory’ were concocted. According to ‘Sun Language Theory’ all languages emerged out of Turkish.¹ As a reminder of those days, the presidential banner consists of a sun representing the Turkish Republic encircled by 16 stars, symbolizing the Turkish state that were presumably created by Turks through out history. This reminder of glorious past was a panacea for Turkish pride wounded by the loss of Empire.

As the Turkish nationalism became the official doctrine of the Republic, a variety of cultural, linguistic and educational policies were pursued that emphasized the distinctive genius of the Turkish people and pointed out their pre-Islamic and possibly their post-Islamic role and

identity. Moreover, reforms were introduced to get rid of all the hurdles, which would come in the way of progress.

In order to take Republic at par with European nations, modernization and Westernization continued at high speed and along with the reforms sanctified by law. A multitude of other Western habits, views, methods of work and business were adopted on an individual or group basis in all fields. Islamic education was discouraged. It was thought to produce the conservatives with narrow intellect, who were not fit to the needs of the time, which demanded more rational and scientific oriented class. In 1925 only 284 students had remained in the theological school, in 1926-33 the number fell from 167 to 2, and in 1941 it was closed for the lack of students and later it had become the institute for Islamic research. Imam-hatip (clergy) schools were also closed.¹

Nationalizing Education

Strong concerned attacks were aimed at obscurantism, mysticism, supernaturalism and traditionalism. Nationalizing education, no doubt,

was one of most important. In the Ottoman Empire, education had been under the control of the *Ulema*. Besides each mosque, there was usually a school. In small town, the Mosque was used as a school, where the children were taught to read the Koran to pray and to perform the basic rituals of Islam. Those who wanted higher education attended special schools that trained the *Ulema*. As a result for centuries whatever schooling a Turk could receive was in or near the Mosque, where one of the chief functionaries was the *Hoca* (hoja) or teacher. The emphasis was on teaching Islamic sciences and Arabic languages, which was not understood by most Turks. Elementary education was limited to this sort of teaching unless the student sought to become a member of the *Ulema* and make himself an authority on Islamic law.¹

From the Tanzimat days in the middle of the nineteenth century, European type schools began to appear, though their number was not large and the system of education underwent many ups and downs. But due to the unstable political conditions of the Tanzimat and the constitutional period any remarkable progress in this field was checked. During the Young Turks period education was again given its

due importance. Not only were the number of government schools increased but also the students were encouraged to study abroad. Consequently, a number of Turkish Muslims began attending the European and American schools within the Empire already maintained by the missionary agencies. Also, remarkable advances were made by the previous foundations (*Awkaf*) in the religious schools maintained by them. This has been aptly described by Halide Edib¹ as:

> The madressas for the first time were to have modern teachers instead of the old scholastic curriculum and the staff. The Mosque schools, which so far taught only the Quran and which were housed in little holes, were now modernized and a dozen schools were amalgamated in one big and up-to date building in an important center. Each was to have a modern staff with a modern curriculum. The boys schools were organized by Ali Bey, a very capable and progressively section chief in Awkaf. The girl schools as well as the small mixed ones were to be organized by Nakie Hanun as the general director.

¹ Memories of Edib, Halide, New York, 1926, p. 351.
It was felt that Turkey’s education was un­systematized therefore now under the Republic education was taken away from the Ulema. All traditional madaressas were closed down and their place was taken up by the government built schools on the model of the West. Education was proclaimed to be universal and free.¹ The different millets continued to provide separate schools, hospitals and other social institutions for those wishing to use them, with the government consisting only that all millet children receive their elementary education in the state schools or according to curriculum established by the Ministry of Education, in order to provide the common bonds for them to participate fully in Turkish life. However, provision was made by the state for further training of religious personnel. At the lower level, new schools were opened to train the imams and preachers and at the higher level a faculty of Theology was established at the Suleymaniya Mederse, which was affiliated to the University of Istanbul. This religious institution was brought under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. Its new faculty was established with an intention to provide modernized and scientific form of religious instruction, which could serve the purpose of a secular, westernized

republic. Education no longer worked to produce good and faithful Muslims but good and faithful Turks. Islam, in so far as it could contribute to the new ends, were retained, but religious instruction was not given by turbaned Hojas but by the regular secular teachers and was so presented, as to produce devoted Turks.¹

Republican Nationalism and the Religious Ethos

Although Mustafa Kemal never attacked Islam but was against the Ulema who, through their superficial knowledge of Islam, were exploiting the people for self-aggrandizement. He made frequent references to Islam whenever he tried to justify his reforms and the programmes of the nationalist government.² What he aimed at was to limit the practice of religion within the boundaries of the places of worship and also to separate religion and state. Thus not only the political and social influences of the Ulema were suppressed but also it was a step towards reducing the role of religion in the social and cultural life of the people.³ It was always explained to the people that these reforms were not against Islam but just to put an end, to the

² Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; p. 98.
³ For a detailed discussion on Kemal’s Secularization see Chapter III
power and influence of the Ulema¹ who, for their motivated interests were misleading the masses.

Nationalizing Language

The most critical stages in the Turkish transformation were exemplified best in the adoption of the Latin script.² There had been proposals of the improvement of the Arabic script since time of the Tanzimat, though nothing very much had come of them. The more radical idea of abandoning the Arabic script entirely and replacing it by the Latin alphabet was put forward and discussed in Turkey in 1923 and 1924, but was decisively rejected.³

Mustafa Kemal opened a nationwide campaign in August 1928 and in November the same year a law was passed by the Grand National Assembly making the use of the Latin script for Turkish compulsory

¹ Lewis, Bernard writes, ‘Mustafa Kemal wanted to break the hold of the Ulema. However they still had great power and influence. A large part of the educational facilities of the country were under their control, the law relating to family and personal matters were still directed by the code they administered. This was the only authority to challenge the new leadership. In fact this was the aspect of the conflict. Cp. Lewis, Bernard Op.Cit; pp. 258-60.
and prohibiting the use of Arabic script in all public affairs after December 1 of the same year.¹

Mustafa Kemal’s purpose in changing the alphabet was not to prevent Turks from reading the Quran. He wanted to reduce illiteracy and develop a uniform and logical Turkish language. He rightly concluded that it was easier for Turks to learn to read and write using Latin alphabet. He and the members of the assembly each took a black board to the villages and towns and proved that the Latin alphabet was an easier medium. The introduction of a new alphabet was a staggering undertaking in the printing of books for the growing schools of the country, but it was done. Turks everywhere knew for the first time how a word was to be pronounced from the way it was written.²

Kemal’s nationalist and populist theories demanded that the Turkish language should be truly Turkish, with the disappearance of the existing duality of language those of the place and the people. He, therefore, ordered that all the Arabic and Persian words should be

² Armajani, Y. and Ricks, T.M. Middle East Past and Present, New Jersey, 1986, p. 246.
eliminated, \(^1\) since the Turkish language, which had been overwhelmed by such an invasion, had been reduced to merely verbs and suffixes in literally works. In the words of Mustafa Kemal, “the Turkish nation which knew how to defend its country and noble independence must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign language”.\(^2\)

At the beginning of the 1930’s language reform movement was revitalized. Mustafa Kemal along with some of the prominent members of the Turkish Historical Congress, held at Ankara in July 1932, and suggested to them the establishment of a society for the study of the Turkish language. As a result, Turkish linguistic society called ‘Turk Dil Kurumu’ was formed. According to article 2 of its status the aim of the society was to bring about the genuine beauty and richness of the Turkish language to elevate it to the high rank it deserves among world languages. To attain this objective a special committee was set up for research in linguistics and philosophy, etymology, grammar and syntax, vocabulary and terminology, the collection of words and publications. In 1932 the first Turkish language congress was convened in Istanbul. The Congress elected the society’s Central

\(^1\) Because these two languages (Arabic and Persian) were considered to be the language of Islam.

Committee, which decided the following main steps towards speedy reform of the ordinary-non-technical vocabularies.¹

1. The collection and publication of the Turkish word material present in the popular language and old texts.

2. The definition of the principles of word formation in Turkish, and the creation of words from Turkish roots in conformity therewith.

3. The suggestion and propagation of such genuine Turkish words as might replace words of foreign origin used in Turkish especially in the written language.

In order to enable the society to carry out its work the government and the administration fully supported it by decreeing in November 1932 for the collection of all such Turkish words which were generally in use of the common people but not found in the written language. The Turkish linguistic society turned out glossary after glossary of genuine Turkish terms. Some caught on, many did not. Nevertheless there was failure to expel all foreign words from Turkish. The movement was then restrained in accordance with newly invented 'Sun theory of

¹ For details regarding the founding of the society and its works see Hyed, Uriel Op.Cit; p.25 ff.
language’. This theory was propounded at the Third Turkish Congress held in 1936. It taught that all languages of mankind were derived from Turkish, so that in using any Arabic or Persian word they needed, the Turks were only reclaiming their own since they had originally been Turkish words.¹

**Importance Given to Family Names**

Another significant publicized event was the forced adoption and use of family names. Only a few of the old Turkish families had names, and many did not use them. The Grand National Assembly gave to Mustafa Kemal the name of ‘Ataturk’ (Father of the Turks). His close friend and second in command, Ismet, became Ismet Inonu, in the honour of his two commemorating victories over the Greeks at Inonu in 1921. Appropriate names were given to other party leaders by Grand National Assembly. The head of each family went to precinct police headquarters and selected the family names from the list of approved Turkish words and names, or a combination of these. No one else in that district could take the name. Most names had a meaning, such as

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Biyiklioglu (son of the man with a mustache), ustundag (mountaintop), and Kirkagaclioglu (son of the man with forty trees).  

Another step taken in this direction was a law passed by Grand National Assembly shifting the capital from Istanbul to Ankara in the Anatolian highlands. It was intended to remove the republican government from foreign influences, from cosmopolitanism, and from stagnating influence of the old Ottoman Sultanate and its conservative entourage. Many towns were renamed in modern Turkey. Angora became Ankara, Syrna became Izmir and Adrianople became Edirne. After 1932, letters addressed with the old named were not delivered.  

The thematic discussion on the concept of nationalism and its growth in Turkey especially after the establishment of the Republic leads one to reach at certain conclusion, which can be summarized in the following paragraphs.  

The concept of nationalism underwent certain changes after the liberation of Turkey and establishment of modern Turkish state. During the 1920’s and 1930’s the theories of Turkish nationalism were severely expounded to achieve the Republican aims and after the

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accomplishment of these objectives they were mostly abandoned. The idea of Turkish nationalism was not imperialistic, as it did not aim to achieve greatness by regaining lands once ruled by the Ottomans but to build their own land a modern state for the Turks within the boundaries of the republic.¹

The Turkish nationalism replaced the regionalism and prevented class struggle and ideological derisiveness. The spirit of solidarity prevailed and discredited the ideologies of Ottomanism and Pan Islamism. Turkish nationalism encouraged the Turks to build their own land, without fostering aggressive irredentist aspirations.

Although nationalism in Turkey was of Western origin, the form it took, in Turkey differed substantially from the original model. It was used to gather the support of the masses by the Westernized classes of the Middle East. The masses, although affected by its cultural aspect, accepted nationalism by identifying it with religion.

Nationalism in Turkey produced practical results. It unified various sections of the Turkish population around common cultural goal, it created a feeling of national solidarity, it oriented the cultural

¹ Shaw and Shaw Op.Cit; p. 376.
development of the country in accordance with the original character of the nation, and finally, it gave to the individual Turk a feeling of national pride.¹

Ataturk’s 1922 victory over the invading allies helped to arouse a national sentiment of an intensity that had never before existed among the Turkish masses.² In fact nationalism was itself the result of modernization and westernization and all other social, economic, cultural and political forces were subject to one of these two tendencies. In its first two and a half decades the Republic was dominated by the modernist secularists led by Mustafa Kemal who easily succeeded in implementing his westernization policy and the goal set by Mustafa Kemal for the new Turkish national state was nothing less than nationalization and westernization. Such a radical approach towards modernization has not even been adopted by any Muslim nation except Turkey. The Westernization programme actually adopted by Kemal was concerned mainly with the political and economic programmes of the Turkish nation state for the prevailing poor economic conditions and the fragile political setup needed a complete re-organization.

Although Mustafa Kemal laid the foundations of the Turkish nation state on Gokalp's principles, which served a source of inspiration for him, he also infused in them his own revolutionary doctrines.

Since the occupation of Turkey by foreign powers and the consequent strong anti-imperialist ideas developed during the war of liberation had given a new political dimension and dynamism to Turkish nationalism, which in the past had appeared, as a device adopted to save the empire. In the war of liberation, it turned from a passive into a dynamic ideal with a definite goal, the creation of a state and nation for Turks alone. Thus the state emerged before the nation comprising of the young officers, intellectuals, and to a lesser extent the civil servants who undertook the difficult task of creating a nation by following at the beginning, for lack of anything better Gokalp's blue prints.

It was Turkish nationalist movement based on Gokalp's ideas that saved Turkey from a total annihilation after the World War I (1914 - 18) under the leadership of the charismatic personality of Mustafa Kemal.

The group of Mustafa Kemal consisted of radical secularists and revolutionaries who aimed at a complete breakup with the past so as
to achieve a programme of total modernization and westernization. The immediate problem of this newly created state was to find common bonds for the internal unity and cohesion. It is a fact that the survival of Turkey may be credited to the genius and wisdom of Mustafa Kemal who emerged as the natural leader of the nation.

In the next chapter an attempt would be made to examine his contribution in reforming and introducing various secular reforms to lay strong foundation and a clear object for future growth of Turkey on Western pattern.
SECULARIZATION OF TURKEY UNDER MUSTAFA KEMAL

Turkey was dominated by the struggle between two groups, the conservatives – religious and the modernists – secularists which were influenced later on by nationalism and particularly Turkish nationalism which was the essential rallying cry for the War for Independence and the Republic. In fact nationalism was itself the result of modernization and westernization and all other social, economic, cultural and political forces were subject to one of these two tendencies.

A decade of war and revolution accompanied by massacre and counter-massacre, banditry, blockade and foreign occupation had decimated the population and shattered the economy of Turkey. However, Turks were the only one of the central powers able to overturn immediately the vindictive settlements imposed by the Allies following World War I. Because, Turkish resistance ultimately was led to success by Mustafa Kemal.

2. Ibid p. 373

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After winning the War of Independence, the Turkish republic adopted a constructive policy based on a positive self-image and optimistic assessment of its future as a nation under the leadership of the victor on the battlefield, i.e. Kemal Ataturk. He did indeed, do more than anyone else to create the Turkish republic on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. He was able to accomplish this by bringing together elements of resistance that had already emerged. He co-coordinated their efforts, expressed their goals, personified, their ambitions and led to victory¹.

Ataturk represented perfectly the well-trained knowledgeable military bureaucratic elite of the Ottoman Empire, guided by a view of the interests of the state.² Whatever Mustafa Kemal envisaged for Turkish nation was based on his ideas and policies, which he adopted from his early days of the War of Independence to his death in 1938. His principles are the fundamental conceptional basis of the Turkish revolution that ensured immediately after the War of Independence and, resulted in the formation of a national and secular Turkish state. This event, which occurred in the years following the collapse of the

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Ottoman Empire gave birth to Kemalism named after the leader of the movement, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk¹.

Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) was born in Solonika in 1881. His father died when he was seven and his mother wanted him to receive a religious education and become a Muslim preacher. Ataturk chose, by his own will and decision a military education². When he was appointed Inspector General of the North Army posted in Samsun, this provided an opportunity to go to Anatolia and to work for National liberation. Mustafa Kemal was promoted to the rank of commander-in-chief and was conferred with the title of Ghazi in recognition of his distinguished services.

A resolution of the Grand National Assembly declared Turkey as a Republic on October 29, 1923 and Mustafa Kemal was elected its first President³.

Mustafa Kemal was a revolutionary from the very beginning of his career. He was influenced by the excitement and style of the patriotic

¹ Karal, Enver Ziya Op.Cit; p. 11. The political ideology, Kemalism, are the radical reform measures implemented by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. It constitutes six principles: nationalism, statism, republicanism, revolutionism and secularism. In February 1937, they were incorporated into the Turkish constitution, Ahmad, Feroze The Making of Modern Turkey, 1993, p. 63.
² Ibid p. 15
poetry of Namik Kemal. His ideas did not differ much from those of the radical member of the Young Turks such as Abdullah Cevdit\(^1\) and Ziya Gokalp. He was able to develop a pattern of thought peculiar to himself and since he enjoyed a unique position of being the hero of the Turkish revolution and the head of the State, therefore, he directed his policies to the needs of the time. He transported his country from the middle ages to the threshold of the modern era and a stage beyond\(^2\).

Kemal asserted that ‘the aim of the reforms we have already carried out and are continuing to carry out, is to transform Turkish society into a modern society in every aspect\(^3\).

Here, this study will mainly be focused on secularization process brought by Mustafa Kemal in Turkey and its impact on the society in general.

After the successful termination of the War of Independence (1919-22), the task of the Kemal was to transform Turkey into a modernized, industrialized and secularized nation State. The Kemalist idea of a

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\(^1\) Abdullah Cevdit (1869-1932) was one of the founders of the Secret Revolutionary Society, which was formed with the purpose of overthrowing Sultan Abdul Hamid at the Military Medical School of Istanbul in 1898, which was later developed into the Union and Progress Party.


\(^3\) Karal, Enver Ziya Op.Cit; p. 15.
nation community ran counter to the Islamic conception of a community, which is essentially religious, thus his reforms constituted a turn of history for the Turkish nation. Since, the Islamic establishments had opposed efforts at modernity during the Ottoman Empire and took an adverse stand to the nation liberation movement. These historical realities facilitated the integration of Turkish people around a secularist and nationalist platform during the Kmalist period. Hence during the Kmalist era, Ottoman Islamic legacy was replaced by a national, secular and political culture.

It is a fact that the founder of the republic Mustafa Kmal could not have played his role successfully without the backing of other prominent figures in the nationalist and later in the Kmalist movements. Amongst his closest associates, Ismet Inonu was one of the most crucial contributors and somehow a necessary complement to Ataturk.\(^1\) Though he played an eminent role in Turkish politics for over half a century, he could not match the charismatic qualities of Mustafa Kmal.

Secularization is one of the distinguishing features of the Kemalist revolution, which was given top emphasis in republican Turkey. Turkey remains today the only Islamic country whose constitution stipulates that secularism is one of the basic organizational principles of the state (Constitution of 1961, Art 2). The principle of secularism had emerged in the Ottoman Empire as a practical necessity, and a preamble for modernization. This now became one of the pillars of the new government.\(^2\)

The term secularism has been used in various senses, but it finally acquired an ideological meaning in the nineteenth century as the differentiation of state and religion, and it became a political term signifying freedom of conscience\(^3\).

For a long time the idea of secularism served as a conceptual basis for those modernists who tried to lessen the role of religion in the state affairs. The Ottoman Empire like any other medieval empires made religion and state inseparable. However, Mustafa Kemal considered this phenomenon as the basic cause of all problems in the Ottoman Empire whether ethnic, social or political. So his secularism involved not just

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separation of the state from the Institution of the state religion but also
liberation of the individual mind from the restraints imposed by the
traditional Islamic concepts and practices, modernization of all aspects
of state and society that had been moulded by distorted Islamic
traditions and ways.\(^1\) It was on the line of this principle that the
abolition of Sultanate Caliphate, the office of the Sheikhul Islam and a
series of other reforms ending the union of the state and religion, the
chief characteristics of the Ottoman Empire, were abolished. According
to A.S. Adivar, it was a rationalist scientific anti-traditionalist and
anticlerical philosophy,\(^2\) which was adopted by Kemal to bring
transformation of the republic.

The principle of secularism as developed by the Turkish ideologues is
more extensive than its Western version. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk
implemented this principle in all aspects of life. It was not only
implemented in government offices and institutions but every effort
was made that secularism was reflected in the fields of social life,
culture, language, literature and in day to day life as well.

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\(^1\) Shaw & Shaw Op.Cit; p. 384.
\(^2\) Adivar, A.S. ‘The Interaction of Islamic and Western Thought in Turkey’ in T.
Ataturk recognized the freedom of conscience as the most natural and crucial rights of the individual. Each person has liberty to think and believe freely, to possess his own political view and to act in a way that suits him as far as the regulations of any religion are concerned.¹

To achieve this object a number of steps were taken to first secularize the state itself. In this direction the underlying steps were taken which subsequently became the salient features of the republic.

**Abolition of Sultanate**

With the occupation of Constantinople by the allied troops, the Sultan’s government had become handicapped for the want of revenue and army, and had become for all practical purposes a prisoner, still his political intrigues continued and he never thought for a moment to reconcile himself with the government at Ankara. Allied powers who still insisted on recognizing the Sultan’s government in Istanbul, invited him as well as the nationalists to the peace conference at Lausanne. This act of allied powers precipitated the clash because the British refused to recognize the nationalist government as the sole representative of the nation. This caused much indignation as both the

government of Sultan as well as that of Ankara was invited at the
Lausanne conference. Here Refat Pasha, whom Ankara had appointed
to be the vali of Eastern Thrace, compelled the Sultan to withdraw its
acceptance of the invitation. This left the Sultan’s government
completely hanging in balance.¹

The mistake committed by the British proved fatal to the Sultanate.
Mustafa Kemal had made his decision of separating Sultanate and the
Caliphate and abolishing the former. From now onwards there was to
be no Sultan but an Ottoman prince, who would hold office as Caliph
only, with religious but no political powers. By this compromise
Mustafa Kemal hoped to disarm the opposition of the religious
elements to political change, to retain the advantages of a legitimate
and revered authority above politics, and at the same time to end the
personal autocracy of the Sultan.²

Mustafa Kemal now feeling confident delivered a long speech on Nov.
1, 1922 in which he lucidly described the evolution of Sultanate and
Caliphate. Citing the examples from history he claimed that the two
could be separated and the former could be abolished while retaining

the later. Now the Sultan was nothing but temporal sovereign and that sovereignty had been taken over by the people.¹

The Grand National Assembly passed a law on 1-November 1922 deposing Sultan Mehmet VI and voiding all laws of his government. The resolution passed by Grand National Assembly contained two articles. In the light of one article, it was declared that 'the Turkish people consider that the form of government in Istanbul resting on the sovereignty of an individual had ceased to exist on March 1920 and now was a history, the second recognized that caliphate rested on the Turkish State, and that assembly would chose as caliph that member of the Ottoman house who was, in learning and character, most worthy and fitting². On October 29, 1923, the Turkish National Assembly passed a law proclaiming Turkey to be a Republic. The Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed VI Vahideddin (1918-22) had gone into exile on November 17, 1922. The Turkish Grand Nation Assembly had appointed his cousin Majid a successor to him on November 18, 1922 in the capacity of the caliph of Islam.³

¹ Berkes, Niyazi, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, pp. 449-450.
Abolition of Caliphate

After the abolition of Sultanate, Kemal’s next move towards the complete secularization was abolition of caliphate. The Caliph Abdul Majid flouted Mustafa Kemal’s authority quietly and determinedly at Istanbul. He was backed by the opposition, especially the defeated members of the first assembly. Propaganda was unleashed that Kemal’s intention was to destroy Islam and statements were being issued in favour of the Caliph. Now it was deliberately made public that Mustafa Kemal was irreligious and a fanatical non-believer. This propaganda stirred almost the whole Muslim world and concern was shown over the fate of caliph inside and outside Turkey.¹

However Mustafa Kemal seized upon the opportunity and prepared the ground by reaching an agreement with his chief supporters. Influential newspapers were persuaded to campaign against the Caliphate as a hurdle in the way of progress.² The Caliph, emphasizing the need of the preservation of Caliphate, and the concern of the Muslims all over the world, asserted that he would not resign from the Caliphate

¹ Two eminent Indian Muslims Agha Khan and Ameer Ali wrote a letter to Ismet Pasha in 1923 emphasizing that the caliphate to be placed on a basis that would command the esteem of Muslims everywhere. For more details see P. Price, History of Turkey, London, 1961 p. 128.
² Davison, R.H Op.Cit; p. 129.
keeping in view, the great importance of his office.¹ Thus the Caliph became the focal point for the opponents of the new regime, who wanted to re-establish the Caliphate and Sultanate. However, the republic of Turkey was founded on the basis of nationalism and national sovereignty, so it could not fit in, the institution of Caliphate, which had been established on the policy of asserting the primacy of religious law.

One can assess the Kemal’s virulent dislike for the institution of Caliphate from his statements quoted below when he retorted to the Caliphs asking for increased privileges as²

Let the Caliph and the whole world know that the Caliph and the Caliphate which have been preserved have no real meaning and no real existence. We cannot expose the Turkish Republic to any sort of danger to its Independence by its continued existence. The position of Caliphate in the end has for us no more importance than a historic memory.

¹ Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; p. 84.
On February 29, 1924, the Caliph Abdul Majid attended his last Friday Selamik, the last such ceremony ever attended by a member of the Ottoman dynasty. Four days later, on March 3, 1924, the Grand National Assembly duly passed the bill abolishing the Caliphate. The Caliph was thus deposed and he was banished from the country along with all the other members of the house of Osman. Abolition of Caliphate, made modernists think that the obstacle to secularization and modernization of the country was removed.

Kemal's efforts during the first four-year of the republic were devoted essentially to shaping the government to consolidating his control over it and to secularization designed to bring Turkey closer to Western civilization. The declaration of the Republic and the abolition of the Sultanate and the Caliphate resulted in the formal recognition of the fact that sovereignty belonged to the people.¹

The abolition of the Caliphate was followed by more radical pronouncements of Mustafa Kemal on the policies of the Turkish Nation State. He described Caliphate as a legend of the past which had no place in his age, in any case, Turkey has quite clearly and definitely

¹ Shaw and Shaw Op.Cit; p. 375.
severed her relationship with her religious past, and marched on the road to progress breaking all shackles of the past.¹

**Abolition of the Office of Sheikh-ul-Islam**

The official religion of the Ottomans was Islam and the majority of the Turks were Sunni Muslims. It was generally understood that religion and state are one. Next to Caliphate another important office of religious significance was that of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*. The political function of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* was formally confined to his power of issuing *fatwas*. In the Ottoman Empire of 19th and 20th century, the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* no longer played this important role. Appeal was occasionally made to the traditional authority of this institution when need arose as on the occasion of the deposition of Abdulhamid in 1909, or the *fatwa* against the nationalists of Ankara in 1920. After the victory of Turkish nationalists all that remained in Constantinople of the old government institutions of the Ottoman Empire was abolished. Their functions were taken over by the officers of the new government at Ankara. This government no longer included the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*. In the constitution of the new government, a *Shariya Wakalati*

¹ Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; p. 100.
had been instituted but the anti-clerical spirit of Grand National Assembly did not allow this imitation of the Sheikh-ul-Islam to survive.¹

Simultaneously with the abolition of the Caliphate the Grand National Assembly passed two more laws, abolishing the office of the Sheikh-ul-Islam and the ministers of Sharia and Awkaf replacing them by a Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet Isleri) and Directorate General of Pious Foundation (Evkaf Umum Mudurhiya) and to unify all educational institutions into one single modern system under the Ministry of Education.² The Directorate of Religious Affairs was appointed by the Prime Minister. The duties of the director included the administration of Mosques, appointed and dismissal of religious functionaries for example Imams, Preachers and muezzins and the general supervision of Muftis. The Directorate of Awkaf was allowed to function independently and was entrusted the responsibility of the administration of all the religious foundations that were taken over by the state along with the religious buildings and from 1931, disbursing the payments of all religious functionaries. The Presidency of Religious Affairs was concerned mainly with the appointment of preachers and

censoring their sermons and occasionally giving a ruling on same questions of the *Sharia*.¹

**Impact on Religion and Society**

The fierce determination of Mustafa Kemal to modernize and secularize the country made him to promulgate a constitution, which virtually placed all power in the hands of the President of the Republic. Most of the reform programs launched by the nationalists under Mustafa Kemal had been prepared and discussed by scores of Turkish intellectuals. The most important contribution of Mustafa Kemal was not his original idea only but his ability to choose a set of inter-related consistent, and relevant ideas and build them into a practical programme. His reforms especially secularization in various fields of life met with widespread, opposition from many conservatives and traditionalists but Mustafa Kemal took little notice of it and continued it on with even greater zeal and vigour. Although the new constitution stated that the religion of the Turkish state is Islam. (Article 2). Nevertheless, the official status of Islam was terminated when the Ministry of Religious Affairs was abolished. Immediately after it on April 8, 1924, the judicial law

abolished the religious courts administering the *Sharia*, and pensioned off their judges and transferred their authorities to secular courts. This was a decisive moment in favour of secularism and has been termed as the greatest coup of the new period.¹

It was generally understood that a Muslim state could not be secular and if it was secular it could not be Muslim. But in the Republic of Turkey, the Turks have been able to assume a seemingly impossible religious position by putting into practice what appears to be a contradiction. Mustafa Kemal created a secular Muslim state. For the Turks although their law is secular, their religion is unquestionably Islam. Next, most revolutionary of all the secularist reforms was the replacement of the *Sharia* by the Western legal codes. In February 1926, the assembly adopted the new codes whereby all religious laws were terminated. A civil code and a code of obligations from Switzerland, a new penal code from Italy and a new commercial code from Germany were adopted. Even before the new codes were finally adopted, the Turkish Grand National Assembly had discussed it for nearly two years. The new legal system obviously became more

palatable when identified as the Turkish (rather than the Swiss) civil code and the Turkish (rather than the Italian) criminal code.\(^1\)

After the abolition of the office of *Sheikh-ul-Islam* all religious matters were administrated by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which licensed preachers, censured sermons and gave occasional advice on the intricacies of the *Sharia*.\(^2\)

Even before the final abolition of *Sharia*, a law school was opened in Ankara in November, 1925, Mustafa Kemal had remarked that, ‘the most important thing is to liberate our conception of justice, and our legal institutions and laws from the bonds which hold us under them unconsciously, and which are incompatible with the needs of the century’.\(^3\)

The law school was intended to be not merely the training ground of high officials and legal specialists but, more important, the basis of a new jurisdiction consistent with the revolutionary ideals and in harmony with the social needs of the new Turkey.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Rustow, D.A. *Politics and Islam in Turkey*, 1920-1955, p. 81.
In the beginning Atatürk had definitely, no intentions of any break with Islam because in Article 2 of the constitution of 1924, it was clearly envisaged, the Islam to be the official religion and included reference to Allah in the official oath taking. In fact, Mustafa Kemal was against those Ulema who, through their superficial knowledge of Islam, were exploiting the people for self-aggrandizement. He made frequent reference to Islam wherever he tried to justify his reforms and the programmes of the nationalist government.¹

In the past too, the Ulema had been forced by successive reformers to surrender large areas of jurisdiction in legal, social, and educational matters. However, they still had great power and influence. A large part of the educational facilities of the country were under their influence. After the termination of Sultanate and other institutions of the past, only those remained in Turkish society having power and organization, and the authority to challenge the new leadership. This had occurred many times when the Ulema had posed problems before the reformers and delayed their work.²

¹ Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; p. 98.
The abolition of Sultanate, Caliphate and other secularizing reforms undertaken by Mustafa Kemal were no doubt a crushing blow to the then existing organizations, and were aimed at putting an end to the union of state and religion that had been for centuries the basis of the Ottoman Empire. This ended also the power of the religious class to limit and control the state.

By nationalizing and secularizing the educational system, Kemal was able to further limit the powers of the Ulema who had, since the earliest period of the Ottoman Empire, been dominating the educational institutions. By these measures he was able to limit the practice of religion within the boundaries of the places of worship and also at separating religion and state. Religion was thus subordinated to the state. The law against high treason passed by the Grand National Assembly on April 29, 1920 helped to stop the misuse of religion for political ends. However, the subordination of Islam to the state also betrayed the deep-rooted belief of the secularists that Islam was responsible for the decline and backwardness of the Turkish nation.

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1 Madaressas, the religious schools operating for centuries were closed down. Under the provisions of the laws of 1924, new schools were opened under the supervision of the Ministry of Education for the Training of Imams and Preachers.
The high tide of secularism unleashed by the Kemalist reforms between 1925 and 1928 continued to sweep large areas of national life in Turkey. His regime was impatient to achieve the maximum progress within the shortest possible time. It embarked, therefore upon a programme of complete Westernization. Secularism was adopted as a means to ensure the smooth operation of this policy. Political factors, particularly, the revolt of the Arab countries and the pressure of the European powers, were further responsible for the adoption of this policy. The extremist policy in the application of secularism as a principle of statecraft began in 1928, with the secularization of the Turkish constitution of 1924, while the wholesale adoption of western laws, the replacement of the Arabic script by Latin and the introduction of religious reforms sponsored by the faculty of Theology, University of Istanbul.

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1 Various arguments have been put forward to explain and justify the revolution in the alphabet. The Arabic letters were ill suited to express the sounds of the Turkish language, they were difficult to teach and troublesome to print, and thus constituted a barrier to education and cultural expansions.
Closure of Tekkes

The great secularizing reforms of 1924\textsuperscript{1} were directed against the
Ulema not the dervishes, but it soon became apparent that it was from
the dervishes, not the Ulema, that the most dangerous resistance to
secularism would come. The dervishes were used to independence and
opposition, they still enjoyed the confidence and loyalty of the
common people and, unlike Ulema were untarnished by collaboration
with the invaders. On September 2, 1925, two decrees were made by
the assembly; one laid down the final closure of the ‘Tekkes’\textsuperscript{2}
(religious orders or Dervish orders) and dissolved the congregations,
the other designated those members of the clergy who had the right to
use clerical garb and to fill positions in the hierarchy of the mosque,
and made conditions to which their conduct must confirm. Also the
‘turbes’ or tombs to which ritual offerings were made and which were
considered miracle working were closed down. One reason behind their
closure may be that their popular support, their radical traditions, their
masonic organization, all made them too little amenable to state
control. Yet another reason for the abolition of the Dervish orders was

\textsuperscript{1} Shaw & Shaw Op.Cit; p. 385.
\textsuperscript{2} Turks called their Sufi sanctuary a ‘Tekke’
the revolt led by Sheikh Said, head of the Naksibendi order in Eastern Anatolia, which was full of Islamic sentiments. The revolt was quelled and special courts, known as Independence Tribunals condemned the Sheikh,\(^1\) other forty persons involved in this rebellion were to be hanged.\(^2\)

**Religious Reforms**

A committee was appointed by the faculty of Theology under the chairpersonship of Prof. Mehmed Fuad Koprulu to prepare a plan for modernizing Islam. Members of committee included professors of psychology and logic and a number of theologians. The report of the committee was published in June 1928.\(^3\)

Two objects of the Turkish Revolution applicable to the proposed religious reforms were mentioned in the preamble of the report: “The scientific development of all social institution” and “the nationalization of these social institutions as all scientific and rational matters are

\(^{1}\) Ibid.

\(^{2}\) Sheikh Said and his Nurcu movement is dealt in detail in Chapter V

\(^{3}\) The text of the committee report is given in Jasckke, Die Well des Islam der Islam in der Neven Tukey, Vol. 1, No. 1-2 Leiden, 1951, pp 65-68.
treated according to the precepts of science and reason.” Explaining the aim of the proposed religious reforms, the report said:\footnote{Ibid.}

Religion also is a social institution like all other social institutions, it ought to satisfy the exigencies of life and pursue the process of development. This development, however, should not be outside of the basic nature of our religion. But it is wrong to think that our religion, whatever its scientific and economic precepts may be, should be bound to the old forms and conventions, and thus be incapable of any progress. Therefore, in the Turkish democracy, religion also should manifest the vitality and progress which it needs.

The religious reforms can also be viewed as a step to modernize and nationalize Islam. If the religious reforms of 1925 had been implemented, it would have produced a modern version of Islam based on the dictates of nationalism, philosophy and science and it would have been another Islam outside the periphery of the Islam preached by prophet Mohammad (PBUH) which has a dynamic philosophy of its own and is not opposed to science and reason.
The Sultanate and the Caliphate were abolished to set up a secular national state. However, the conversion of the Mosque into a modern Islamic Church proved impossible. The project was impracticable and the report in the proposed religious reform remained a dead letter.

Finally, the Turkish government decided to introduce the 'adhan' in Turkish in 1932. The Turkish version of the call to prayers was prepared by the Linguistic society, and it was published by the Presidency of Religious Affairs. This innovation caused more resentment among the people than any other secular reform and it was considered as government interference in religious affairs.¹

Mustafa Kemal had ordered the Quran to be translated into Turkish and published in the new alphabet, and people were persuaded to pray in Turkish but they did not accede to it. However, with the change of alphabet in November 1928, a new generation of Turks did not read the Quran in Arabic. Only the devout took the trouble to teach their children the rudiments of the Arabic alphabet.²

Abolition of Fez

Whatever changes, Mustafa Kemal was trying to incorporate in the Turkish society, were directed towards undermining the religious classes indirectly by encouraging a spirit of modernism in the minds and hearts of every one in the Republic. A law was passed in 1925, which prohibited the wearing of Turbans and Fezzes in public. Fez the red hats was introduced a century earlier by Mehmood II as a Western innovation. Now Turks were required to wear a European hat and it was also envisaged that all had gear should be equipped with a trim or visor. Regarding the prohibition of the traditional headgear (Fez) of Ottoman bureaucrats, Kemal Ataturk defended his hat law as:

\begin{quote}
Gentlemen it was necessary to abolish the Fez, which sat on our heads as a sign of ignorance, of fanaticism, of hatred to progress and civilization, and to adopt in its place the hat, the customary headdress of the whole civilized world, thus showing, among other things that no difference existed in the manner of thought between the Turkish nation and the whole family of civilized mankind.
\end{quote}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Shaw and Shaw Op.Cit; p. 385.
\item Ataturk, M.K. *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1927*, (Nutuk), Istanbul: Ministry of Education Printing Plant.
\end{enumerate}
These changes were believed to symbolize the modernization of Turkey. This move was met with wider criticism, for the *Fez* was compatible with the Muslim practice in a way that the hat was not as during prostrating the forehead touches the ground where in hat it seems problematic. But the Turks changed and prayers were performed either with a bare head or with a cap turned backwards.\(^1\)

**Status of Women**

Mustafa Kemal’s modernizing reforms were also directed to improve and enhance the status of women in society and provide them a chance to prove their talent in every field as was happening in the civilized Western nations.

Ataturk removed all obstacles tethering the community from the contemporary life. He believed that the essence of civilization, and the basis of strength and progress lie in family. The male and female elements, which comprise the family, must have possession of their natural rights in order to perform their family duties.\(^2\)

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Thus Kemal Ataturk encouraged women to come out of the traditional bonds. The use of veil, particularly in cities, was discouraged, though it was not made illegal. Muslim women now began to present themselves in beauty contests and in 1929 the first Turkish beauty queen was chosen.¹

Moreover, women were given extensive grounds to divorce their husbands. Polygamy was abolished and divorces by court action introduced. Civil marriages were made compulsory for all, even though many who wished to do so still could have religious marriages as well. Women were given equal legal rights to vote and be elected. They were first allowed to vote and contest the election of the municipalities in 1930, then the village council of elders in 1933, and finally in national elections for the Grand National Assembly in 1934.² Women were admitted to the public schools, the civil service, and the professions on an increasingly equal basis with men.³

³ Ibid.
Education

Development of a modern system of education throughout the republic was an important element of secularism. Education was mainly related to the religion. Now it was completely divorced from religion, and religious lessons were forbidden, learning them to the family or, where they existed, to Hojas, maintained privately, mainly in the smaller villages. The job to develop policy on matters of curriculum and school regulations was left to the Ministry of Education, helped by an education council, which included ministry officials and representatives of the various levels of education, both teachers and administrators who met periodically to discuss these matters.

Elementary education was made compulsory and free for all children, regardless of religion, to assure a common training.¹ New schools were built and large-scale programs training new teaching were adopted. Though emphasis was on technical and career training. At the higher level also the educational plan begun by the Tanzimat was retained but modernized, often with the help of foreign experts and teachers.² The Ottoman university was reorganized as the university of Istanbul in

² Ibid. p. 387.
1933, wherein many members of the old staff were replaced by German refugees, improving the quality of education.

As Shaw has given brief account of this whole process which would be worth to cite here.\(^1\)

The number of vocational, technical and teacher-training schools were increased, technical academics enlarged, and the war academy transferred to Ankara. Between 1923 and 1940 the number of higher faculties and technical schools increased from 9 to 20, teachers 328 to 1,013 and students from 2,914 to 12,147, a sizable through not substantial improvement.

Thus education in Turkey which was till new completely in the hands of Ulemas and was mainly religious education, was completely taken out of the hands of these people and was taught in accordance with the Western pattern. The aim being to produce enlightened and knowledgeable Turks, who could compete with the challenges offered by the new civilization.

\(^1\) Ibid.
A series of Kemal’s other moves were another set back for the conservatives, which emboldened the modernists. In 1925, the international time and calendar systems replaced the traditional Islamic ones, which already had been reduced to limited usage by the end of the nineteenth century.\(^1\)

However, religious holidays and Ramadan continued to be calculated by the Islamic method. That same year Turkey also began to use the international designation for time instead of the traditional Muslim method of calculating the hours of the day from the sunset. Yet another change in this regard was concerning the weekly holiday, which was affected in 1935. The weekly holiday on Friday was dropped and instead it was fixed from 1.00 p.m. Saturday until Monday morning.\(^2\)

**Abolition of Millet System**

In the secularizing and modernizing process, while institutions and laws were copied from the West, at the same time efforts were put in to

\(^2\) Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; p. 91.
unify the internal population within Turkey’s new boundaries, which completely shattered the old Ottoman order.

Under the Ottoman rule each distinctive religious group was allowed to organize into an autonomous, self governing body or *millet* whose highest governing official was an ecclesiastical dignitary who was appointed by and responsible to the Sultan. They were immune to the laws of the state and although they reached positions of responsibility, dignity and honour. There were few compulsory obligations imposed on them. They were exempted from military services. After the treaty of Lausanne in 1923 the Western nations gave up their capitulatory privileges and from then Turkey was to manage her own affairs.

A tremendous internal readjustment was there by the abandonment of the *Millet* system. The measures taken to eliminate the religion from its place of control and the desire to have one modern law code which could be uniformly applicable to everyone in Turkey caused the decision on the part of the government to adopt a totally new set of statutes based on the Western models with this ended the special

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1 Special privileges enjoyed by European government were capitulations, which permitted citizens of those countries to be exempt from Turkish law and subject to the laws of ‘their own country when in Turkish territory. For further details see Toynbee, A.J. and Kirkwood Op.Cit; pp. 136 ff.
long-standing exemption, privileges enjoyed by the Jewish and Christian population. Upon being promised equal treatment in the country they accepted Turkish citizenship on the same basis as the Muslims. As the law of citizenship of June 1928, not mentions religion in any way as a qualification or handicap in the attainment of Turkish citizenship. The government, by abandoning its official connection with Islam and framing its laws on the model of those of the European countries, was able to lay down citizenship regulations comparable to those of Western nations.¹

By these reforms, Mustafa Kemal was slamming a door on the past as well as opening a door to future.² Mustafa Kemal made clear his aims and objects of the Turkish revolution through his many speeches in and outside the Grand National Assembly. His most famous speeches were those, which he delivered between October 15th and 20th 1927 at the Congress of the Republican People’s Party. In these speeches he described the events that led to the establishments of the Republic of Turkey and also the justification of his policies.

Concluding the speech he explained the chief goal of the Turkish revolution in the following words:\(^1\)

Gentlemen, our new laws which will ensure beneficial results in the social, economic and in short, in all civilizational matters and relations of our nation as well as our civil law which ensure the freedom and stability of family life, have been made in the period that we have discussed, we shall therefore, benefit only from one viewpoint. The viewpoint is to raise the Turkish nation to the position that it deserves in the civilized world, and to strengthen Turkish democracy further everyday on unshakable foundations and to obliterate the idea of autocracy for this purpose.

In the end he had appealed to the youths of Turkey to safeguard Turkish independence and democracy forever. Various organizations in Turkey have adopted this as an article of faith and is frequently quoted on important occasions in the schools and colleges.

\(^1\) Ataturk, M.K. A. *Speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 1927*, (Nutuk), Istanbul: Ministry of Education Printing Plant.
The secularization program launched by Kemal was aimed at the separation of state from religion. Through it, State, wanted complete control over religious, educational and cultural affairs in order to bring the secularization of public and social life. The government not only tried to contain the role of Islam in society, but also took steps to reform Islam according to its own vision. The purified Islam was expected to promote the creation of a society composed of nationalist, scientifically minded and anti-traditional individuals.¹

However, Shaw has different views, he asserts that the secularism of the republic was at lessening the influence of the clergy and creating an environment in which the individual could follow his religious beliefs without having to embrace predetermined dogmas and conform to strict rules. It did not intend to abandon Islam as some of its opponents have claimed. The state was not anti-clerical as long as the Ulema made no overt attempt to interfere with the reforms. Worship at Mosques was not forbidden and religious leaders never prevented from performing their religious functions.²

¹ Karpat, Kemal H. *Turkey's Politics*, p. 271.
It is also a fact that with the Ottoman Empire’s disintegration, Turkey would have sunk, but was saved by the reforms of Kemal, which saw that unless a modern state based on the principles of citizenship, nationalism and secularism were created, it would be impossible to preserve the independence of Turkey which would otherwise fall into the status of a colonized territory. Under the conditions prevailing in the capitalist world-economy and the inter-state system of that period, the alternative for Turkey was between the creation of modern state and the loss of political independence.¹

D.A. Rustow puts it that Kemal’s achievement was revolutionary in that it enforced a drastic change of direction from the Ottoman and Islamic past, and implemented a program of nationalism and integral Westernization that only a decade or two before, would have seemed visionary and unrealistic.² The same author adds, that the Turkish transformation never generated any uncontrolled, accelerating momentum such as was characteristic of the English, French and Russian (or more recently the Iranian) revolutions. The threads of legitimacy were severely strained, but there was never any break in

institutional continuity, never any organizational vacuum. The new institutions proved durable in part because they had been prepared and tested, both for their support at home and their recognition abroad, before they were irrevocably announced.¹

According to Professor Akmal Ayyubi, "Kemal Ataturk was a dynamic personality of Asia. He had devoted his life to turn Turkey into a modern European state without destroying its own identity and culture in the process. It was his leadership that developed nationalism, populism and secularism as response to the challenges of imperialism, communism and theocracy and made him an undisputed leadership of reformism, modernism and secularism in the East."² He further adds, his achievements also made him personification of our national advancement and freedom. No one can deny that he was badly overawed by Western technology and scientific progress and tried to impose European civilization with the hope to enter new age of science and technology but he was not anti Islamic. It is also fact that in 1924 the Caliphate was abolished and religious courts were closed and next year law was passed compelling men to wear a hat he also suppressed the powerful and rich religious orders and discouraged the use of the

¹ Ibid.
ruthlessness, combined with patience, foresight, and judgment, which Kemal displayed’.¹

Moreover, Ataturk can be attributed to have initiated Western pattern of living in the Asian region. No doubt, he was conscious of the geographical and cultural proximity of Turkey with Europe. Ataturk had introduced various reforms to lay strong foundation and a clear object for future growth of Turkey on Western pattern. He had tried successfully to separate the state with the Church (Mosque). He was true reformist modernist, secularist and an excellent military officer, called justly the father of the Turks, Mustafa Kemal had also abolished the monarchy and changed the non-racial and multi-national Empire into a one nation and one language state bestowed with a rare sense of realism, he was a dynamic personality and had fired the imaginations of the intelligentsia of our sub-continent.

Kemal Ataturk saved Turkey from complete annihilation and division by Western powers and laid the foundation of a modern nation and on the other hand, he led the people to religious and social reforms, which ultimately modernized Turkey and transformed the medieval into a

¹ Rustow, D.A. ‘The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic’ World Politics. 11(4) 1959, p. 537.
traditional veil of the women for which there is no sanction in the Quran.¹

Thus some of his actions were un-Islamic but it cannot be realistically said that he was anti religion. His primary intention was to undo the harm done by conservative mullahs in the name of religion and not to suppress Islam, for he expressed his respects for it in his third address to the Grand National Assembly as early as on March 1, 1925. The idea of reasonableness of Islam became a deistic conviction in his mind. For him the abolition of the Caliphate meant liberating Islam from its unreasonable traditional associates and preparing the ground for its emergence as a national religion. He also believed that religion inspired by God has no need of support from the civil authorities. To wear a hat was also to follow the policy of a famous Turkish sociologist and a philosopher Ziya Gokalp who had said that we come from the East and go towards the West.

According to Rustow, ‘none of the highest army commanders... could have equaled the personal courage, resoluteness and even

¹ Ibid.
modern society. He never intended to abandon Islam. Prayers at Mosques was never forbidden. Performance of religious functions were allowed and the majority of the population of Turkey remained religious, as they had been in the past. Kemal Ataturk himself was product of the army and his main aim was to save Turkey from the complete domination by the Western imperialistic power or from those nations who attacked Turkey under their protection. Thus, while the Ottoman Caliphs were weak and played into the hands of the imperialist agents, Ataturk was successful in rousing national sentiment and creating a force of patriots who ultimately gained victories over the imperialists and established new democratic republic of Turkey. It is true that Mustafa Kemal was an architect of modern Turkey without whom the Turkish nation and State probably would have disappeared in the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire. He proved that Turks are able to live as an honorable nation without depending on any foreign power.
Chapter - iv
Ataturk was a brilliant military tactician and a consummate political organizer. Although he led the establishment of the forms of the parliamentary rule, he ran Turkey as an autocrat. He setup a political party under his absolute control and, referring to the Committee of Union and Progress as a model, used his new creation to dominate the political scene.

Ataturk’s Republican People’s Party (RPP) would create the new Turkish government based on the ideas of its leader. Kemal’s moves towards Westernization and modernization would include many points, the strongest of which were the 1924 abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, the mass closing of Islamic schools, and a new constitution based on quadrennial elections and the concept of universal male suffrage. In 1925 the Islamic calendar would be eliminated from use with the adoption of the Gregorian date system. This was coupled with the outlawing of the Fez and Turban to be replaced with a more Western style of headwear. In 1928 the constitutional clause calling
Islam the state religion would be eliminated and the Arabic alphabet was replaced by a Latinized Turkish alphabet created by Kemal himself. His six principles or ideological tenets of republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, revolutionism, and etatism would be officially drafted into the Turkish constitution. With these reforms Turkey as a nation would emerge as the bridge between Europe and the West Asia yet as an individual belonging to none.¹

The Republic’s political power was centered in the Grand National Assembly with the Republican People’s Party as its driving force, and Ataturk serving as both the party leader and the nation’s president. In this way he manipulated access to high political positions.

The system was inherently a single party system. He eliminated rival political organizations, starting with supporters of the Caliph in the 1923 elections and the Progressive Republican Party in 1925. The opposition Free Party – his own tame creation, which was intended as a device to promote constructive criticism and to discourage laxness in the Republican Peoples Party was also closed down when it threatened

to get out of hand in 1930.\textsuperscript{1} Thereafter, he adopted a modest approach to a corporate state in which party and government posts merged. But this fusion of party and state led to the atrophy of the former and the clear dominance of the latter.\textsuperscript{2}

Ataturk took to the creation of independent deputies, non-members of the Republican Peoples’ Party, whose job it was to criticize the government vigorously in public and to expand the theory of ‘Loyal Opposition’. This was paired with the creation of halkevleri, or people’s house, which were to serve as models of self-administration and institutions for both general education and political indoctrination.

The period of the 1930’s saw the expansion of economic and social development, including state education, transportation systems, and expansion in the fields of communication and industrialization as much as possible with Turkey’s limited resources. This was also the time the nation had to face the death of Ataturk in 1938.

The autocratic style of rule that Ataturk practiced behind the façade of one-party assembly could not long survive his death in 1938. In fact, his successor, Ismet Inonu, after taking the charge recognized the need

\textsuperscript{1} Harris, George S. \textit{Turkey Coping with Crises}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
to liberalize the regime and by the end of World War II Turkey was set on the path of a multiparty system. As a matter of fact, Inonu was well aware of the rising domestic discontent, which could not permit further delay in instituting competitive party politics. Calls for the relaxation of political party restrictions led to the government allowing four prominent members to split off and form the Democratic Party.

While each and every government which followed Mustafa Kemal Ataturk adamantly proclaimed its adherence to Kemalism in general and secularism, as interpreted by him, in particular, after the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1950, many of the strictures were lifted against such religious practices as the pilgrimage to Mecca (formerly restricted supposed to ‘protect the flow of hard currency’), the call to prayer in Arabic and religious classes.¹

Feroze Ahmad observes that the multiparty period ended the phase of militant secularism in Turkey in deed if not in word while in opposition the Republican People’s Party used secularism as a stick with which to beat the government. However, the end of militant secularism did not mean the triumph of the Islamists. The Republican People’s Party lost

the election because voters associated it with the long nightmare of mono-party despotism. The Democrats won because they promised to slay this dragon and put it to rest forever.¹

**The Democratic Party (1950 – 60)**

A number of political parties were found in Turkey, after World War II, owing to the internal and international pressure, which hastened the introduction of competitive party polities. Among the parties formed, the Democratic Party was most influential. It was established by four prominent defectors from the Republican People’s Party, being headed by Celal Bayar, who had been Ataturk’s last Prime Minister. The Democrats united a broad range of intellectuals, business and peasant constituents from the more modernized parts of the country. Democrats won a small number of seats in the elections of 1946, yet it was not until 1950 that the nation would be shocked by the massive victory of the party and the quiet transfer of power from the Republican People’s Party thus ending the Kemalist period of Turkish politics and stayed there until it was overthrown in a military coup in 1960.

The Democratic Party from which all center right parties turn for inspiration and legitimization, from its inception, identified itself primarily with agrarian interests and with the rural population.

Its power base consisted of a large numbers of landowners and peasants in the more developed regions of Turkey who had been hard hit by the extensive emergency powers of Republican Peoples Party Government during the war, for the war time controls had induced the poverty in rural areas. Moreover, introduction of the land reform Bill by Republican Peoples Party in 1945, had shattered the confidence of the big farmers. Owing to this bill the big estates and nationalized farms were broken over a certain size.

Thus the opposition became the political rallying point to give voice to an unequal coalition of peasants, provincial town dwellers, professionals and the business community, the later evolving from the Kemalist policy of national economy. The periphery in its social forms peasantry, urban lower strata and petty bourgeoisie – was excluded from political participation under the single party system.¹

In the Democratic Party era (1950-60), the military suffered a dramatic decline in parliamentary representation, with professionals and merchants replacing retired officers and state officials as the most powerful group. In the late 1950’s nearly one half of the top governmental leaders came from the legal profession, while only three percent were from the military.¹

The Democratic Party enjoyed also the support of urban business and mercantile interests that had made quick wartime profits and did not want to have the interventionist Republican People’s Party policies in the postwar economy.² For these diverse elements, which make the power base of the Democratic Party, Islam represents a cultural tradition but not a political ideology.³ The nature of the demands made by the rural masses of the Democratic Party is in itself an evidence of this.⁴

Its political discourse centered on themes such as respect for indigenous culture and freedom for business. The Democratic Party’s

approach to religion involved the incorporation of Islam as a living cultural tradition into the mainstream of Turkish politics. Religion in this view was necessary social cement for the cohesion of society.\textsuperscript{1} It emphasized that religious commitment and social development were not incompatible objectives and that religion did not negate the positivism of a section of the single party elite who tended to present this relationship as mutually antagonistic.\textsuperscript{2}

While in power, the Democratic Party introduced voluntary religious courses into primary schools; it re-established religious radio broadcasts and the call to prayer in Arabic; it set up Imam- Hatip lycees (Prayer- Leader and preacher schools) and also established the faculty of Divinity at Ankara University. Government funding for mosques increased and the general political discouragement of religious practice was eased. These changes were not aimed at dismantling the secular state. Some of these changes had already been initiated by Republican People’s Party, what Democratic Party

\textsuperscript{2} Zurcher, ErikJ. Op.Cit; pp. 243-44.}
achieved, was to lend legitimacy to Islam and traditional culture in the context of the official politics of the country.¹

However, the Democrats who ruled throughout the fifties were not about to permit anything resembling a counter-revolution, to the reforms imposed by an autocratic rule.

In the fifties, the Sufi and other religious orders² that had gone underground began to reappear. The religious orders had become active once more. The Democrats took them seriously enough and found it expedient to cultivate them though never to the extent of tolerating them. The accusation that Democratic Party was soft on Islam is unconvincing³. The Tijanis, a Tarikat group who rejected the reforms as aesthetic and morally corrupting, and smashed the statues and busts of Ataturk which are found everywhere, were dealt with seriously they were punished for their anti – Ataturk outrages. The Democratic Party pursued court cases against reactionaries, Islamist publications, and Said Nursi, the leader of the influential and conservative Nurcu group. Moreover it closed down the Nationalists

² For details about Sufi orders and other Tarikats see Chapter V
Association of Turkey an ultra-nationalist body, and passed an "Ataturk Bill" to fight the anti Kemalists.¹

In the prevailing political landscape of 1950’s the Democratic Party promoted religion for electoral success, and took steps to appeal to traditional Muslim sentiment for political gain. Because the Democratic Party was faced with economic failures and rising unpopularity, so it tried to enlist the support of the Tarikats and the Nurcus.²

It actually served the goal of the state, because it helped the party maintain its political hierarchy, political unity, and national security feeling threatened by the propensity of the political opposition to organize around social class, the secular state resorted to the non-secular use of religion for checking and blocking communism.³

Feroze Ahmad comments that the attitude of the Democratic Party towards Islam remained ambiguous and failed to win the trust of the Islamists, for the fact that the four founders of the party-Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Fuad Koprulu, and Refik Koraltan had all been prominent members of the Republican People’s Party. They had all

¹ Ibid
supported the party’s policy of secularism and Köprülü had even been in charge of a commission whose task was to devise the reformation of Turkish Islam. Thus, the Islamist, keeping in view all these facts, supported the Nation Party, and thought that it will bring Turkey to true secularism and bring a slide to atheism.¹

The period beginning with 1959 would usher in the next wave of reforms in Turkish politics. Though Democratic Party focused on Turkish economy and encouraged private enterprise and was also able to get large-scale aid from the United States under the Truman Doctrine. The government began deficit financing, which resulted in a period of rapid inflation, coupled with increased urbanization with the economy becoming unstable, opposition from the Republican People’s Party became stronger and in May 1960 the Turkey faced its first military intervention as the army ousted the Democratic Party regime.

As Weiker asserts that the increasing violation of democratic rights and individual liberties, as well as concessions to traditional and

¹ Ahmad, Feroze, “Politics and Islam”, p. 10.
conservative forces, completely alienated the intelligentsia of the cities who had earlier supported the Democrats.¹

Zurcher also views the same. According to him the political exploitation of religious sentiments among the population accompanied this suppression of public criticism and led to open charges that the Democrat regime was undermining the secularist principles of the Turkish state.²

It is said that the overthrow of the Menderes government was triggered not only by convergence about the country’s political situation, but also by the fact that the privileged positions of the Turkish military was at stake.³

**The Military Regime (1960 – 61)**

On 27th May 1960, the Democrats were overthrown by a military coup. By then Turkey had accomplished a thorough transformation in almost every sphere of life except politics. The economy was no more agrarian in character but commerce and industry were becoming

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³ Harris, G.S., ‘The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics Part I’ *Middle East Journal* 19 (1) 1965, pp. 54-56.
dominant. This transformation has given rise to new social group, majority of which were Technocrats and managers. Their cultural values were neither as western nor as cosmopolitan as those of the elite. Such people felt quite comfortable with Islam, which had remained a living tradition in their daily lives despite the militant, secularism of the mono party period.¹

The political transformation carried out by the military regime was what the Democrats had failed to do. A new constitution was adopted in place of the 1942 constitution, and that liberalized the entire system. The 1961 constitution declared Turkey a social state responsible for each citizen’s welfare. This constitution facilitated the growth and the formation of different parties and associations such as Workers Party of Turkey and Fikkir Kulubu² (opinion clubs).

In 1940’s communism was emerging and was perceived as an external threat posed by Moscow and it was thought that it would find fertile ground in a society devoid of Islamic values. In 1960’s it was viewed as an internal threat to which Islam was the antidote.³ Thus, a society

¹ Ahmad, Feroze Op.Cit; p. 12.
² Such associations emerged out of students independent association. There the politics were discussed and alternatives proposed.
³ Ibid. p. 13.
with some Islamic instincts could be tolerated just a shield against the fast spreading communism.

As the left wing critique of society attracted a political following, So the Islamist invective against the left became more bitter before and after the 1965 general election, the Workers Party of Turkey, became the target of a red baiting in which Islamic rhetoric played a prominent role.¹

As regards the role of Islam, this first coup in the Turkish Republic represented a watershed in its politics.² The new constitution of 1961 introduced measures of liberal democracy and political pluralism in reaction to the policies of the Democratic Party, which had turned increasingly authoritarian. With the result, political liberalization and democratization in this period facilitated growing role of political Islam in national issues, conflicts, and policy processes. In order to use the popularity of the Islamic movement to its advantage, it became more accommodating, to the movement.³

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¹ Ibid.
³ Ibid.
This military regime used Islam as an underlying ideological principle of its reform platform.

General Cemal Gursel, said: ¹

Those who blame religion for our backwardness are wrong. No, the cause of our backwardness is not our religion, but those who have misrepresented our religion to us. Islam is the most sacred, most constructive, most dynamic and powerful religion in the world.

The General Cemal praised Islam not only to secure the political and moral legitimacy of the military regime but also to check against any reactionary upsurge using Islam. The state’s political tradition of distinguishing between two Islams—one secular and dispassionate, the other reactionary, was also followed by the military. As already mentioned enlightened Islam was regarded as the best bulwark against communism and religious fanaticism.² Because of this the state focused on training progress and secular Imams and other civil

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¹ Courted in Ahmad, Feroze, ‘The Turkish Experiment’ p. 374.
² Cizre, Umit Op.Cit; p. 239.
servants religious cadres to deliver sermons urging political support for its objectives.

The Justice Party Period (1961 – 80)

The Justice party was formed in February 1961 by the former members of the Democratic Party, which had been dissolved by the military after the 1960 coup. It inherited much from the Democratic Party. The party’s second general congress held in 1964, elected Suleyman Demirel Party Chairman. Demirel led the Justice Party into the 1965 national elections. From 1965 to 1971 Demirel headed three Justice Party governments and from 1977 to 1980 he led three Justice Party dominated coalition governments. Thus the party dominated political life for the following decade and a half (1965 – 80), either on its own or as a part of ruling coalition.

Domestically, the Justice Party’s approach to politics was adaptive and anti elitist. It occupied a right of center (liberal conservative) position on the political arena. It advocated tolerance for traditional religious expression.
The Justice Party conceived the place and role of religion in politics in a way similar both to the secular outlook of the military regime that preceded it and to the rationalist positivist ideas of Ataturk.¹

In formulating and resolving the question of the political role of Islam, the Justice Party had certain limitations. The first being its liberal Western stance, which tied the legitimacy of the political system to popular sovereignty and eliminated Islam from the public sphere.²

In order to combat all the opposition to its modernization, the Justice Party tried to bring tradition at par with modernity and western civilization with religiosity. Following its military and Kemalist predecessor, the Justice Party supported and built new Imam Hatip school. In the early period of the Republic up to 1965, there were only 26 such schools where as the Justice Party opened 46 new Imam Hatip schools between 1965 and 1971, when it was in absolute power and 147 between 1975 and 1977, when it led the ruling coalition.

The Justice Party’s policies regarding official Islam was also fashioned by the external pressure exerted by armed forces, which intervened

¹ Cizre, Umit Loc.Cit.
² Ibid.
both in 1971 and 1980, when the Justice Party was in the power. Thus Justice Party sought a somewhat secular liberal identity, which had direct consequences on the form and substance of its policy towards Islam. With the result the Justice Party was successful in accomplishing and increasing prosperity and welfare benefits in the 1960’s that gave the party increased resonance.

From 1960 to 1980, Islam became a powerful weapon against communism in the hands of the Justice Party and its right wing allies. Whereas communists were placed in the anti-Islam front, which could include liberals in favour of political pluralism, anti-communism became an ingrained component of the radical conservatism, of which Islam was a part.¹

However, the Justice Party’s policies concerning Islam were not contrary to the long adopted state’s secularism and modernization. This necessitated the incorporation of strict secularism on the official level and separated Islam from the public sphere as it was thought irrelevant for political and economic development. Domestically, the Justice Party advocated tolerance for traditional religious expression. Justice Party established direct and lasting relationships with various

¹ Feroze Ahmad, ‘The Turkish Experiment’, p. 376.
Islamic groups, communities and leaders. This party’s relations with the Tarikats and Nurcus were established mainly for cultivating selected support. This involved a process of exchanging votes and political support for access to public resources and protection against threats from the state and secular forces. Thus, the conservative influence was more pronounced in the case of the Justice Party.¹

Despite strong state control over politics, populist nationalism and religious revivalism started to emerge during 1970’s. Religious organizations, which had surfaced in the 1960’s, mushroomed in the 1970’s. Different Tarikats and Sufi orders helped those of lesser means cope with the problems of modernization and became clubs for dislocated groups sacking solidarity in a changing world.²

Some more religiously oriented groups, disenchanted by nationalism, sought salvation in political Islam. For those groups wanted nation not to be a secular political entity but rather a community of believers. Those groups came to the forefront under the banner of Islamic parties. Because of the highly religious nature of these parties, they have usually been banned once they gained some sort of popularity,

¹ Ayata, Sencer Op.Cit; p. 44.
² ‘Turkish Nationalism, Then and Now’
   http://www.cyprus.conflict.net/ergil.htm
but are an important force as they continue to rise under different guises.\(^1\)

**The Islamic Parties of 1970 – 80**

The period of 1970’s witnessed the emergence of the pro religious Turkish political parties. These parties represent the Islamic opposition of the grass root movements against the secular Kemalist state. No doubt these movements have succeeded in promoting the importance of Islam in Turkish politics.\(^2\) The National Salvation Party (1972 – 81) and its successor, the Welfare Party\(^3\) (1981 – 1998) are worth mentioning here. Their development depended more on the organizing principles of the dominant culture and institutions of politics than on the moral and political aspirations of their followers.\(^4\) The Muslim Sufi Tarikats especially Naksibendis formed the power base for the Nationalist Salvation Parties. Though it was the first time in Turkish politics that Tarikats had played a crucial role in backing a pro-religious political party. However, the party lost the support of Tarikats especially after it entered a coalition with the social democratic

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\(^1\) Ibid
\(^3\) Rise and Demise of Welfare Party is dealt in detail in Chapter V
Republican People Party in 1974. Also the Tarikats accused the party of deviating from the Islamic principles and adopting the norms of the prevailing regime.¹

In fact, in the period of sixties, another facet was beginning to emerge created by the social and economic development, which found expression first in the National Order Party in 1970, then in the National Salvation Party in 1973 and finally in Welfare Party in 1983. They regarded Turkey’s problems and its solutions in Islamic terms. As Feroze Ahmad observes, the Islamists laid great stress on moral regeneration and the restoration of religious values if Turkey was to be saved.² They took pride in their glorious Ottoman-Islamic heritage and traditions and claimed that their party itself followed this very tradition. Their dogmas appealed to those who had never felt comfortable with the new secular culture, which they found artificial and alien, seeing their own culture being reasserted, therefore, supported the Islamists.³

² Ahmad, Feroze ‘Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey’ pp. 13-14.
³ Ibid
The standard argument for the genesis of political Islam in the 1970's emphasize economic grievances\(^1\) along with the cultural alienation of small merchants, businessmen and artisans. The electoral base for the party was formed by the traditional conservative elements who were culturally alienated and economically deprived. Thus as the socialist ideology became palatable to a large proportion of the working class, perhaps threatening the very existence of Islam, Islam became a platform for rallying both socioeconomic and cultural discontent.\(^2\) It is because the massive expansion of modern secular education and economic development that led to rising expectations on the part of the segments which were unfulfilled by existing political and other organizations. Thus the party also voiced the protest of those who wanted a large political and economic role in expanding world of modernity.\(^3\)

As a matter of fact both the parties National Salvation Party as well as Welfare Party had to deal with the nation, which was more oriented towards modern aspirations. Thus to bridge the gap between

\(^1\) Turan, Ilter 'Religion and Political Culture in Turkey', *Islam in Modern Turkey*, p. 45.
traditional elements in society in which were imbibed deep the religious
beliefs and a nationalist conservative outlook, and the modern
aspirations of its diverse power base, both parties developed a double
discourse by espousing a combination of religious and non-religious
themes.¹

At the one hand these parties fitted in with its advocacy of a return to
a strict Islamic polity in terms of moral and religious value while at the
other hand they came with a programme of scientific and technological
development, industrialization, and social justice-oriented redistributive
policies. At the same time these advocated a return to a strict Islamic
polity in terms of moral and religious values.

Nevertheless, National Salvation Party and Welfare Party’s rethinking
modernity in light of Islamic maxims, adopted a reformist posture and
operated within the system rather than trying to bring about a radical
transformation of society along the lines of Sharia, besides the officials
of both parties publicly supported secularism and paid homage to the

¹ Ozbudun, Ergun, ‘Islam and Politics in Modern Turkey: the Case of the
National Salvation Party’, in The Islamic Impulse, ed. Barbara Freyer
principles of popular sovereignty, parliamentary democracy, political, pluralism, human rights and individual liberties. \(^1\)

In Turkey after the institution of multiparty democracy in 1950, Laicism was challenged by a number of groups. Even though, the principle had rooted itself sufficiently firmly never to be removed from Turkish constitutional practice. In fact, the Democrat Party, which was often accused of having undermined Laicism, kept the principle in operation. However, since 1960, religious currents have not abated, but they have become stronger, inspite of the fact that the constitutional principle of Laicism is still the foundation of Turkish constitutional law and is upheld by the large segment of Turkish intelligentsia.\(^2\) On this revival of religious currents in post-Kemal Turkey, Serif Mardin comments that Kemalism did not understand the role played by Islam for Turks in the building of personal identity. No doubt Kemal tried to separate religion from state, it was there in one form of other.

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\(^1\) Cizre, Umit Op.Cit; p. 242.

The same author elaborates it as

After all Islam had an aspect which addressed itself to man's being in this world, to this basic ontological insecurity, which enabled it to fasten itself on to psychological drives. It is a truism, but still worth emphasizing, that Islam has become stronger in Turkey because social mobilization had not decreased but on the contrary increased the insecurity of the men who have been projected out of their traditional settings. This insecurity is sometimes 'cognitive' and appears as a search for a convincing political leadership or a bountiful economic system. Here Islam assumes an ideological guise and compacts with Marxism.

1980 Military Coup and Post 1980's Period

The military regime came to power on September 12, 1980, with this form substance and power base of the Islamic movement and also the state policy towards it changed radically.

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1 Ibid.
In fact, it was military itself that played a major part in making the Islamist political discourse socially acceptable. During the political turbulence of 1970’s, a group of conservative intellectuals supported by the business world and center right politicians began to think about Islam as a force to counter the rise of leftist ideas. As carried out by left parties in their manifesto and programs. They developed the Turkish Islamic Synthesis as an ideological concept integrating Islam and Turkish nationalism. It became prominent also among right wing politician of Suleyman Demirel’s National Front governments (1974-77) and also incorporated in National Action Party.

After the 1980 coup, this mixture of fierce nationalism and a version of Islam friendly to state, appealed to the senior officer corps as an ideology to reintegrate Turkish society. This was carried for two purposes, first to create the desired unitary character of Turkish society, and second to counterbalance the spread of nationalist ideologies among Turkey’s Kurdish population.

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1 In late 1970’s Turkish Society was shattered by ideological polarization and communal violence. The existing government failed to improve the law and order situation, which ultimately led to a military coup in 1980.
3 Jung & Piccoli Op.Cit; p. 121.
Though with the onset of military rule, all the parties were dissolved and the country underwent another period of repression. Most of the disillusioned youth turned to Islam especially after the success of the ‘Islamic revolution in overthrowing the Shah’s regime in Iran. Further, as Feroz Ahmad asserts, in 1980’s Islam also became a vehicle for the youth to protest against the military regime, especially in a period when politics was forbidden for students¹.

The military due to its ideological affinity to Fethullah Gulen’s teaching, used the Turkish – Islamic Synthesis, and therefore used Islam, as an ideological political instrument. The generals who came to power considered Islam a pacifying and submissive ideology preferable to the threat of Communism.² Instead of showing any disregard or even suppressing it, they took several steps to strengthen it. Some measures taken in this regard included opening of new Quranic schools (Kuran Kurslari) making religious courses necessary, and employing new preachers (Imams).

Further, according to Yavuz, leaders of the military coup depended on Islamic institutions and symbols for legitimization thus they fused

¹ Ahmad, Feroze Op.Cit; p. 18.
Islamic ideas with national goals, to create a more homogeneous and less political Islamic community.¹

Despite the military regime’s claim to restore true Kemalism, it favoured the use of religion to be taught more widely in schools and allowed the influence of the Sufi orders to be exposed through their Quranic schools and student’s hostels.²

Much contribution came from the Association of Intellectuals Hearth. (Aydinlar Ocaqi) which happened to be an organized association of conservative scholars. It played a significant role in cementing the various interests together. It put forth the ideology of Turkish Islamic Synthesis. This ideology as already mentioned, was based on Ottoman, Islamic and Turkish popular culture which was aimed at making the past relevant to the present, so that nation and state which was reinterpreted as a family and as a community was saved from the danger posed by ideological fragmentation and thus through the Turkish – Islamic Synthesis, the state and nation was identified as one

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
cemaat (community) modeled after the concept of *Umma* (religious community).¹

The Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) tried to evoke nationalism and accommodate religion as well. It may be well substantiated by citing the examples of establishing in 1981, a new department ‘Dawah’ (*İrşad Dairesi*) within the Directorate of Religious Affairs, to fight against the Kurdish nationalism in Southeast Anatolia.

The new hegemonic ideology that came out of the ‘Islamization of national identity’ by the Association of Intellectual’s Hearth and nationalism of Islam by the Directorate of Religious Affairs helped in ignoring the multicultural character of Turkish Society comprising the Kurds, Alevi and other ethno-cultural communities. It promoted a state-centered Turkish Islamic consciousness by imposing its own singular meaning on symbols and historical events.² The religious sentiments and traditional allegiance were employed by the military government to achieve political stability and national unity.

The Islamism of the 1980’s differed from the Islamic movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s in its social base, nature and capability and it was

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¹ Ibid
transformed by changes in Turkish society.¹ In the post 1980 military regime and during the ensuing Motherland Party government from 1983 to 1991, state policy towards Islam underwent radical changes in style and substance.² Religious instructions in primary and secondary schools were made mandatory in the 1982 constitution.

It was in the post 1983 period i.e. when Motherland Party (MP) came to power that the emergence of contemporary Islamism was seen. Veiled women became visible on modern university campuses in big cities and Islamist periodicals, newspapers and books stuffed the intellectual debates in Turkey, away from the dominance of leftist intellectuals to that of the Islamists.

These new agents of change represented the move of Islam from the periphery of the system to its center, and yet were themselves a product of that center of its educational institutions and its urban life.³

With the Motherland Party’s coming to power, many initiatives were made in the social and cultural realms. During Turgut Ozal’s administration special efforts were made to incorporate different

¹ Ibid, p. 69.
² Cizre, Umit Op.Cit; p. 244.
ideological trends into the party structure, which eased existing political tensions.¹

Turgut Ozal pursued a policy of Islamicizing the educational system, and his minister of education, Vehbi Dinserler, a member of Naksibendi Sufi order, prepared a new curriculum of national history and geography that constantly used ‘Milli’ in the religious sense.²

Moreover, in the late 1980’s the expansion of higher education, print media, and mass communication played a critical role in the public emergence of an Islamic identity. This identity was consolidated and promoted by the process of democratization, to the policymaking level by Motherland Party of Turgut Ozal and the Welfare Party and thus new public spaces for Islamic groups to find their voices were opened.³

The Naksibendis emerged as the single most important lobbying group in politics during that period. Ozal himself had Naksibendis affinities, so the members of this Tarikats or brotherhood were given privileged

³ Yavuz, M. Hakan Loc.Cit.
positions in the Motherland Party.\(^1\) Their members penetrated all ranks of political society, including the government, civil service, intelligentsia, and the business and banking.\(^2\)

The Naksibendi orders and Suleymanci were free to run unofficial Quranic courses and youth hostels to educate needy youngsters who came from provincial and rural areas to be educated in cities.\(^3\) There was an abundant growth of the printing materials and publications of Tarikats and other religious groups each disseminating its specific views on and method returning to *Sharia*. Saudi money came in Turkey by means of finance companies, projects and religious foundations.\(^4\)

Though the Naksibendi networks were useful to the party beyond borders as they played a significant role in promoting Turkish exports to the Middle East and Gulf States. In short, a multitude of Islamist groups and networks especially the Naksibendis became firmly

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\(^1\) Ayata, Sencer Op.Cit; p. 45.
\(^2\) Cizre, Umit Op.Cit; p. 244.
\(^3\) Ibid
entrenched in, both the state and civil society, their growing power and influence in one sphere facilitating access to the other.

Nevertheless, in the post 1980, the civilian governments of Motherland Party, succeeded in the military's vision of reconstructing the relationship between state and the society. So it could be controlled by the state. However, Motherland Party's enforcement of a policy Islamization was without the disguise of a Kemalist discourse.

This comprehensive study of multiparty period in post-Kemalist republic clearly reveals that Islam was not banished and excluded from the official public sphere, rather Turkish state adopted a double discourse: on the one hand establishing rigid segregation between religion and the public political realm while on the other hand, accommodating and incorporating Islamic politics into the system in various ways.

Secular Vs Islamic

One important feature of Muslim societies facing the impact of modern civilization is a steady trend towards secularization of traditional

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institutions. The Muslim peoples have different ethnic origins, geographic situations, historical backgrounds and present-day conditions. The changes occurring among them differ in scope, intensity, and velocity. Still there are some similarities in their experiences of social changes.

The process of secularization is universal, but the attitude towards the problems created by it differs in every case, and the acceptance of a secular outlook on religion, political, social and cultural matters are far from universal.

It will be useful to make a distinction between the process of secularization and the doctrine of secularism. Secularization is a sociological process which takes place as a result of factors beyond the control of individuals and a doctrine of secularism involves individual ideas, attitudes beliefs or interests. The two are often interrelated, but the later is not a necessary accompaniment or a necessary product of the former.

Among the Muslim countries it was in Turkey, that, prior to World War II a secular concept of state, religion, law, education and economy was first promoted and a definite doctrine of secularism implemented as a
political constitutional, educational and cultural policy. The policy has not, however, won the approval of all Muslim nations or of most individual Muslims. The doctrine is being challenged even in Turkey. Many claim that Islam is incompatible with such an attitude.

Traditional Ottoman polity was fashioned essentially by a patrimonial authority called Sultanate, Islamized by recognizing the Sharia, which the Turks spelled as Seriat, as the sacred law of the Muslims, and by assuming the charismatic title of Caliphate, which was believed to be a succession to the prophet’s headship of the community of Islam. In Turkish history, the concept of unity of state and religion (din-u-devlet) was applied through an imperial system, which gave unity and order to a great multiplicity of religions, sects, professions and social classes. However, this system reflected a different understanding of the unity between religion and government than that implied in the classical Islamic theory of ‘Imamah’, which simply meant leadership or headship of the community of believers. This concept led to shift the headship from the leader of the community to a sovereign ruler whose chief function was to maintain unity and order through the application of power.
Thus, like the Christian, the Muslim political view was permeated by belief in a social structure based on distinct orders and estates and the emphasis was on non-equality, on a rigid differentiation according to economic and political functions and religious differences and on the need for a power with which to oversee and hold the separate units together.

In Turkey as in other Muslim Countries, Secularism is considered to be the prerequisite of Westernization rather than of democratization. Secularism, in Turkey, is linked to the State’s control of the public sphere (rigidly in the early years of the Republic but softened gradually from the 1950’s to the 1980s). Turkish Secularism has meant the banning of religious orders, dress codes for public servants, and the imposition of certain types audiovisual programming at state radio stations and television channels. According to Ernest Gellner, it became a ‘didactic Secularism’, teaching and imposing a modern way of life.¹

The practice of secularism in Turkey presents a very interesting experiment to the Islamic world. It is the first time that a Muslim country experiments with a secular democratic government structure.

¹ Ernest Gellner as cited in Gole, Nilufer Op.Cit; p.49.
Some other Muslim countries such as Iran and Afghanistan followed the Turkish model in secular modernization in such areas as women’s rights during 1930’s and 1940’s, but their experiments were cut short by the military interventions of British and Russians in Iran and British in Afghanistan.¹

The secular character of the republic was enshrined in the first as well as several subsequent articles of the 1924 constitution and became one of the cornerstones of the ideology of the politically powerful army and the ruling Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party).

The steps taken in order to remove the pervasive hold of Islam on Society and the polity included religious, social and even language reforms. This plan was mainly a scheme to Turkify Islam in its spiritual content. However, the secularizing reforms of the Kemalist government has led the western writers to conclude that religion was defunct in Turkey as a social institution. They however, failed to take cognizance of the deep-rooted influence of Islam over the Turkish people. The secular reforms actually played an important role in the resurgence of

¹ Kologlu, as cited in ‘Public Policies, Problems in Turkey’, http://www.indiana.edu/megs.pea/turkeycase.htm
Islam in Turkey because Islam was never dead in Turkey either before or after the Kemalist reforms.

During the Republican Party’s rule a centralized state was developed which was created mainly by means of the bureaucracy, the military and the spread of modern educational networks. No doubt, it led to the increased control of state over many aspects of public and private life. The reforms undertaken targeted the power of Religious functionaries, leader and communities and transferred their public functions to the new state institutions. Inspite of all these reforms, the religious activities in general remained largely unaffected in Turkey. The Sufi Tarikats remained active underground although the government had imposed a ban on their operations. The peasantry which formed three fourths of the entire population in Turkey remained devout Muslims. The influence of Islam was also profound on the labour class and petty tradesman in the cities. Even among the educated people in the large towns and cities, the inherence of secularism was never predominant.

Keeping in view the significance of Islam in Turkish Society, Kemal and his associates recognized that religious faith was important for national unity and mobilization and that it could contribute to social and moral
welfare. On the other hand, they also saw Islam as a traditional force and a source of conservative influence, superstition, false ideas and dogmas that they felt were responsible for Turkish backwardness, and were obstacles to the achievements of national ideals. The attitude of the Republican leaders was supportive when it was at cross purposes with the main objective of modernization.¹

In order to make Islam compatible with the modern nation and bring Turkey at par with the West, the secularization program was enforced. The Turkish model of secularism introduced radical changes at executive and legislative levels. As already discussed it involved a set of major legal and institutional changes implemented by the government in the years after the declaration of Turkish Republic in 1923. These reforms had a strong impact on the cognitive secularization of the people.²

Secularism was emphasized even more under the regime of Ismet Inonu (1884-1973) President from 1938 to 1950, had a flamboyant personality who, not being popularly perceived as ‘Shrouded in the

¹ Allen, H.E. *The Turkish Transformation*, pp. 172-173.
mantle’ of his great predecessor, may have felt that he needed to be more royal than the king’ in carrying out part policies.¹

In fact, very important factor in the maintenance and strengthening of a genuine interest in the principles and practices of Islam among the people was the strong influence of ‘Uمامah’ both in the rural and urban areas, besides the ‘Tarikats’ that operated as powerful instruments in the preservation of Islam among the Turkish people during the crucial period of the implementation of secular reforms in Turkey.²

The only major resistance to the demotion of Islam from ‘the very reason of existence of the state to a private matter of conscience and whose limited manifestations were subject to regulation by the government d directorate, came in the form of rebellion of a number of Kurdish tribes under Sheikh Said in 1925. However, it was quickly and severely put down and, partook of as much a nationalist as a religious character.

After the second World War, when Turkey became a member of the United Nations and with the end of one-party rule, there were signs of increased religious activities and there was a demand for the restoration of religious education in schools. A debate was held in the Grand National Assembly on the subject in December 1940, although at that time government did not yield to the public demand. A long controversy raged in the newspapers and other forms of public opinion. The Turkish Government finally introduced optimal religious education in schools early in 1949. During the same year a faculty of Divinity was established at the university of Ankara for higher religious education. It provided courses in Fiqah, Tafsir, Hadith, Psychology, Sociology, History of religions besides instruction in Arabic, Persian and European languages.

These developments brought about a tolerant attitude towards religion, and the people began to voice their religious views more freely and with it, the number of books and periodicals on Islam increased rapidly. A law was passed by the Grand National Assembly on 23rd March, 1950 for the expansion of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The law provided for the appointment of a Deputy Director, an advisory committee for religious publications, a section for publications, a
Directorate of Charitable Institutions and a Committee for the supervision of the publication of the holy Quran. The provisions of the law also called for the appointment of Muftis in the provinces.¹

Ever since the establishment of the Turkish republic, controversy has raged especially among the educated section of the Turkish people concerning the secularism emerging from the Kemalist Revolution. A set of belief is that this secularism meant the separation of religion and state after the fashion of French Laicism, while the other set signifies that it was a policy of atheism aimed at the systematic liquidation of Islam. The Islamists, who had strongly opposed separationism when they were promoting the idea of an Islamic state, favoured the separationist interpretation of secularism following their defeat. They now claimed that provisions restricting the political power of religion were incompatible with secularism which implied non-interference in the affairs of religion; therefore Kemalist secularism was not true secularism, but shoddy legitimization for the persecution of Islam. A modern secular state, said the secularist jurists on the other hand, should let religion follow its own course if the state did not intend to

liquidate religion altogether. The inference was that if Kemalist secularism did not fit one shoe it should, perforce, fit into the other.¹

Secularism in Turkey is a mixed blessing and these are contrasting views about the success of the Turkish experiment in secularism. Sami Secluk argues that there cannot be a state religion in a secular state which by definition has to be impartial between all beliefs and religions. He contends that it was a mistake for Turkey to institutionalize the dominant Islamic sect (Sunni Islam, Hanefi division), to include it into the government hierarchy, to build mosques and to pay the clergy with tax money. Secular believes this practice to be at odds with the secularism principle. He further favours that the Directorate of Religions Affairs needs to be taken out of the bureaucratic hierarchy.²

Yet Kemalist secularism had certain features contradicting both these judgments it is true that certain aspects of Kemalist secularism implied political, legal and educational restrictions upon religion while some others, such as the existence of a Department of Religious Affairs

¹ Berkes, Niyazi The Development of Secularism in Turkey, pp. 479-480.
within the government and the expenditure of public funds on religious affairs, seemed to be inconsistent with a secular state. However, the seeming inconsistencies will disappear if we leave aside two presuppositions underlying the two judgments. Then the aspects of appearing as incompatible with a doctrine of laicism (understood as a complete separation between religion and state) will prove to be, not the essence of the Kemalist secularism, but products of a process of severance, without which neither a secular state nor a non-political religion could ever come into existence on the basis of din-u-devlet, the legacy of medieval Islam.¹

The Kemalist regime has been criticized by the communists for its tolerance of religion, and by the Islamists for its persecution of religion and by the western liberals for its keeping religion within the fold of State. Kemalism faced attacks and underwent serious tests during the years following World War II when conditions in Turkey had changed. It received its heaviest attacks from chauvinist nationalism and from the Islamists. The later raised or lowered their demands, depending upon conditions, from the restoration of the caliphate to the re-veiling of women.

As secularism did not separate religion and politics, but rather subordinated religion to the political realm, it promoted the politicization of Islam and struggle between secularists and Muslims for control of the state. Any attempt by marginalized social groups to penetrate the state has been considered an ‘Islamic revival’.¹

Indeed conservative Muslims who are opposed to a secular system of government are gaining influence. They are generally known as nationalists. Their influence has been reflected in Turkish politics since 1950 when they joined the newly formed political parties. They have played an active role in the evolution of the tolerant attitude of the Turkish government towards religion, and the strengthening of Turkey's relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

Especially, in recent history, Turkish politics has been subjected to vast changes in its makeup. Since the 1980 military intervention in particular, the subject of religious revivalism has been in the forefront of the Kemalist Republic.² While many countries in the West Asia have witnessed religious upheaval in recent past, it seemed that Turkey’s history and structure have protected it from the same course of

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events. However, recent elections and trends in Turkish politics quite manifest a different status of one of the world’s strongest secular governments.

Islam is well embedded in the Turkish society. In fact it has remained a depository for regulating day-to-day social life for the masses, and the secularization imposed from above alienated Turkish Society from the state. The history of Turkish policies, therefore, is the story of a complex tension between these two views and identities over time, the state centric republican elite and its supporting groups have identified themselves as secularists, commonly known as Laikler, and the large masses as ‘backward Muslims’. The debate over secularism versus religion, therefore, represents major and deep-seated divisions in Turkish society; modern versus traditional, progressive versus conservatives, and rationalist versus religion. Here it would be pertinent to examine the ideological clash of these elements over this brand of secularism.

Moreover for the sake of reaching a viable perspective the discussion would be concentrated around the opinions and assessment of some

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well-known writers and publications representing certain schools of thought.

While the conservatives maintained the high moral and cultural superiority of Islam now they were not opposed to the adoption of Western technology. However, they have always considered the supporters of Kemalist’s reforms as reactionaries. They criticized various social reforms undertaken by Kemalist regime. According to them adoption and acceptance of Latin script, was the introduction of the language of the bible rather a reform. Similarly they denounced the law forbidding the veil, which in their opinion was anti-Islamic.¹ They are also against the West, which they think, is about to exterminate the soul of human civilization. They believe that Islam is positively superior to the west in moral values, so there is no need to reform.

Secularists, who admire the Kemalist religious-social reforms, are of the opinion that it was the need of the hour to bring about some radical changes in the obsolete and out-dated traditions of the various aspects present in the Turkish society.

Prof. Bulent Daver thinks that the goal of secularism was to create a Turkish society and state system based on reason, reality, experience and freedom. The secularistic character of the Turkish Revolution has been reflected in the restriction of religious freedom and particularly in the fields of law and education. The attempt to evolve a modern social order can give a positive value to Islamic principles. The secularization of education has only fulfilled a long felt need.¹

Prof. Siddik Sami Onar has also justified the restrictions imposed on religion as a preventive measure against those who wanted to oppose the creation of a modern social order. He believes that the contradictions found in the restrictions on religion are due to the fact that a legal system compatible with the accepted principles of the Turkish revolution has not yet been established, and the relations between the state and religion have not been determined in the constitution. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Islamic principles have been given up.²

As Prof. Bahri Sayci has attempted to give a definition of secularism beyond the generally accepted one that it means the separation of the

¹ Feroze, M. Rashid Op. Cit; pp. 139-140.
² Ibid
state from religion. He has described the Turkish Revolution as a movement to save the individual from wrong, beliefs and institutions, and to enable him to enjoy the freedom of conscience. Secularism does not simply mean the separation of the state from religion. The parallel development of secularism and democracy in Turkey should not be interpreted to mean that the people must conform to the opinion of the majority. Secularism necessitates the recognition of the individual, and the safeguarding of his moral and social behaviour from religious pressure.¹

A young Turkish lawyer Citen Uzek, has put forward another interesting interpretation of secularism. He has asserted that ‘secularism has essentially a national character, and its application in different countries will differ according to their conditions. To accept secularism in the sense of independent and separate existence of the state and religion is erroneous, narrow and dangerous. Secularism consists of two elements. The first being the protection of religious freedom, the second being the principle that the political structure of the state should not be based on rules of religion. From this stand

¹ Ibid
point, the state has a right to interfere with religion in order to put an end to the misuse of religious rights and freedom in public interest'.

Serif Mardin asserts that there was a need to find a principle of social cohesion for Turkish society and to develop means of raising social consciousness among the Turks. In so far as Islam had been found wanting in both these respects, it had been rejected. As Islam no longer served these purpose, it had indeed become a matter for the 'private' consciences of the Turks.

Prof. Ali Fuat Basgil, in his book entitled 'Religion and secularism', has defined secularism as, 'the protection of the religious freedom and the rights of the countrymen born out of it against their enemies', and the non-interference's of the state in religious affairs and of religion in state affairs. It follows from this definition that the duty of the state is to organize the material aspects of public life, whereas religion has to rule the spiritual world, such as the private and family life of the individual.

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1 Ibid. pp. 133-134.
2 Mardin, Serif Religious and Secularism in Turkey, p. 211.
The author further adds that modern civilization is sick and cannot fulfill man's psychological and spiritual needs, although the progress achieved in the fields of sciences and material development is formidable. He has suggested that the remedy lies in bringing about a re-approachment between sciences and faith. His main criticism of the application of secularism in Turkey is directed against the use of force for bringing about a social change, which cannot produce satisfactory results.¹

However, for the Republican conservative circle, the hallmark of Turkish modernism was the rise of the nation-state. These intellectuals, nationalist stand against Islamism and provided a certain degree of legitimacy for them on the side of the ruling elite.

Bobby S. Sayyid asserts that the new ruling elites and 'Islam as the antagonistic other of Kemalism.² It was described as 'the symbol of obscurantism and from that point on, was treated like a ghost in the political and cultural life of the nation.'³

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¹ Ibid
³ Ibid
These Republican conservatives devoted much energy in differentiating themselves from the Islamist groups, which in their view had betrayed the nationalist movement by collaborating with the foreign aggressors in the early 1920's.¹

Furthermore the advocates of complete westernization are of the opinion that Westernization is necessary for Turkey. It involves a compulsory change of culture. This movement has continued since the days of the Tanzimat until the present day. The West signifies a particular set of mind and thinking. It is represented by the contemporary civilization. The East possesses its own character, which enslaves human beings and crushes the creativity of the human intellect. There is no human freedom in the East, which is dominated by the power of darkness. In the final analysis, the East is compelled to move towards the West.²

The two periodicals, ‘Turk Dusuncesi’s³ (Turkish thought) and ‘Forum’ have presented the views of the supporters of complete Westernization

² Ibid, pp. 91-95.
³ Turk Dusuncesi, One of the most conscious conservative journal of the time began to published in mid 1950’s.
in an elaborate way. *Turk Dusunqueşii* has maintained that the culture life of the Turks can be described as a complete anarchy of thought, because they try to understand the West with the help of outdated means and translations. The conflict of various thoughts in Turkey is a fight between the opponents of the constructive measures of the Turkish revolution and those who reject the lively values of the past. Both of these groups are characterized as revolutionaries and reactionaries yet this is not the problem of westernization. The problem is to mould the Turkish Revolution into the spirit of the West. It involves the preparation of a synthesis of the West and the East. The periodical has emphasized the need to understand the West not simply by its technological progress but by studying the Industrial and Philosophic movements of the West in their historical perspective.¹

Supporters of partial Westernization are of the opinion that partial Westernization means simply the acceptance of Western technology. There are two different schools of thought in favour of partial

Westernization, one of them is represented by Kadro (Italian Quadro English Cadre), a monthly journal, published between 1931 and 1934.¹

The chief concern of Kadro was to determine Turkey's policy on the problem of westernization. It rejects European capitalism and imperialism, which had led to the decline of the European civilization. Turkey therefore, could adopt only Western technology. In the political and economic fields, the Turks would have to formulate their own policies based on the historical evolution of their nation and according to the conditions of their society. Thus an ideology would come into existence. It would be a national socialism, different from European socialism and other national philosophies, which could led to the evolution of a homogenous and classless society in Turkey.²

Members of the conservative group believe in the moral and cultural superiority of Islam. They are in favour of the adoption of Western technology. Their approach to Turkey's social and political problems is based on the principles of Islam. The conservatives have criticized several aspects of the social reforms introduced by the Kemalist regime, such as the Latin script and Western headgear. The

¹ Ibid. p. 96.
acceptance of the Latin script has been described as the introduction of skepticism. These conservatives advocate that the values of Turkish culture should be preserved in a programme of Westernization.

This ideological polarization is increasing day by day and is attract worldwide attention towards it. In a programme of BBC about Islam and modernity, Robert Hardy, reported that on the streets of Istanbul Muslim girls march in defiance of the Turkish state. They are demanding the right to wear a headscarf when they go to school.\(^1\)

Although the state is secular, there is overwhelmingly Muslim majority. So this issue has become highly charged symbol of the collision between Kemalist’s and Islamists.

Seventeen year old Zeliha was turned away by riot police when she tried to go to school in her headscarf. In the defence of the legacy of Ataturk’s secular and modern Turkey, one of the guardians of that legacy - Sabri Yirmibesoghi, a retired general, said that it is wrong for women to wear head scarves in government schools or in government departments as the Turkish public gets upset when this is done in the

\(^1\) Clash between religion and secularism in Turkey. 
http://www.rozanehmagazine.com/sep.oct02/wturkish.htm

175
public sphere – and when the head scarf is used as a political symbol.¹

A variety of explanations can be used to give meaning to the recent rise of religion in both Turkey and the West Asia at large. Many Orientlists tend to see this reaction as an inherent part of Islam. Islam is not only a spiritual religion but also assigns political duties to its followers. Therefore, it would not be surprising to expect that Muslims when given the chance, would draw on their theology of aspect of Islam rather than the secular philosophy to guide their political actions.²

Some politicians see it as a disturbing impact of Islam on the political situation in the West Asia to be the natural outcome of the conflict between modernity and tradition. In this case the West is accused of the increased speed of modernization in the region, which in turn precipitated political and social reaction led by the traditional forces in society.

R. Hrair Dekmejian points to the concept of a multifaceted crisis, that whenever in the past Muslims faced a multiple crisis which had

¹ Ibid
² Islam’s Rise in Turkish Republic
http://www.midestinfo.com/archive/paper2.htm
political, social, economic or cultural dimensions, they reacted by adhering closer to Islam. It may be due to the collapse of the old social order without the emergence of a viable replacement, increasing, economic dependency on the West, and cultural penetration by others. A return to the Islamic past, therefore, became necessary to regain their balance and recover from the deterioration in society.¹

¹ Ibid.
THE REASSERTION OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND PARTIES IN TURKISH DEMOCRACY

The State and Religion

Though the role of religion, in Turkey, began to expand gradually from the 1950’s onwards, its influence went on increasing in the late 1980’s and 1990’s. It has been rightly said that in the post Kemalist period, religion was not dead in Turkey. What it needed was proper channelisation. Religious teaching and the activities of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, are the two areas which contributed a lot in this regard besides, other agencies. Here we are examining briefly the role and contribution of religious schools and the activities of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the other most important factor that is ‘Tarikats, orders and communities’ in the rise of religious revivalism in Turkey.

There are three basic categories of Islamic education in Turkey: Theology faculties, Quranic schools, and Schools for Chaplains and Preachers. The Islamic education is under the surveillance of the state and after 1950 all of these multiplied.
Theology departments have been established in eighteen universities in Turkey, fifteen of which are in the recently founded provincial universities.\textsuperscript{1} Their graduates take specialized Islamic courses in the Schools for Chaplains and Preachers as well as a compulsory religious course in secular middle and high schools. Most of them find jobs in the private sector and in government.

According to the information provided by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Quranic schools all over the country were 4,929 in number, with 5,295 teachers and 176,892 regular and 52,028 evening school students in 1994. The number of children attending summer courses reaches 1,326,443.\textsuperscript{2}

The Schools for Chaplains and Preachers were 466 in number, which were totally subsidized and controlled by the government. The number of students, including secondary and evening students is 446,429 with 14,995 teachers.\textsuperscript{3} The curriculum at the secondary level, remains basically secular, with an elementary teaching of the Quran taking no more than five hours a week. At the high school level, the courses include Quranic teaching, theology, Islamic jurisprudence, *Hadith*

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\textsuperscript{1} Ayata, Sencer ‘Patronage Party and State’, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{2} Directorate of Religious Affairs, 1994
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid
\end{flushleft}
(religious sayings) preaching and history of world religions, accompanied by other courses such as history, geography, Turkish literature, mathematics, physics and chemistry. Though this type of curriculum does not include any education on fundamentalist instincts, yet the products of these schools are highly sensitive and responsive to all kinds of Islamist movements because of the factors such as classroom interaction, exchange of ideas among peers, and the collective religious identity conferred upon these schools.

Among the graduates only ten percent are employed by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, while the remaining either continue their university education or find employment in other fields.

The functions of Directorate of Religious Affairs were confined to the publication of Quran and a few basic sources of Islam and had a very limited staff until 1950’s.¹ However in the past four decades, the size, activities and responsibilities of the department have expanded enormously, with an increase in its number of personnel from only a few thousand in the 1950’s to 88,533. It had now more than a dozen

departments and numerous subunits; and its share of the government budget was a mere 1.23 percent in 1990.¹

The Directorate of Religious Affairs has its headquarters at Ankara and has local branches in all provinces and sub-provinces throughout Turkey with 63,053 chaplains and preachers in the 68,675 mosques under its control.² The religious functionaries are pulling in their efforts to redefine the responsibilities of the department so as to extend its sphere of influence from ‘belief to worship’ to having a say in ethics and the definitions of the content of religion while remaining silent on political matters. The officially approved version of Islam is conveyed to the public by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, so as to reconcile the values of the nation and state with those of Islam. Though the Directorate of Religious Affairs personnel at the local community level do, informally, express their own political views, but the Directorate of Religious Affairs has never formally asked to make specific pronouncements or to interpret or legitimize the decision of the parliament, the government or the bureaucracy. The Directorate of Religious Affairs personnel respond to the grass-root needs of the

¹ Ibid. p. 48.
² Directorate of Religious Affairs, 1994, also see statistics given in the booklet published under the title Turkish Republic: The presidency of Religious Affairs, Ankara, 1989.
masses, which in turn make them more popular and respectable among these people in both rural and urban areas, which eventually strengthens their hold and influence on Muslim population.

These Islamic organizations and the Schools for Chaplains and Preachers provide scholarships to the needy high school students and provide dormitories for their lodging. They also help their graduates in seeking admissions in Universities. In this way the Islamist students are found almost in every field from engineering, medicine, public administration, law to social sciences, and after leaving the Universities, they get appointed as engineers, judges, economists, prefects and on other ranks in the state bureaucracy. This infiltration in the bureaucracy is helped by the Islamic networks, which indeed aims at gradually diluting the earlier stringent secular attribute of the State and ultimately Islamizing the very character of the Turkish Republic.

**The Sufi Orders, Tarikats and other Communities**

With the Kemal’s secularist reforms, the state of Turkey was never devoid of Islamic instincts, rather Islam was very much there
embedded in Turkish society. It is the Sufi Islam\(^1\), particularly the Naksibendi\(^2\) Tarikats, which played a distinctive role in the rise of religious revivalism in Turkey. From the late 1960’s onwards, there were active networks of these Tarikats in business, politics, the mass media and social and welfare services. They even played a significant role in the formation of political parties.\(^3\)

The religious orders and communities such as the Nurcu, Suleymanci, Isikci and Fethullahci, are well organized and have broadened their activities than their parent organizations, the mainstream Naksibendi lodges, from which they originated. A brief discussion on their teachings and ways would perhaps be not out of place.

Self purification, as the Sufi teaching stresses is must to strengthen the inner drive of Muslim believers, which in turn will enhance the resistance to excessive material desires. It also lays emphasis on the

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1. In the early centuries of Islam, Sufis were not organized into particular circles or Orders, however, gradually, a more institutional structure was given to their gatherings and these Sufi centers were usually called Khaneqahs or Zawiyyas. The Turks called their Sufi sanctuary a Tekke.

2. The Naksibendi order is one of the Sufi orders. It takes its name from Shaykh Bahaud-Din Nakshband of Bukhara (d. 1300). It is widely spread in Central Asia, the Volga, the North West and South West of China, Indonesia, the Indian subcontinent, Turkey, Europe and North America. For more details on Sufi orders see Shaykh Fadhalla Heari, *The Elements of Sufism*, London, 1990, also http://www.nuradeen.com/reflections/elementsofsufismintro.htm

3. The Naksibendi and Nurcu encouraged the establishment of the National Order Party and National Salvation Party respectively.
renewal of faith in Islam, so that the spiritual and political conquest of the West and its materialist culture could be overcome. They advocate that the great struggle, the *Cihad-i-ekbar* is to be waged against the carnal, bestial and predatory elements of the individual ego, and cannot take place in a state of isolation. Self-reform requires a leader and a devout Muslim community. An infallible mentor who has a profound knowledge of Islam and who is an ethical guide to interpreting Islamic rules in new contexts is essential.¹ Sufi’s assume that only individuals strong in faith can combat the external enemies of Islam.

The Naksibendi’s emphasize the role of a righteous community in sustaining the self-reform process. Extremely detailed codes of conduct derived from the Islamic *Seriat* are introduced into the everyday life of devout Muslims, and their observance is enforced by a vigilant community. Ordinary adherents of Tarikat with the help of pamphlets and cassettes make masses aware of religious worship and ethics.

In the 1970’s and 1980’s Tarikat activities in the public sphere were mainly focused on the efforts to widen the basis of their organization. With the help of modern media techniques, such as audio and videocassettes, as well as their personal approaches such as house-to-house visits, video shows, preaching in mosques, they tried to increase the number of followers and cadres. Teaching of Quran to the propagation of religious and political views is often described as the goal of the activities of Sufi networks and Organizations.¹

The activities of Sufi network include the publication of dozens of journals that address religious, political, scientific and social issues as well as thousands of books on almost every major topic, the setting up of formal institutions such as schools and preaching in mosques, houses and special gathering places. All these activities have led to a great influence of these Tarikats and has given rise to a new Islamist elite of journalists, writers and intellectuals.

It will not be out of place to make mention here two such communities, which have attracted world’s attention and have contributed a lot in sustaining the use of religion in modern Turkey.

¹ Ibid.
Nurcu Movement

The Nurcu movement, which represents a conservative group of Muslims, has sought to combine a modern interpretation of Islam with Turkish nationalism and statism. It is a religio-social movement that takes its name from its founder, Said Nursi (1873-1960). His chief work is *Risale-i-Nur*, consisting of 130 parts, which has been written in Arabic script by hand and distributed gratis.

Though it is a resistance movement to the Kemalist modernization process, yet it is potent and proactive.¹ Said Nursi offers a conceptual framework for the people undergoing the transformation from a confessional community to a secular national society. Folk Islamic concepts are redefined and revived to establish new solidarity networks and everyday life, strategies for coping with new conditions.² Said Nursi visited Sultan Abdulhamid II (Ottoman Sultan 1876-1909) in 1907 to seek his support for a university where natural sciences could

² Ibid.
be brought together with Islamic sciences, but his proposal was rejected.¹

During the World War I, Said Nursi fought along with his pupils on the battlefront against the Russian, Armenian forces. He spent some times in Siberia as a prisoner of war. He sharply attacked the British occupation of Istanbul, and fully supported the troops of Mustafa Kemal. Ataturk and hence he was invited to Ankara in 1922, where he delivered a series of lectures asking the new regime to obey Islamic precepts, but was disappointed with his exchanges with Mustafa Kemal and other officials in Ankara.

Nursi believed in the power of ideas and a cognitive revolution and the goal thus became the construction of an Islamic consciousness. He wanted to prove that science and rationalism are compatible with religious beliefs and wanted to contemporize Islam by Islamizing science and also to protect the people from unbelief and those in the Madrassas (traditional Islamic schools) from fanaticism.²

Said Nursi spent most of his life in educating his countrymen in the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah. For his mission he traveled from

² Ibid, p. 587.
village to village. Nursi and his followers, the *Risale-i-Nur* movement, spread throughout Turkey after 1950, despite the state’s efforts to stop their activities, and had special success among the young and those educated in the secular education system.¹

Indeed, he enjoyed the confidence of the government as long as Democratic Party was in power, when he died he left behind more than half a million followers belonging to all classes of people, from the peasants up to the highly educated persons such as advocates, journalists and members of the Grand National Assembly.²

Nursi believed that Westernization had led the people astray, and towards foreign politics and way of life. Hypocrites and disbelievers had misused religion for politics. He asserted that the Western civilization is not based on virtue and belief in God, but on Greed and avarice, jealously and domination. It is like a withering tree, and it would be defeated by Asian Civilization³ Nurcu movement accomplished transition from and an oral culture to a print culture for the Nurcu movement seeks to move Islam from an oral based tradition

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² Feroze, M. Rashid Op.Cit; pp. 141

to a print based medium and to raise religious consciousness through education and reason. This encouraged the formation of a number of reading circles, known as dershane. Gradually these reading circles dershanes spread throughout Anatolia and updated Islamic vocabulary in terms of the global discourses of science, democracy and human rights. There are more than 5,000 reading circles, dershanes in Turkey and the number of Nurcu adherents varies between two and six million.¹ Also there are fifty-three dershanes in the Central Asian Republics, twenty-four in Germany, four in Holland, four in Austria, two in Belgium and one in Sarajevo. This clearly manifests that this movement represents the shift advocated by Nursi from oral culture to print culture and from rural to urban.² In disseminating his ideas, Nursi encouraged the use of new communication technology. Thus the Nurcus contemporary use of modern media such as radio, Television, magazines, e-mail and newspapers is a direct out growth of Nursi’s earlier encouragement.³

² Ibid, p. 590.
³ Ibid
Fethullah Gulen and Neo Nurcu Movement

After the death of Said Nursi, the Nurcu movement fragmented along ethnic class, educational generational and regional lines. Fethullah Gulen, born in Erzurum in Eastern Turkey in 1938, became a prominent Nurcu leader commonly called Hocaefendi (The master of higher religious authority). Though a moderate Islamic spiritual leader, his views on Islam are surprisingly liberal. His writings and world-view create a marriage between tradition and modernity.

Gulen does not favour the state applying Islamic law, the Sharia. He asserts that most Islamic regulations concern private life and only a small portion of them concern state and government. Thus religion being a private matter, its requirements should not be imposed on any one. Gulen wants to accomplish two intellectual facts: the Islamization of Turkish nationalist ideology and the Turkification of Islam and hopes to re-establish the link between religion and state that existed in Ottoman era.

\[1\] Ibid.
He emphasizes that there should be freedom of worship and thinking in Turkey. He writes of an ‘Anatolian Islam’\(^1\) based on tolerance and excluding harsh restrictions or fanaticism. Thus he prepares two keys to provide peace in society: tolerance and dialogue. As reported in Reuters, he asserted, ‘we can build confidence and peace in this country if we treat each other with tolerance’.\(^2\) His views regarding the question of women are very progressive. On the veiling of women, he states, ‘no one can suppress the progress of women through the clothes they have to wear’, he added, ‘no one should be subject to criticism for his or her clothing or thoughts’.

The neo-Nurcu movement is dormant in central Asia and has great influence on the Turks of that area. Perhaps because of its ability to communicate the message of Said Nursi.\(^3\) Other Islamic countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are not successful in disseminating their versions of Islam because of the poor response from the people of that area.

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\(^1\) Gulen holds that the Anatolian people’s interpretation and expression of Islam are different from others especially the Arabs.

\(^2\) Alistair Bell ‘Turkish Islamic Leader defies Radical Label’ Reuters Aug. 7, 1995.

\(^3\) The Sufi Oriented Softer Turkish Islam has been more appealing to the Turkish Nations than the Saudi or Iranian versions of a ‘Rigid Islam’.
The proliferation of religiously shaped social practices that include shopping at pro-Islamic malls, watching pro-Islamic television programs and consuming popular Islamic literature, it is all encouraged by neo-Nurcus.¹ Muslims are being urged by Islamic foundations, associations and other publishing groups to become socially and politically active and control their own lives.²

It is really tough to assess exactly the size of Gulen’s giant community of sympathizers (known as Fethullah’s partisans of Fethullahci) but its range is guessed between 200,000 and 4 million.³ Its supporters include young urban men, doctors, academicians and other professionals.

Gulen stresses education and engagement in the market economy, so his activities are aimed at moulding of cohesive and disciplined community through education, mass media and financial networks. It has a control over a large media empire. It owns many publications, magazines, journals and dailies, which are used to disseminate Gulen’s

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ideas to masses in general and to elites of Turkish society in particular. Its publications include *Yeni Umit* (New Hope, a theological journal), *Eklogi* (an environment related magazine) *Sizinti* (Leak, a scientific monthly journal), the *fountain* (English language religious publication), *Zaman* (a daily newspaper) Besides it has media outlets; *Samanyolu TV* and *Burch F.M.* (Radio station). It also organizes national and international symposia, panel discussions and conferences where different issues regarding secularism and Islamism are discussed. In comparison to most Kemalist and other Islamic groups, Nurcus allow more freedom of debate and criticism in their magazines/journals, radio, television stations and dailies, but only within the co-ordinates of Islamic-Turkish nationalism.¹

This community has built a vast educational empire which includes schools, colleges and universities throughout the Turkey and outside. It has around 300 schools in some 50 countries starting with the Turkish republic of central Asia, where its establishments have won Turkey a strong reputation for good education (brief analysis of students and teachers in different countries is given under, in Table 1.

¹ Yavuz, M. Hakan Loc.Cit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Personnel From Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>27 High Schools</td>
<td>5539</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>11 High Schools/1 Univ.</td>
<td>3023</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>18 High Schools</td>
<td>3334</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>12 High Schools/1 Univ.</td>
<td>3295</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>11 High Schools</td>
<td>2093</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tataristan (Russia)</td>
<td>6 High Schools</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>5 High Schools</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>2 High Schools</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestan (Russia)</td>
<td>5 High Schools</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5 High Schools</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>4 High Schools</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashkortistan (Russia)</td>
<td>3 High Schools</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>4 High Schools</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberia (Russia)</td>
<td>4 High Schools</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>4 High Schools</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia (Russia Proper)</td>
<td>5 High Schools</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuvashia (Russia)</td>
<td>2 High Schools</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>3 High Schools</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gagauz (Moldova)</td>
<td>2 High Schools</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimea (Russia)</td>
<td>2 High Schools</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Turkman</td>
<td>4 High Schools</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>2 High Schools</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>1 High Schools</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachay (Russia)</td>
<td>1 High Schools</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1 High Schools</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,532</strong></td>
<td><strong>3167</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gulen’s community controls one of the fastest growing financial institutions, Asya Finans, which has over half a billion, US dollars in capital\(^1\) and backed by sixteen partners\(^2\). In addition to this ISHAD (İslam Hayatı Dayanımsa Derneği), a powerful association of over 2000 businessmen and merchants supports Gulen’s educational activities.

Besides the community runs dormitories summer camps and other foundations. The combination of mobilized money, knowledge, media and students has already molded the educational landscape in Turkey and central Asia. Its education system seeks to discover the attributes of nature to consolidate faith in God. For, according to Gulen a lack of religious education would create atheism whereas the lack of scientific education would result in fanaticism. According to some critics, Gulen’s educational institutions, give the neo-Nurcu a ‘powerful and pernicious domination over the minds of the next generations’\(^3\).

As Bulent Aras comments that the unique character of Gulen’s movement lies in the attempt to revitalize traditional values through the states official modernization program and aims to reconcile hundreds of years of tradition with the demands of modernity and seeks to

\(^1\) Ibid
\(^3\) Cited in Yavuz, M. Hakan p. 599.
construct a Turkish style Islam; Islamize Turkish nationalism and re-create a legitimate link between state and religion.¹

However, Gulen who was seen as a moderate face of Islam, even by the politicians from president Suleyman Demirel to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit is now seen as the state's prime enemy who is trying to undermine the foundation of the secular regime.²

This brief sketch of the Nurcu and neo-Nurcu movement clearly reveals that they have played and are playing an important role in supporting Islamic ideas among masses. Though purely a movement of faith, they have also concentrated on building a religious society and polity.

There are also many other Sufi communities, which play a significant role in financing Quranic schools to which the government also contributes. They help the needy students by providing them free accommodation in their dormitories and also contribute to their food and other expenses too.

For the past few years, these networks have been concentrating on welfare services as in response to the widespread poverty in cities. As

the economic reformist policies of the 1980’s limited government expenditure on social services and on the welfare state in general, it did provide an opportunity for the religious organizations to offer social services and relief to the poor and needy. They also organize medical centers and hospitals that offer treatment schemes and child care programs.

As for the financial resources, they get contributions from people, as well as donations from local to international Muslim business, institutions and states, including Turkish migrant workers in Europe, the tapping of public resources. With the expansion of the economy of the Islamist sector, especially since 1980 with large-scale holding companies, investment houses banks and insurance companies are also contributing to these orders.

**The Turkish Democracy**

The democratic essence of Turkish politics has long been questioned and debated.\(^1\) According to Sonar and S. Sayari there are serious difficulties and limitations involved in the development of Turkish

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democracy because the government has imposed narrow limits within which political activities can take place. Statism, one of the main features of Turkey’s Kemalist political culture acts as a center-periphery schism; and a persistent inability to come into terms with the more subtle nuances of democratic politics.¹ In fact, Turkey’s resilient statist tradition has led to the centralization of power among a consistent core of elites.²

The military government in the coup of 1980 imposed a five-year ban on political activity of the members of the parliament at the time of the coup. This ban aimed at changing the composition of the elite political classes in parliament in its endeavour.³ As a matter of fact, Turkish politics is still ridden with familiar faces and personalities, which are cyclically rising to the power and then falling from it only to rise and fall again. However, this elite has failed in accommodating the dissenting voices within itself and, as a result there is always a marked chronic disagreements and internal conflicts as well as intra-elite

² Ibid p. 21.
discords, which give rise to a chaotic nature of the Turkish political party scene.\textsuperscript{1}

A truly democratic culture is marked by a social spirit of compromise and accommodation, which is lacking in Turkish political system. This argument may be well supported by the instances of intense rivalry even at the highest levels of political system. In the late 1950’s, there surfaced conflicts between President, Suleyman Demirel and former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, and Tansu Ciller and Mesut Yilmaz, their mutual wranglings and discords in fact, did bring the country’s political machinery to a virtual halt during those periods.\textsuperscript{2}

It was this intense rivalry among the elites, which was going to push the system to the verge of paralysis and provide an opportunity for the self ascribed saviours to come to rescue, be they in military uniform or armed with absolututist even religious solutions. Although largely unsubstantiated, there have been rumours of a possible military coup by elements within the armed forces.\textsuperscript{3} It came in one of the country’s leading newspaper that, ‘Turkey is rapidly moving towards a yearning

\textsuperscript{2} See, for example, The Turkish Daily News, 7 June, 1994, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{3} Turkish Daily News, 4 May, 1994 and Turkish Daily News, 10 Oct. 1995.
for authority that goes beyond military coups, a yearning not for a military coup as an alternative to democracy but for an authority that goes beyond it'.\(^1\) To the disenchanted voters on March 1994 and December 1995, the Welfare Party appeared as the most likely party capable of averting potential disaster. In such prevailing circumstances, it appeared that the Welfare Party provided a better alternative to ‘politics as usual’ and symbolized a political movement that was in tune with the social and cultural currents gripping the nation.

Eric Rouleau sees the Kurdish conflict among other factors which contributed to the remarkable revival of Islam in Turkey, for the results of the parliamentary elections of December 24, 1995, is a testimony that the Welfare Party which is the main political body of the Islamist trend raised its percentage of votes from 7 to 21 percent (between 1987 and 1995, respectively) because of the Kurdish support.\(^2\)

**Welfare Party: Rise and Demise**

The history of the Welfare Party stretches back only to 1970 when Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, born in 1926 and educated as an engineer at

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Istanbul Technical University, appeared on the political scene. As president of the Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industries, he had spoken for small business, which he claimed was being subordinated by big capital and, especially foreign interests under the aegis of the then Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel’s Justice Party.¹

As early as 1970 Erbakan had also begun to make pronouncements against not only communism but also against the ‘infidel’ West and ‘international Zionism’. The latter statements led opponents to charge him with ‘anti-Semitism’ an allegation, which Erbakan and his subordinates have subsequently denied.²

Erbakan became an independent member of parliament for Konya province in 1970. Konya city contained the tomb of Jelal ed-Din Rumi, preeminent mystic and founder of the whirling Dervishes and was the traditional stronghold of religious conservatives. There Erbakan founded the National Order Party. This party was dissolved after the military ultimatum of March 12, 1971 which demanded, amongst other things ‘a strong Kemalist government’ The National Order Party,

² Ibid.
however was not singled out for closure, and not only was Erbakan not prosecuted but he was allowed to re-establish his party some eighteen months later under the name of the National Salvation Party. At that time Erbakan was included in socialist Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit’s left-of-centre government as vice-premier and minister of state.

Thus Welfare Party has been around in various guises and under different names since the late 1960’s and is not a new player in Turkish politics.¹ First as the National order party in 1969 and then National Salvation Party founded in 1972. The National Salvation Party was represented in parliament between 1973 and 1980 and also took part in three different coalition governments: one led by Bulent Ecevit, the leader of the Social Democratic Republican People’s Party, in 1974; and the other by Suleyman Demirel of the Justice Party, between 1975 and 1977 Necmettin Erbakan remained its unchallenged leader until the 1980 military coup disbanded the party.

The welfare party, the successor of National Salvation Party came into being in 1983 after the ban imposed by the military on all political activities was lifted, and the political parties were allowed to openly

participate in political processes. In the highly unstable and volatile climate of the 1970's the National Salvation Party had found much support among members of the civil services, a support that in the newly charged atmosphere of the 1990's was once again proving to be a great asset.¹

The National Salvation Party had adopted the Islamic platform up to the limit as was allowed by the constitution of 1961 and the political climate of the 1970's. But neither the National Salvation Party and nor the Welfare Party in its early years could gather much support among the Turkish electorate. During the 1970's and the early to mid 1980's it was not Islam but rather social democracy that attracted increasing numbers of Turkish youth and intellectuals, in turn evoking sharp reaction from the far right.² The National Salvation Party represented those who were not fully integrated culturally and economically into the 'modernist center'.³ The National Salvation Party's goal was to return to traditional social and cultural life and laid emphasis on Islamic mores as a cure to social problem. In contrast the Welfare Party aimed

¹ In the 1970's both the National Salvation Party and the National Action Party were alleged to use their participation in government to place supports in the bureaucracy.
² Ahmad, Feroze, 'Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey', p. 17.
³ Toprak, Binnaz, 'Politicization', p. 131.
to modernize traditional norms and institutions by breathing new life into them.

The Welfare Party fitted well within the category of organized Islamic popular movements that operate as political parties.¹ It superseded other political parties, not only in the size of its membership, but in the efficiency of its party organization. Its activists were highly motivated, well disciplined and strongly committed. The Welfare Party, offered people three major things. First, the ideology that explained what was fundamentally wrong with the country and the solution to put things in order. Second, its activists provided poor people some material support and benefits as health care and medical aid. Finally, they showed sympathy and appreciation of the difficulties of every day life for ordinary people and respect for their work and struggle, thus creating an atmosphere of closeness, affection, congeniality and companionship with their voters.² In addition the Welfare Party helped in the political socialization of Islamic groups by mobilizing them to take part in political system thereby ensuring their political participation. It even attracted the voters ignored by other parties. Moreover, it even mobilized and included the people imbued with Islamic values and were

on the political periphery and the large Kurdish population, though their inclusion was not costly because the Islamic periphery did not request the immediate redistribution of political power. It rather helped the state’s strategy to expand its social base by incorporating Islamic voices into the system.¹

The Welfare Party, unlike other parties, was an institutional expression of a modern social movement that was based on a new form of consciousness created by mass education, the expanding impact of print media, and the shift of religious authority from traditional Ulema to urbanized university graduates. This movement strives to redefine socio-cultural and economic relations through political means.²

Though the Welfare Party was established on July 19, 1983 by Ali Turkmen and his thirty friends, but the party could not enter the first national election after the coup, held in 1983. However, the party contested local elections on March 25, 1984 under the leadership of Ahmad Tekdal. The party secured a total number of 778,622 votes

² Ibid.
with a percent of 4.4 of the total and won mayoral seats in 'Van' and 'Urfa'.

In the first general party congress on June 30, 1985, Tekdal sharply criticized Ozal’s economic policies and stressed social justice and political freedom for the working classes. Binnaz Toprak comments that party wanted to expend its social base, but assumes that it was molding and leading the passive Islamic masses.

When the ex-politicians were allowed to enter into politics, in the light of the referendum of 1987, Necmettin Erbakan and some of the pre-1980 cadres came to the forefront and took the reins of the party in their hands and rally the support of the Nurcu sect of Muslims. Erbakan known as Hoca (master), speaks German and English, and is a veteran politician with 27 years of experience. Upon his return to the party, his style of leadership and drive were restored to the organization and a new party mission was based on his own ideology. The platform which Erbakan derived, leading into the December 1995

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elections, was based on his desires to maintain democracy while stripping the Turkish constitution of its secular character.\(^1\)

The Welfare Party's first electoral showing in the parliamentary election of 1987 was not, so good, in which it failed to secure any representation in the Turkish parliament. In these elections its share was only 7.16% with 1,717,425 votes, in 1989 local election the party won only 9.8 percent of votes. This unsatisfactory electoral showing compelled its policymakers to form a purely pragmatic alliance with the Nationalistic Action Party and Reformist Democratic Party on September 23, 1991. This alliance won 62 seats in parliament in the 1991 general elections and its vote percentage raised to 16.2.

The Welfare Party became a significant force in Turkish politics when, in local elections on March 27, 1994, it won 19.7 percent of the national votes and its pro-Islamist mayors took control of twenty-nine large cities, including Ankara and Istanbul.\(^2\) This percentage increased even further by late 1995 to 21.4% and 158 seats giving the Welfare Party the largest single bloc of representatives in the parliament and for the first time in Turkey's Republican Party history an avowedly

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religious party gained a relative majority of the votes in the general elections. Welfare Party’s steady rise in its electoral base can be ascertained by looking at table 2.

| Table 2 | Elections in Turkey, 1987 - 1995 |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|         | 1987            | 1991            | 1995            |
| Parties | %               | Seats           | %               | Seats           | %               | Seats           |
| Center Right |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                  |
| True path    | 19.1            | 59              | 27.0            | 178              | 19.2            | 135              |
| Motherland   | 39.3            | 292             | 24.0            | 115              | 19.7            | 132              |
| Center left |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                  |
| Democratic left | 8.5          | --              | 10.8            | 7                | 14.6            | 76               |
| Republican people | --          | --              | --              | --              | 10.7            | 49               |
| SODEP        | 24.8            | 99              | 20.8            | 88               | --              | --               |
| Nationalsist |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                  |
| National Movement | --          | --              | --              | --              | 8.1            | --               |
| People’s Democratic | --       | --              | --              | --              | 4.1            | --               |
| Pro-Islamic |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                  |
| Welfare Party | 7.2           | --              | 16.2*           | 63               | 21.4            | 158              |


It is not only its pro-Islamic stance, but there are other reasons, which culminated in the Welfare Party’s victory in the 1995 elections. The Mayors of Welfare Party which took charge of many cities after the 1994, local elections, have worked hard to improve public services and
offered better services than their predecessors. Moreover, they reduced corruption and nepotism in their municipalities, and acted more professionally than the other parties on the left and right.¹

Further, it cannot be denied that the Welfare Party’s electoral success was also greatly facilitated by the paralysis and failure of its principle competitors, especially the main ruling centrist coalitions. The mainstream secular political parties were perceived as immersed in corruption, in particular the True Path Party and the Motherland Party were engaged in endless squabbles, in particular with the new Republican People’s Party.²

Metin Heper, argues that some members of the secularist intelligentsia were constantly engaged in de-legitimizing the political regime by trying to belittle such key institutions as the military, the National Security Council, the Presidency, and even the parliament, and this too played into the hands of Erbakan and his colleagues.³

Mehran Kamrava sees four specific reasons that underlined the WP’s steady rise in stature and power. They included the Welfare Party’s

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³ Heper, Metin ‘Islam and Democracy in Turkey’ p. 36.
highly populist agendas; its concerted efforts to tap into previously ignored electoral sources (as the Southeast region, the army etc.); its internal cohesion and organizational strength, especially when compared to the wide spread lack of discipline in most of the other parties; and its grass-root efforts and general posture as a 'movement' rather than a political party.¹ Moreover, the political events in the neighbouring West Asian region also had their impact on the success of Welfare Party. All of these factors gave it a distinct identity and an edge over the other parties.

**The Welfare Party and its program**

The Welfare Party’s popularity is attributed to its highly populist agenda, that contained the enunciation of party’s various theorists as well as party’s platform, its corner stone being what the party called the ‘Just Order’.

**Just order (Adil Duzen)**

It was the most appealing programme presented by Welfare Party. The party’s supporters identified social equity as the main objective of the just order system. People saw in it justice, a secure social and

economic environment, the protection of state property, an end to nepotism and corruption, cooperation between state and nation, protection of the unity of the state and an end to undue western influence over Turkey. Such responses indicate that Just Order was seen as Islamic political system, but at the same time addressing Turkey's immediate social and economic problems.¹

The Just Order was the brainchild of Erbakan, the party's leader, and Suleyman Karagulle, a former collaborator who later severed his ties with Erbakan and the Welfare Party.²

Comprising thirty-one articles, some of it dealt with Socio cultural and theoretical issues, however, the most of which revolved around economic matters. In fact, article 1 explicitly states that 'in the just order, the state does not engage in any economic activities, the private sector runs the economy', the state's concern is to prevent monopolies.

The aims and objectives of Just Order are enumerated below:

• foster rapid development, as there will be no interest on loans, and the money diverted to interests go as towards investments instead (loans will be provided by the wealthy to ‘trust worthy entrepreneurs’);

• prevent unemployment, in fact tripling the work force from its current 10 million to an estimated 30 million workers;

• result in an explosion of exports, as production will rise by 'five fold to six fold' and so will capabilities to export;

• lower the country’s foreign debt, because of the increased wealth of the nation and the capable management of Just Order 'cadre': and

• eliminate inflation although there might be small increases and drops in prices associated with changes in supply and demands.

The Just Order is not to be confused with 'capitalism' neither is it to be misinterpreted as communism. According to Mehran Kamrava,

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1 The information on the Just Order written above comes from the English translation of a 43 page booklet published in Turkish by the Welfare Party under the title Adil Duzen (with no name of author or date and place of publication) as printed in Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Western Europe (Here after FBIS: WEU), Turkey’s: Welfare Party explains its 'Just Order, 5 December, 1995, pp. 1-15.
capitalism is bound to go bankrupt just as communism has. The Just Order is 'an order of harmony not discord' and one in which there is a congruence of interests between workers and employers, government administrators and the people, doctors and patients, and lawyers and clients.\(^1\)

As a matter of fact, the quest of the poor and newly urbanized masses for equal distribution of economic goods and for economic prosperity finds expression in the Welfare Party's just Order. Thus this party offered an institutional framework for the voiceless and suppressed masses of Turkey and for social movements, seeking to redefine and transform social, cultural and political interactions.\(^2\)

The main objectives of the Just Order, as manifest from its stipulations, were the protection of the state and its property and was more concerned with the country's social and economic problems. The Just Order did not imply an interest free economic system or a welfare state; it stood for the prevention of injustice and religious discrimination against pious people.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) Ibid.
Identity (Kimlik) and the Welfare Party

The Welfare Party provided a forum, for diverse ethnic and regional identities to flourish and coexist, by means of using Islamic idioms and symbols. In practice the party leadership had implied no bar on its participants, rather it functioned as a space in which to negotiate political tradeoffs between competing identities and loyalties, Islamic identity thus became a mobilizing tool in the hands of the party leadership. Necmettin Erbakan often quoted a famous saying of Mevlana, ‘Come, regardless of your background come what ever you are, you should come. Come and internalize our identity in due time’. This manifests that Erbakan did not see the party platform as a flexible structure that could be altered by new participants rather he demanded that new comers accept the form of the party, which acts as a school to mold and shape individuals.\(^1\) It seems that this party having an articulate ideology, had the potential to mould its supporters and imbibe among them Islamic interests and thus transform them, with a new Islamic identity.

\(^1\) Ibid p. 75.
The leadership of the Welfare Party admitted three spheres of confrontation in Turkish society: ideological (left versus right and Islamist versus both Marxist and capitalist), ethnic (Turkish versus Kurd), and religious (different sects of Islam such as Sunni versus Alevi). The liberal wing of the party sought to harmonize these three zones of conflict by opening a series of communication channels and public spaces to socialize differences through interaction. Bahri Zengin, with his liberal views, played a key role in the opening of new channels of interaction between the different segments of Society. Because he emphasized the importance of social peace and the need to bring different factions—westernized ‘open’ women and traditional ‘covered’ ones, Kurdish and Turkish nationalists, Kemalist intellectuals and Islamists, together in a common ideological ground. However, the conservative core of leadership of the party, which includes Necmettin Erbakan, reacted negatively to this openness and insisted on the subordination of cultural and political cleavage in Turkish society to a single ideology. This clearly revealed the ambiguous trends present within the Welfare Party and the ideological fragmentation among its party leaders.

1 Ibid. pp. 75-76.
Other Aspects of Welfare Party

The Welfare Party maintained that West had developed at the heavy cost of undermining the Islamic world in general and Turkey in particular. Erbakan, in a speech before the Welfare Party's fourth Grand convention in 1993, claimed that the other political parties 'have been dancing to a tune played by some one else', namely the United States.¹ He decried that the Turkish state is nothing but an 'imitator region', which is more eager to serve the interests of the Europeans and the United States, than that of Turkey or any of the other Muslim countries. The remedy was to pursue foreign policies that were more genuinely nationalistic and involved greater solidarity with other Islamic countries. So Welfare Party opposed Turkey's application for membership to the European union that was supported by roughly 40% of the Turkish population² (according to a public poll). The popularity of Welfare Party's this stance increased with the constant rebuffing of Turkey's application for membership to European Union.

Although giving assurances that it had no intention of damaging either Turkey's republican order or its Western relations, Erbakan initiated

some bold symbolic changes in domestic and foreign politics. Some instances which are worth to cite here are: paying his first state visits to a number of Muslim countries, allowed female bureaucrats to wear the head scarf in the office and agreed to the adjustment of working-hours during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting.¹

On the domestic front, the Welfare Party adopted a deliberate ideological ambivalence towards it. As the Southeast region has good electoral resources, Welfare Party could not afford to even appear sympathetic to the cause of Kurdish separatism. Instead the Welfare Party often focused on the region’s economic and industrial underdevelopment. In fact the Welfare Party never outlined their political policy or solutions for this region, once in power, yet it frequently criticized the governments harsh treatment of Kurdish activists.²

The overall ideology of the Welfare Party was a form of Islamic ‘liberalism’ for it did not see Islam as an alternative to politics but searched for ways in which to integrate Islamic identity and its

² Ibid
symbols into the political sphere.\textsuperscript{1} Although the Just Order and the party's other ideological expositions did not specifically refer to religion, Islam did provide the overall theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the Welfare Party's platform and agendas.\textsuperscript{2}

No doubt, the Welfare Party's popular image as an 'Islamic' party was due more to the history, activities and enunciations of its main activist especially Erbakan rather than its adherence to the theoretical works of a synthesizer of religion and politics in the Turkish context.

For Welfare Party's members and its supporter's, Islam was not so much of a guide for the acquisition and conduct of political power as it was a comforting source of identity and a larger, more general philosophical framework in which to operate. However it seemed that, most of the members of the Welfare Party not only accepted and internalized the separation of politics from religion but had gone further and given primacy to the winning of political power over pursuing regions goals.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Yavuz, M. Hakan Op.Cit; p. 76.
\textsuperscript{2} Kamarava, Mehran Op.Cit; p. 291.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
Organization and Regionalism of Welfare Party

In Turkey, the political scenario was changed by the 1994 and 1995 elections, which some secularists interpret as a revolt against Kemalism where as it is viewed as democratization by Islamist publicists.

One of the major reasons for the success of the Welfare Party and the rise in its electoral base in these elections was its organizational flexibility besides the strategic use of modern means in mobilizing traditional networks. Its highly evolved administrative organization was designed to reach the most basic local level of every neighbourhood. The organizer of each neighbourhood appointed street representatives to collect information about the age, ethnicity, religious origin and place of birth of the inhabitants on each street. Every week the work of the organizers was received by inspectors of district level, which in turn reported to district chairman and finally, through district chairman to a provincial party council, made up of 50 regular members and 50 reserves. This set up was replicated at national level.¹

In fact it was this organizational hierarchy that made the Welfare Party more efficient and unique from the other political parties of Turkey, which lacked such type of communication with their neighborhoods. Further more, there were unofficial divisions that are generational and regional, these two categories just differentiated between the various members of the party. All party workers fell into one of the three categories.

At the top were men of considerable experience, who were the primary administrators of the party. These party men were in their sixties and seventies, and, besides, their political activities, most of them were successful engineers and academicians. Many of the party's parliamentarians were drawn from them.¹

The second category consisted of men in their thirties and forties, most of them were serving as administrators in provincial organizations and local authorities and others were government employees, teachers and lecturers. They served as a moderating force against the more indoctrinated and often more radical members of the third category comprising the party's grass root workers and supporters. These members, were in their late teens. Some of them were also in late

twenties and early thirties. However, most of them tended to be current or former students who could not get jobs according to their qualifications. Also among this group were young workers and men and women from lower middle classes, most of whom were drawn to religion during the Islamic wave that swept across the West Asia in the 1980's.

Unlike other parties which have a centralized campaign strategies, and which do not have face to face contacts, the Welfare Party's district organizations were quite autonomous in the sense that they could utilize local resources, devise its own strategies and adopt the local languages to win elections. They shared the grief of a bereaved family thus brought a human touch, which differentiated the party from the callous and face less image of other political parties.\(^1\)

Jenny B. White argues that, the Welfare Party also maintained many types of clubs that brought together potential voters. Thus, the Welfare Party's strategy relied on building interpersonal trust.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Ibid p. 78.
\(^2\) White, J. B. 'Islam and Democracy The Turkish Experience', *Current History*, January, 1995, p. 11.
Nevertheless, some regional differences could be found among Welfare Party members, which mirror their regional preferences, found in the different parts of the country. Party members from central Anatolia, which mainly comprised the middle class workers, small merchants and farmers; tended to be more provincial and conservatives, both in terms of their religious beliefs and in their greater degree of nationalistic fervour. In this region the party has become an institutional expression of Sunni Turkish verses Alevi identity.¹

Those from the Black sea region though cosmopolitan in their outlook, are more willing to mix religion and politics while in the Southeast, Kurdish identity, mixed with religion, became more prominent and this was clear from the growing number of Welfare Party supporters and members from this region. Party members belonging to bigger cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir showed any of these characteristics. Although the Welfare Party did not muster much support in the coastal strips of Aegean, the Mediterranean, and the western Black sea,

¹ The Welfare Party was able to gain more support in central and eastern Anatolia, because of its certain policies, like adoption of a new policy of indifference to the Kurdish problem in 1995 thus neutralizing the accusation of being pro-Kurdish, adopting anti – Alevi posture by Welfare Party and improved public services by its mayors also paid it in the elections.
perhaps because of the high concentration of wealth at the hands of
the Istanbul or Ankara based elits.¹

In South East Anatolia, the Welfare Party increased its vote by 1.40
percent in the 1995 election and won more seats than other parties.
For gaining Sunni-Turkish votes, the Welfare Party ignored Kurdish
problem and did not nominate Pro Kurdish nationalist from the region.

The Islamic appeals of the Welfare Party had also enjoyed the support
of the dominant Sufi orders of South East Anatolia. The Welfare Party,
in the Marmara region (Istanbul and Adapazi) had a Social Democratic
image. In Istanbul, the Welfare Party emphasized justice and the
distribution of benefits and responsibilities.² This also adds to its
popularity in this region.

Although Welfare Party supporters varied from one region to another
with respect to their regional concerns, yet each regional socio
economic problem was expressed in Islamic terms because the very
structure of Turkish society is Islamic, defined differently by each
group. Turkish Muslims understand the significance of Islam and try to

¹ Milliyet, 11 April, 1924, p. 21, as cited by Kamarava, Mehran Op.Cit; p.
² Ibid. 297.

223
imbibe it in their daily practices, but they do not ignore the culturally rooted conventions and rules of every sphere of social life from education to politics to the economy and to medicine, which may not be strictly in line with Islamic precepts.¹ What makes Islam relevant is its flexibility and not its rigidity or inherent quality to govern human conduct. For example, on one hand in South East, the land owners and party bosses invoked Islam to consolidate the old power structure, while in industrialized cities, Islam rallied the oppressed masses around the demands for justice and equality.²

The Welfare Party’s victory in the 1994 local elections and then in 1995 general elections had clearly shown that it had become a formidable force in Turkish Politics before it was banned in January 1998. In fact, this party with a 'pro-Islam' attitude had won the votes basically because of the anger of the lower middle class as well as the failure of its competitors especially the True Path Party and the Motherland Party to cater to the needs of the common masses. As Erik Cornell puts it that Republican Party’s advance should be interpreted as an expression of dissatisfaction from the voters and a warning signal to the politicians of the established parties whose political

¹ Yavuz, M. Hakan Op.Cit; p. 79.
² Ibid.

224
mistakes proved more advantageous to Welfare Party.\textsuperscript{1} Besides one more reason of the Welfare Party’s strength was the expansion of the economy, resulted form Turkey’s open door trade policies.

In fact, Turgut Ozal’s free market Policy, in the late 1980’s and 1990, were supported by small businessmen in the provinces, and contractors, small industrialists, restaurant owners, textile shop owners and food producers of the big cities. This class, not in favour of state intervention in the economy, were supporters of economic liberalization. Therefore, they thought Islamist symbols and ethics, the best weapons to generate public opinion against statism and big industrialists.\textsuperscript{2}

Moreover, it cannot be overlooked that its success was because of the party’s own grass-root efforts in a climate that was marked by a high rate inflation and unemployment, the consequent disillusionment with the mainstream parties coming on top of the social costs of economic policies of the past decade, added to the resonance of the party’s largely traditional but only loosely Islamic platform which promised a

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way out to these problems.\textsuperscript{1} The steady rise in the popularity appeared astounding inspite of a few blemishes on the party’s image. Nonetheless, the party continued to appear strong to the younger member of the more traditional classes, the lower middle and lower classes and the economically marginalized elements.

The Welfare Party’s ascendance to power did not prove fruitful, especially with its highly fragile coalition. While in power, Erbakan had to play a crucial and a delicate balancing role. He pursued populist domestic and foreign policies in order to cater to the constituents of its party. He toured a numbers of Muslim countries to develop friendly relations with them and to appease his party supporters. However, at the home front he could not placate the worries of the armed forces and Turkey’s other secular politicians.

In these pursuits, the Welfare Party had to down play its religious identity. For instance, in 1996’s convention, Erbakan called its party Welfare Party a guarantor of democracy and secularism in Turkey.\textsuperscript{2}

Welfare Party’s rise to power in 1996 was as a result of its unique brand of populism and it was this populism that the military of Turkey,

\textsuperscript{1} Kamarava, Mehran Op.Cit; pp. 299-300.
\textsuperscript{2} The Christian Science Monitor, 18 October 1996 p. 7.
which sees itself as the ‘guardian of the secular republic’ was threatened which eventually led to the removal of the party from office and its banning. On January 16, 1998, Turkey’s constitutional courts dominated by the military announced the closure of so-called fundamentalist Welfare Party, on the ground that it had violated the constitution’s secular provisions.¹

The undemocratic way in which the Islamist experiment came to an end stirred little protest among Turkey’s Western allies. On the contrary, reminded of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the countries of Europe and the United States silently approved the ‘post-modem coup’ in order to get rid of the Muslim fundamentalists.² The real reason behind Western fears was the fact that many Western observers still believed in the Kemalist brand of the secular revolution, perhaps being unaware of the prominent political and social role that religion has always played in the West Asian Muslim countries in general and in Turkey in particular.³

Following the detailed discussion above in the subject, one can safely reach a conclusion that the revival of Islamic sentiment distinctly

¹ The Hindu, Madras, February 19, 1998.
³ Ibid. p. 119.
constitutes the most significant development taking place not only in the West Asian region but in Muslim countries of Southeast Asia\(^1\) as well. No country having Muslims as majority are unaffected. Particularly in Turkey the success of Welfare Party in nation wide local elections as well as in the national elections was the manifestation of the steady growth of Muslim consciousness besides seeking salvation against a deteriorating economic background.

\(^1\) The growth of Muslim sentiments in Malaysia and Indonesia is gaining momentum in these countries.
CONCLUSION: TURKEY AT THE CROSSROADS

Turkey is born out of the ashes of Ottoman Sultanate. Historically and geographically Turkey's location itself presents a challenging duality of tradition and modernity, urbanity and simplicity, earnestness and tolerance, and unilateralism and pluralism. There is an unresolved, unease among the various conflicting forces existing there, they are traditional Islamists and secularists. Like other Muslim countries, there is a critical polarization of Westernized modernists and traditionalists. While modernists see no other way out other than adopting whole sale modern civilization through its various manifestations like speaking English, adoption of Western culture and education. At the same time the traditionalists inherently Pan Islamic, are more oriented towards Islamic values and Islamic culture. Though willing to adopt some Western values but at the same time they want to retain their Islamic ethos.

Until the founding of the Turkish Republic (Oct. 1923), Sultan Caliph was both the temporal and the traditional head with Islam as the chief component in its ideology. Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his followers
were modernists to their core. They criticized the exploitation of Islam for political and feudal purposes. They were against the prevalent rigid, outdated and irrational interpretation of the Sharia. They were reforming the country both from inside and outside to rid the country from these malaises. They decided to adopt secular nationalism as the ideology of the new state in order to modernize Turkish political, social and economic structure by relegating Islam to the back seat.

Kemal’s policy of modernization was more like Westernization and it seems that, for him, the progress and power of Europe was an attainable model and he wanted to achieve more in less time. Kemalism has its own supporters and opponents. Its supporters admire the reforms undertaken by Mustafa Kemal as the only measure to save the country from total annihilation after the disintegration of the Great Ottoman Empire. They don’t see any fault in his ideology, as they believe it to be the only foregone and unalterable consensus on Turkishness that Kemal had to adopt.

However, its opponents quite dissatisfied with the secular measures tended to use Islamic discourse to challenge the legitimacy of the state. Though the Republic took many measures to contain the role of
Islam but it seems that the Turkish version of radical Islam, like that else where in West Asia, has asserted itself effectively in all aspects, and at all levels of society. Though secular nationalist politics of Turkey has defined the parameters of political discourse but Islam was never totally excluded from the official public sphere. On the one hand Islam was separated from the public political realm but at the same time it was accommodating religion into the system in various ways.

The resurgence and revival of Islam in Turkey since 1950’s is thought to be a reaction to the failure of Kemalism to achieve its goal of complete Westernization. Neither the secularization nor the Turkification of the nation was negotiated with the people in a serious way. The Grand National Assembly, Turk’s national parliament was an elite club and held unchallenged power. So whenever the need arose Kemal got his secularization reforms passed and promulgated.

Here it may be pertinent to add that while Kemal was vigorously secularizing the state and reforming its traditional institutions, he made little effort to impose the new ways on the daily lives of the masses especially the peasantry who were more traditional and for whom religion had such a great social function. This resulted in two diverse
cultures, one Westernized culture of bureaucrats centered in Ankara and the other traditional Islamic still prevailing in the rural masses.

Thus, Kemalist reforms did not penetrate deeply into Turkish society. While religion in public life was frozen during the Ataturk era, the Kemalist icecap started to melt after the World War II and gave way to the almost unchanged religious expression of Turks and Kurds alike.

Nevertheless, the end of the monoparty rule, and the transition to a multiparty political system marked the beginning of the re-emphasis of Islamic values, which has continued until the present day. So with the entrance of the peripheral rural masses immersed in traditional Islamic outlook into politics, re-appearance of dormant Islam came. This Islamic revival was further precipitated by the contributions made by Democratic Party government in this direction, which included abolition of Ataturk’s prohibition of the Arabic call to prayer, building of new mosques, government funded new schools for the education of preachers and prayer leaders. Also from 1950’s onwards, the religious orders (Tarikats) and communities (cemaat) reappeared and played an important role in Turkish politics and society.

In the post 1980 period, there has been a series of complex interaction between Islam and state. Indeed, the incorporation of Islamists into the system has softened Islamic demands and voices. Islamization of Turkish nationalism by 1980 coup, besides the rising religiosity of the masses, has brought more power to the religious functionaries of Islam, which in turn led to the crystallization of some Islamic movements. Further Sufi and other new cultural associations provided an extra political space for some parties, which thus gained momentum in the political scenario of Turkey. This resulted in the incorporation of Islam in the social, economic and political fabric of Turkey in the 1990’s.

The transformation of Turkish society in being viewed as a great threat to the ideology of Kemalism by its supports. Thus during the 1970s and 1980s, Islam experienced a kind of political rehabilitation because right of centre secular leaders perceived religion as a potential bulwark in their ideological struggle with left of center secular leaders. Moreover, the increasing polarization of Turkish political life in the 1970, created opportunities for existing religious trends to be pushed even further.
Turkey is predominantly a Muslim country. It has a society with an Islamic ethos, regardless of its political super-structure. If we have a general look on the results of the national elections since the last two decades, it becomes amply clear that the Turkish people have generally voted for anti-statist, liberal and religiously inclined parties and have shown a dislike for the establishments especially the military ones. As after each military intervention the people voted against it. In 1961 and 1965, the conservative Justice Party was the people’s choice. In 1973, the electorate split its vote between three right wing parties and in 1983 it voted for the Liberal Conservative Motherland Party and in 1994 local elections Welfare Party increased its strength and in June 1996, it was finally able to put together a ruling coalition government. Nevertheless, the victory of these parties suggest that the majority of the Turkish electorate has always voted for parties that claimed to respect religion, were liberal in their politics and were modernists in working style.

In party political terms, the growth of the Welfare Party is the most striking aspect. Apart from gaining support from the masses, who have their roots firmly held in the Islam-centered values, Welfare Party’s
resonance added as it promised dispossessed masses, who had migrated to cities a better life, and the social and economic justice.

Moreover, its rise is also attributed to the mistakes committed by its adversaries that proved more advantageous to it. Turgut Ozal was generally charged with nepotism and for economic favours to relatives and followers, leading to a number of lawsuits against him. True Path Party was also accused of economic irregularities if not to the same extent and also Tansu Cellar's newly acquired and considerable fortune was her weak point. Social Democrat People's Party though considered honest had been hit by a corruption scandal in the running of public utilities in Istanbul.

The economic crisis of 1994 made the situation more acute. It created a collapse of living standards as Turkish income failed to keep pace with 134 percent of inflation. The rate improved into 1995 dropping to 90 percent but still has resulted in severe economic hardships in the lower classes. Such economic problems had made wage earners, simple tradesman and middle class shopkeepers suffer the most.

So in these circumstances, the party leaders of the other political parties in and around took their hold on power and tenure in office for
granted. They failed to fully cater to the needs of the people and were seldom concerned with reaching to the masses. In the circumstances Welfare Party seemed to be the only pure and untried alternative, which could be a defender of labourers, artisans and small tradesman threatened by unemployment and high interest rates. Furthermore, the efficiency shown by the Welfare Party mayors kindled a new hope among the so far ignored masses. Thus these disenchanted voters looked up to the Welfare Party, and became its source of strength which started threatening other political elites who could not gather a good following among the voters and thus they exaggerated the Welfare Party’s anti-secular image in order to cause its downfall.

At the international level the rise of Welfare Party to power gave rise to certain apprehensions as they are: whether Turkey would still be an ally of United States, and there could be segregation of Turkey from the West, which might become a stumbling bloc for Turkey in becoming a member of the European Union.

As there are close ties between Washington and Ankara, Turkey firmly supported United States policy during the Kuwait war, participating in the coalition against Saddam Hussain and had even endorsed
Washington’s policy of ‘Dual Containment’ of Iraq and Iran. It hosted ‘Operation Provide Comfort’ to provide relief to Kurds in the Northern Iraq and has 1,500 troops stationed in Bosnia to help with the implementation of the ‘Dayton Peace Accords’ the United States in turn supports Turkey’s attempts to win full membership to the European Union. It has endorsed the Turkish plan to build a pipeline through Azerbaijan and Turkey for the exportation of petroleum from the Caspian sea basin, as opposed to using alternative Russian routs. But it was assumed that, as for Turkish foreign policy, the Islamists in power wish to loosen Turkey’s ties with the Western world, including North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. They were being blamed to advocate closer ties with Arab states proposing a military alliance of Islamic states (with Turkey as its leader), and an Islamic common market.

In fact, Welfare Party, though critical of Turkey’s Western alliances was not in favour of breaking them. Neither was it opposed to Ankara’s integration in the European Customs Union but called for the renegotiation of the agreement, which it considered unfair in its current form. No doubt, Welfare Party was in favour of the creation of an Islamic common market, where according to it, national interests of
Turkey would be better preserved. But Welfare Party has not been virulently anti-American. It supported North Atlantic Treaty Organization during the cold war. However, it threatened to ask for Turkey’s withdrawal from the Western alliance if North Atlantic Treaty Organization pursued what it took as anti-Islamic policies.

Welfare Party was taken as a Conservative Mainstream Party by the West for its criticism of Western oriented policies. However, Erbakan often made statements, which are quite reassuring and accommodating and deny the charges of its anti Western stance. Erbakan once declared:

Every body should know that it is in the interest of the West if the Welfare Party comes to power Turkey will be a powerful country, ensuring peace and stability in the most sensitive regions of the world. Turkey will be a strong economic power and as such will constitute a stronger partner for the West. Investments made by the West will be protected by the Welfare Party. The resulting stability will provide a state of comfort for the West.
Thus Erbakan was careful to accommodate Washington on host of important issues. No doubt, he worked for closer ties with Iran and he visited rouge states like Libya, but they were symbolic gestures to appease his more radical followers.

It seems that what bothered Washington was not because Erbakan was promoting Islamic principles, but that his type of Islam did not seem friendly to the West, being an Islamic society does not disqualify a country from being an ally of the United States. Even the country which is ruled by the Sharia, the law of Islam, and which is a fundamentalist country, that is, the oil rich Saudi Arabia, and the other Sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf are not secular democracies. The United States went to war in 1992, to protect all these Islamic regimes.

By implication one can draw an inference that even anti-secular and so called Islamic regimes could be allies of the United States and her Western partners as long as they continue to cater to their needs and dictates. However, United States along with her European lackeys could in no time snap there ties with them if they did not subscribe to
their demands, declaring them undemocratic, fundamentalists and violating all sorts of human rights.

As matter of fact, Erbakan and his Welfare Party was not threatening democracy and it certainly lacked the revolutionary characteristics of Khomeini’s brand of Islamic movement. Welfare Party came to power in a very democratic way but it was pushed out of the office in June 1997 by military, who consider themselves as the guardian of Kemalist secularization. Many Turks called it a ‘soft coup’. They considered it to have overstepped the bounds of acceptable political behaviour within the country’s narrowly defined democracy. However, it was the most undemocratic way in which the Islamist experiment came to an end. Although Islamists justified their claim to power and fiercely attacked the democratic institutions of the West they behaved and acted as silent spectators.

Its fall caused a little stir among Turkey’s Western allies, the Welfare Party contrary to their preconceived notions was not a staunch religious party in true sense. Its leaders were not clerics, and its programmes were not based on the Sharia. Its campaign was secular in style and substance. Further, the Western anxieties were much
exaggerated, for the real power of this party was very limited and it could hardly bring about the feared transformation of Turkey’s society. Moreover different ideological wings internally fragmented the party and only a minority of its voters supported fundamentalist policies. The anti-Western and anti-secularist rhetoric of welfare had been largely provoked by what many see as the passive and apologetic policies of the formerly governing parties.

The moderate secularists recognize the significance of religion for the people. They accepted that Welfare Party had the right to compete in the politics and if got majority to form a government though they had some apprehensions that Welfare Party might be instrumental in establishing an Islamic state in Turkey. Yet, they refrained from assuming a hostile attitude towards it. This tolerant stance towards Islamic party may hopefully lead to the amelioration of relations between the secularists and the religiously oriented class.

As James Brown asserts, the resurgence of Islam, has disproved the misconception prevalent among Western observers that Islam and democracy are incompatible. There may be some temporary discrepancies in the functioning of democracy in Turkey from the
Western viewpoint, but it cannot be denied that the trend of developments has been towards a better democratic system based on a self-supporting economic structure.¹

Probably, the misfortune of Turkey was to model itself after France, which had historically been revolutionary, adopted 'state and law' highly divided among competing social groups, politically unstable administratively highly centralized, and taken secularism as a militant ideology that tries to suppress religion rather than co-existing with it. which is quite in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon countries which are historically evolutionary and have a tradition of comprise among social groups and enjoy a type of secularism that is in peace with religious beliefs.

Thus, Turkey being a democratic country should soften its stand towards the moderate Islamists. This will move Turkish democracy in a more liberal direction. Otherwise denying them the political right will put a question mark on the democratic credentials of Turkey.

At the same time if the moderate Islamists only seek freedom of conscience to be safeguarded in a secular democratic state where both

¹ Brown, James, 'Islamic Fundamentalism and Turkey' Journal of Politics and Military Sociology, 16 Fall, 1998, p. 239.
religion and the state are separate and autonomous, it will be an
invaluable contribution to Turkish democracy.

Furthermore, Turkey has to be an open society preaching and
practicing a vibrant democracy, secularism and decentralization. It also
should have traits of genuine separation of power, enhanced freedom
of expression, improved human rights, a more participatory and
pluralist democratic practice and supremacy of law. And the solution
to the frictions between the Islamic and modernist groups in Turkey is
not to be sought in the area of clash between these groups. There
should be tolerance for change, openness to dialogue and diversity and
the strengthening of constitutional democracy.
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