CHAPTER VI
THE TURKEY OF MUSTAFA KEMAL: FROM EMPIRE TO REPUBLIC
We have discussed in chapter 5, the emergence of Mustafa Kemal as the most successful field commander. The battle of Gallipoli was one of the very few occasions when Ottoman army defeated European forces in World War I. The reputation of Gallipoli was reaffirmed on other fronts. The victory at the three-week battle of Sakarya with Greeks followed by another great victory in September 1922 inflicting a devastating and humiliating defeat on Greeks are other military successes which Mustafa Kemal achieved. He was against Turkey’s entry into World War on Germany’s side as he could foresee the consequences. If Enver, the then War Minister, would have followed his opinion, Turkey would have been spared of the trauma of defeat. He had an aptitude for military service from his childhood. When his mother wanted her to join a religious school, he rebelled and reminded his mother that his father had given him a sword at birth, an indication that he wanted his son to be a soldier. So Mustafa said, “I was born as a soldier” and “I shall die as a soldier.” Throughout his military career, he always secured a high ranking in his class. His performance on the battle-field and during his military service confirmed that he was really an outstanding military commander. We now proceed to examine how this military hero acquits himself as the head of a state of which he himself was the chief architect which he managed for about 15 years (1923-1938).

He showed great leadership qualities in organizing the nationalist movement and the war for independence which culminated in the emergence of the modern Turkish Republic. After World War I, the Allies controlled Istanbul
and the Ottoman government and they were determined to punish the Ottomans. They had secretly planned to carve up what little remained of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan was a prisoner of Allies. Resistance movement started and Turks in Anatolia took matters in their own hands. They began to come into armed conflict with local non-Muslims and it was apprehended that they would soon confront the occupied forces fearing anarchy, the Allies urged the Sultan to control the situation. The Sultan deputed Mustafa Kemal. After arrival in Samsun, Kemal, instead of quelling the popular resistance movement, got involved in organizing the movement to defend the country. Avoiding dismissal by the Sultan, he resigned from the army service. At this critical time when he was just a civilian, General Kazim Karabekir, commander of the 15th Army Corps of 18,000 soldiers, placed his army at Kemal’s disposal. Kazim also convened a Congress of all defence-of-rights associations held in Erzurum. Mustafa Kemal was elected as head of the Erzurum Congress and thereby he got an official status. Later developments are all dealt with in the previous chapter. Suffice to say that at this crucial hour when the weakened Sultan could not stop Allies (as is further evident from the fact that the Treaty of Sevres 1920, a death warrant for the Ottoman Empire, was signed by the Sultan under pressure from Allies), Mustafa Kemal mobilized the local resistance groups, calling themselves the societies for the defence of rights, into a national movement culminating into a Grand National Assembly. Kemal set up an opposition government that fought both the Allies and the rebellious ethnic groups within the Empire. This was a great political achievement. The
Lausanne Treaty (1923) was a remarkable diplomatic victory for Kemal and his government. The aspirations expressed in the National Pact of 1920 were fully achieved. Bernard Lewis well observed, “Turkey alone among the defeated powers of First World War, succeeded in rising from her own ruins and, rejecting the dictated peace imposed on her by the victors, secured the acceptance of her own terms.”

The above brief discussion shows that Kemal was gifted with qualities of leadership. He had the talent of moving, inspiring and mobilizing the masses of people so that they act together in pursuit of an end. It is also important that leaders should lead by persuasion and not by force; force only when necessary. No leader is infallible and making a cult of a leader is always a mistake. With this in the background we now proceed to examine the achievements, together with failures, if any, of Mustafa Kemal who was elected as President (with Ismet Inonu as Prime Minister) of the Turkish Republic created on October 29, 1923.

The Reforms of Mustafa Kemal

Most of the Middle Eastern rulers, including Ottoman sultans, who wanted to modernize their countries on Western lines sought to adopt selected European technological improvements and organizational methods for their armed forces and later in spheres other than the military. They did not intend to completely westernise their states and their countrymen. Mustafa Kemal was not a selective reformer but a committed westerniser and a secular nationalist who wanted to abandon Ottoman legacy and transform Turkey into a modern
European state. On assuming office as President, he initiated a series of radical reforms in the political, social and economic life of the country with the object of rapidly transforming Turkey into a modern state. As Davis puts it, “Although Turkey has come a long way since Atatürk’s death, the guiding policies which he had laid down have fundamentally been followed: the creation and preservation of a territorially limited national state for the Turks; the inculcation of a Turkish national consciousness; the breaking of the hold of Islam over state, law and education; the westernisation not only of material life but of institutions, minds and customs; the rapid development of the economy; the avoidance of class divisions and growth of a sense of solidarity; a devotion to the republican form of government; and finally, the pursuit of peaceful foreign relations.” Although some of these aims – the republic, the secularisation and the nation-state – were Atatürk’s contribution, the groundwork was prepared during a century of reform effort before him. The Republic had emerged from the failures and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, but also out of Empire’s experience and progress which itself had a history of 600 years. To say that the Republic was just a clean slate which bore only the Atatürk’s revolution would be an exaggeration. The Tanzimat reforms had laid the foundations of a secular state. The Young Turks, along with their attempts to preserve the Empire, had given a powerful impetus to the cause of Turkish nationalism. During the War days, some secularisation was initiated and universities and public positions were opened to women. Some law courts which were under the control of religious authorities were placed under the
jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. Reforms were also made in 1916 in the rules governing marriage and divorce. Mustafa Kemal carried the process much further boldly and even rashly, as the discussion below will bring out. His task of reform was made easier due to several factors. As just stated, the Ottoman Empire had already established a trend towards westernisation – westernisation of institutions, thought and customs (chapters 1 to 5 of this study have already spelled out these developments). The Empire was now very small in size, a very large number of non-Turks who were creating uprisings and revolts, were now out leaving a relatively homogeneous population to administer. Further, the Republic inherited capable elite of bureaucrats, officers and professional men to guide its destiny, together with experience in parliamentary forms, a complete system of local government, the beginnings of a new educational system and of a westernised law, and much more. Unlike most of the developing countries of today, Turkey had never entirely lost its independence, the traditions and experiences of ruling and decision-making were there to draw on. Furthermore, and the Republic had a great advantage over the Ottoman Empire that it was at peace through the whole course of its development. Once the shackles of sultan/caliph eliminated, opposition from conservative Muslims (like Sheikh Said’s revolt in which more Turkish soldiers died than in the war of independence) removed, and opposition from old CUP leaders put down by invoking the draconian Law for the Maintenance of Order, 1925, the road was now clear for Kemal to go ahead with reforms and innovations.
Before going into a detailed and critical discussion of Atatürk’s reforms, one more general comment may be made here. Many writers of Ottoman history seem to be so much enamoured with Atatürk that they have completely ignored other important individuals who resisted the partition of the Empire proposed by the Treaty of Sevres and worked to save what remained of it to establish a homeland for the Turks. According to recent studies, the resistance struggle that followed World War I was planned and carried out by the CUP. Mustafa Kemal and his supporters were not at first among its leaders. Mustafa Kemal promoted a cult centred on him by encouraging the erection of his statues in his honour. A very talented military commander, Kazim Karabekir, who was also amongst the architects of the Republic, wanted to publish his own contribution in the form of a memoir, but that was suppressed. Mustafa Kemal was ruthless with those who opposed his reforms. When an attempt was made on his life in 1926, it provided him with a pretext to rid himself of leading members of CUP. Fifteen of them, including Javid Pasha, the brilliant finance minister during CUP days, were hanged; some were exiled and some acquitted. Opposition was effectively broken.

At the beginning of the war for independence, Kemal saw the Empire in ruins and he had a vision of constituting it into a Republic guided by the principle of separation of church and state on the model of laicist France. In 1922 in the new capital, Ankara, the Grand National Assembly abolished the sultanate and in 1924 the caliphate, the religious and political institution which had lasted for a millennium Thus, for the first time in Islamic history, no ruler
claimed the spiritual leadership of Islam. Turkey, as heir to the Ottoman Empire, should have got this leadership. The abolition of caliphate was symbolic of the change in Turkey’s relationship to the Muslim world. Charles Gallagher remarked, “Turkey was exiled voluntarily from its own historical cultural world and turned toward its own program of separatist national secularism.” In the name of the sovereignty of people, the GNA proclaimed the Republic. The office of Sheikh al-Islam was abolished and so the Shariah courts dealing with matters relating to family law. Soon the religious schools (Madarsas) were closed, Sufi orders and monasteries abolished and compulsory state schools and co-education for all children and young students introduced. The property of religious foundations (Wakf) was put under state control. The Mejelle, the civil code dealing with family relations on the basis of Shariah was replaced by the Swiss Civil Code. The change of Islamic to Western calendar, outlawing the fez for men and frowning on the veil for women, both garments traditionally associated with religion, the replacement of Arabic script with Latin script, the call for prayers in Turkish were other reforms bearing on religion. The Hagia Sophia, (Emperor Justinian’s 6th century Basilia which was converted into a mosque by Mehmed II) was made into a museum. These reforms, as observed by Bernard Lewis, made Islam a department of state; the ulema had become minor religious servants. The summary way in which all these reforms were endorsed by the GNA without much discussion reminds one of the Napoleonic ways of doing things.
Mustafa Kemal formed the Republican People’s Party (RPP) which became the exclusive political instrument for carrying out his reform agenda. In 1924 the Grand National Assembly framed a constitution providing a legal framework for the government with guaranteed civil rights. Having been elected as President by the GNA, he appointed Ismet Pasha as his Prime Minister, handpicked his cabinet, and then continued his brisk efforts to modernize the Republic. Given below is;

A summary of Atatürk’s major reforms placed in chronological order

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reform</th>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Grand National Assembly abolishes Sultanate (Nov.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Republican Peoples Party formed. Treaty of Lausanne gives Turkey almost its present form (July 24); Allies evacuate Istanbul; the Ottoman Empire is dissolved Declaration of Turkish Republic with capital at Ankara and Kemal elected first President (October 29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Abolition of Caliphate; Ottoman dynasty exiled (March 3); Traditional religious schools closed; office of Sheikh al-Islam abolished; Constitution adopted (April 20).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Dervish brotherhoods abolished; Fez outlawed by Hat Law (Nov. 25); Veiling of women discouraged; Western clothing for men and women encouraged; Western (Gregorian) calendar adopted. Ministry of religious endowments abolished. A drastic law, Law for the Maintenance of Order passed by GNA under which Sheikh Said, the leader, and more than 40 rebels executed. This law</td>
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invoked when an assassination attempt on Kemal’s life was allegedly discovered involving Kemal’s political opponents. 13 of whom were hanged, several exiled and some acquitted.

1926 The Assembly voted to abolish the Mejelle. Swiss Civil Code was adopted along with penal and commercial codes modelled on Italian and German codes. Millet system ended.

1927 First systematic census. Mustafa Kemal makes six-day speech.

1928 New Turkish alphabet (modified Latin form) adopted; State declared Secular (April 10); Constitutional provision relating to Islam as the religion of the state deleted.

1933 Islamic call to worship required being in Turkish. Aya Sofya, the great Byzantine church which since 1453 had been a mosque, was secularised as a museum.

1934 Women given the right to vote and the right to hold office; Law of Surnames adopted – Mustafa Kemal given the name Kemal Atatürk (Father Turk) by the Grand National Assembly; Ismet Pasha took surname Inonu.

1935 Sunday adopted as legal weekly holiday; State role in managing economy- Etatism or Statism, the 6th Arrow – written into the constitution.

Mustafa Kemal sought to unite the whole army and the nation of the Ottoman Empire through the ideas of secularism and nationalism. To him all were Turks who were residing within the boundaries of Turkey and further that church/religion and state are separate. In this way, a new Turkish nationalism took place under the clashing push and pull of imperialism. The Erzurum – Sivas Congress (1919) and the National Pact (1920), which provided for a Turkish government on the basis of national will, territorial integrity and
complete independence, showed the consolidation of the ideas of Turkish nationalist consciousness. This national solidarity made the war of liberation a great success in 1923. The Turkish National Liberation Movement represented the collective will of the Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and his new “revolutionary elite” which was a substitute for the Ottoman ruling elite. During the liberation movement, nationalism was the main ideology of the Turks and it prepared them for future changes in the Turkish Republic. After the successful war of liberation against Western imperialism, the Turks emerged as a new national entity which represented a logical culmination of the nationalist ideas of the “Young Ottomans”.

Mustafa Kemal was very much influenced by the thoughts of the Young Ottomans in the form of Nationalism and Populism. He also stated that “the aim of the reforms which we have already carried out and are continuing to carry out was to transform the Turkish society into a modern society in every aspect”. This was the basis of the Kemalist reforms.

The most important contribution of Mustafa Kemal was not so much originality of ideas but the ability to choose a set of interrelated, consistent, and relevant ideas and build them into a practical programme. He was more a child of the Young Turks than of the Young Ottomans and more a Turkist or a pan-Turkist. His idea of Turkification was not the imposition of Turkish language and culture on non-Turks, but getting rid of non-Turkish elements, including territories with non-Turkish population.
In reality, Mustafa Kemal was a true Turkish patriot and used all ideological means capitalist, socialist, Islamic and secular to integrate and develop his nation. Broadly speaking, the elements of Westernism, Modernism, Nationalism, and Secularism, contributed in determining various prominent features of the Kemalist ideology.\textsuperscript{10}

**Westernization:**

The emergence of the Turkish Republic as an independent state signified an end to the process which had created a duality in the old Ottoman System and finally led to its dissolution. The Republic represented a new national identity implying renunciation of the international postures of the Ottoman Empire and adoption of the ideals of Turkish cultural heritage, Turkish language and Turkish territorial boundaries.\textsuperscript{11} The Turkish nationalism was adopted as the state ideology in the Republic which made it a source of moderate ideological control.\textsuperscript{12}

Mustafa Kemal was the supreme commander and the founder and first President of the Turkish Republic. Since his personality had developed in the military environment, he thought in a mechanical way, talked in absolute terms and acted decisively.\textsuperscript{13} After assuming the power he was in a position to formulate the state ideology of Turkish nationalism according to his likes and dislikes. This does not necessarily mean that his associates were denied a role in the formation of the Turkish state ideology.\textsuperscript{14}
Mustafa Kemal’s aims and objects of this transformation were as follows:

1. To modernize Turkey.

2. To free it from foreign economic tutelage; and

3. To secularize it.

The basis of this transformation was symbolised by the “Six Arrows” that came to be known as the “Six Principles of Kemalism”, which were adopted by the Republican People’s Party, with the addition in 1931 of Statism and Reformism to the four previous principles of Nationalism, Secularism (Laicism), Republicanism and Populism. Each was interlocked with the other – Statism insuring through populism against exploitation; populism guaranteed against it by secularism; all protected by nationalism against foreign aggression, and kept alive by the revolutionary dynamic. Later in 1937, these were formally incorporated into the Turkish constitution. These Six Principles expressed the fundamental political philosophy of new Turkish Republic.
SIX PRINCIPLES OF KEMALISM

OR

SIX ARROWS

1. ⇒ Republicanism
2. ⇒ Nationalism
3. ⇒ Populism
4. ⇒ Statism (in economic policy)
5. ⇒ Secularism (Laicism)
6. ⇒ Reformism (Revolutionism)

1. Republicanism: The Turkish Republic (established in 1923) made a somewhat biased use of Namik Kemal, highlighting those aspects of his thought that focused on the defence of the “fatherland”. In fact, this use of patriotism was more in tune with the Turkish nation-state that emerged after First World War than with the Ottoman Empire. During the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal completely ignored the idea that constitutionalism should be harmonised with Islam. But it is also true that Mustafa Kemal witnessed the debacle of the Turkish Empire, and he had no other alternative except to go to the extreme against the ideals of the Ottomans.

Republicanism represented a political system in which the government did not retain the absolute authority, but accepted the right of peoples’
participation at all levels. It stood for “the form of government which represents and realises the ideal of national sovereignty”. In the Turkish Republic, it led to the creation of a patterned set of modern institutions and initiation of political processes for the running of political system characterised by the largest political participation. This republican set-up provided sufficient stimulus to the process of modernization in all fields.

In the Turkish Republic, it had created a strong movement of modernization and revolutionized many aspects of the Turkish society. Thus, the traditional order underwent change and gave rise to new organisations, institutions, processes, attitudes, beliefs, roles, behaviours, and relationships. The age – old ascriptive – hierarchical system was abolished and new, mobile and achievement – oriented system was initiated. The new socio-political set-up gave rise to new groups with specific opinions about their status and interests which they demanded and defended. As a result of these developments, the Republic experienced a multi-dimensional change in the new political environment. The major political measures like abolition of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, declaration of the Republic, introduction of the constitution, the representative assembly, the political party and the national political system had changed Turkey. The new political system legitimised the functioning of political parties which necessarily meant the involvement and participation of different groups in the political system.

During the Kemalist era, the state was absolutist. It was because the Kemalist elite intended to carry out a patterned and controlled change through
the state and prepared the society for a democratic stage. The Kemalist high-handedness to introduce reforms was regarded as a must in order to ensure the success of westernization and to root out reactionary forces.²¹

2. Nationalism: The ideal of nationalism appeared (in the Ottoman Empire) first among the non-Muslims, mainly the Ottoman Christians, then among the Albanians and Arabs, and finally among the Turks. The fact that it appeared last among the Turks was not accidental: The Ottoman state was formed by the Turks themselves. At a time when the Ottoman Empire was multi-national, nationalism would have appeared as its repudiation. The state is a nation already established (nation de fait) whereas the ideal of nationalism meant the nucleus of a nationality based on will (nation de volonté).²²

The intelligentsia needed a more sophisticated interpretation of nationalism because they were concerned with the fate of the state. The real beginning of Turkish nationalism came through the linguistic movement initiated by the Young Ottomans like Ziya Pasha,²³ Namik Kemal,²⁴ and Ali Suavi, through this movement they wanted to reach the greatest number of people who could understand only a simplified Turkish language. This Turkish nationalism was extolled as a supreme and sacred ideal in the Republic. In essence, it was an ideal stressing special Turkish character,²⁵ unification of the Turkish population, national organic solidarity²⁶ and strengthening of the Turkish linguistic unity and cultural homogeneity.²⁷ However, it got identified with the form of political absolutism in all spheres of society. So, all problems were examined with a “nationalist mind” which had positive effect of social
integration and national consensus within the national boundaries. This type of nationalism renounced the above – national Islamic – Ottoman character and the expansionist outlook to live with limited distinction in the community of modern nations. Though nationalism in Turkey was of the western origin, the Turkish form differed substantially from the original model because of the modifications made at the local level. In spite of the fact that the Turkish nationalism represented broadly a consensus model in the Republic, the conservatives used it as a “safe shield against the unorthodox ideas”, and the modernists tried to negate the impact of the orthodoxy through the creation of nation culture and universal understanding.

Mustafa Kemal was very much influenced by the thoughts of the Young Ottomans in the form of Nationalism. This idea developed through the medium of the Young Turks revolution of 1908. It was time when the giant multinational Empire was about to sink. As a matter of fact the period following 1908 up to First World War may be described as a period of emergency for the nation. This actually forced Mustafa Kemal to base his thinking on a scientific way.

After the First World War, Mustafa Kemal united the whole Nation of the Ottoman Empire through the ideas of Nationalism. Nationalism was the main ideology of Mustafa Kemal and it helped them for future changes in the Turkish Republic. His idea of Turkish Nationalism which claimed Turkey for the Turks and rejected jurisdiction over territories with non-Turkish population.
3. Populism: The Kemalist idea of the sovereignty of the people was conceived differently from both the liberalism and the communist doctrines. It took shape parallel with the struggle against communism, imperialism, sultanate and caliphate, and was expressed in the principle of populism.\(^{30}\)

Populism based not on religion or race but on common citizenship, national unity, sovereignty and devotion to the national ideal. According to Mustafa Kemal, populism was “the social principle that seeks to rest the social order on its work and its law and Turks to struggle as a whole nation against the imperialism and the capitalism”.\(^ {31}\) So it was directly related to the “Government of the people and not of the ruling class”.\(^ {32}\) The underlying assumption of this doctrine was that all Turks formed a social whole, though with certain differentiation but, at the same time, with non-class formation. The Turkish society was devoid of antagonism of the class society but was rather marked by consensus and conformity. This situation gave rise to a new social order based on the national sovereignty, harmony of interests, and proclaimed the absolute equality of all classes of people before the law.\(^ {33}\)

Mustafa Kemal was very much influenced by the thoughts of the Young Ottomans especially Namik Kemal in the form of populism. Namik Kemal was the first Muslim who got interested in “the people”, and also understood the real essence of liberalism and the meaning of the sovereignty of the people.\(^ {34}\) The Young Ottomans failed to graft Western ideologies to the body politic of Islam, but they were successful in introducing new values to the Turks.\(^ {35}\)
Populism had developed under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, and it was adopted by Grand National Assembly on 20th January, 1921, that is, after a five month struggle. So, populism became the manifestation of an urge for national-social solidarity through the peoples’ rule. Mustafa Kemal himself explained the idea thus:

“The aim of a people’s organisation as a party is not the realization of the interests of certain classes over against those of other classes. The aim is rather to mobilize the entire nation, called people by including all classes and excluding none, in common and united action towards genuine prosperity which is the common objective for all.”

4. Statism (economic policy): It referred to a system in which the state participated actively for general and vital economic interests of the people (through private work and activity as a basic idea) in order to lead the nation and the country to prosperity in the shortest possible time. In other words, this principle of massive capital investment gave opportunity to develop the country by rapid industrialization. Mustafa Kemal said:

“The statism that we are implementing is a system peculiar to Turkey, engendered by its own needs. It means that while recognising private entrepreneurship as the main basis, but recognising that many activities are not undertaken, the state must be given the control of the economy to face all the needs of a large country and a great nation.”

This was aimed at developing national economy by liberating it from foreign dependence and encouraging local enterprises under state supervision.
This idea came from the thoughts of Namik Kemal, who was the first Turkish writer to see clearly the importance of the economic penetration of the West. His descriptions of the evils of existing economic, financial, administrative, and educational conditions were accurate and pioneering.\textsuperscript{38}

The major political decisions, adopted by the Kemalist elite and implemented by the absolutist state, resulted in certain socio-economic changes. It is felt that these changes were not basic primarily because the economic power was retained by the commercial bourgeoisie without disturbance in the post-revolutionary era. However, certain socio-economic changes were eminent which are explained here. While the abolition of capitulations through the Treaty of Lausanne on 24\textsuperscript{th} July, 1923, led to the emergence of new native classes of the nature of small- bourgeoisie, the adoption of the statist economics had far-reaching impact on the consolidation of the national bourgeoisie. Thus, statist policy provided certain sections of population with additional income and employment possibilities at the cost of others. Statism gave rise to certain social groups and classes like peasants, workers, small businessmen and intellectuals. The penetration of money economy into rural areas changed the relatively self-sufficient traditional economy, relationships based on it and the pattern of urban-rural relations. In actuality, statist policies fulfilled the wider needs and intensified the broader processes of modernization including industrialization.\textsuperscript{39}

5. Secularism (Laicism): It established the principle of the separation of religion from politics, state and social life.\textsuperscript{40} The main objective of secularism
was to evolve a non-religious consciousness in order to replace the traditional concepts of loyalty like Islam and Ottomanism. According to Bernard Lewis, the purpose of the Kemalist secularism "was not to destroy Islam, but to destabilise it to end the power of religion and its exponents in political, social and cultural affairs, and limit it to matters of belief and worship".41

The development in the form of separation between religion and state took place throughout the Tanzimat, Young Ottomans and Meşrutiyet (constitutional) periods, and that this development was not in the right direction. But the Kemalist approach to secularism differed radically from the approaches of the Tanzimat and the Meşrutiyet. Moreover, the emphasis on rationality in the religious affairs became a deistic conviction of secular colouring in Turkey. In this context, the abolition of the caliphate was presented, as "liberating" Islam from its "unreasonable traditional associates" and preparing the ground for its emergence as a rational religion.42

The Kemalist secularism was not "anti-religious" in the sense of liquidating religion systematically.43 Although the official formulation was content to separate the worldly from the divine, and to oppose the exploitation of religion for political purpose, in reality Kemalist "Laicism" became an instrument for control and supervision of Islam by the state.44

According to the Kemalist, it was an attempt to evolve a "rationalised-humanised" and "enlightened" Islam. Mustafa Kemal’s understanding of Islam was purely logical, and he recognised that “our religion is most rational and natural religion”.45 In reality, Islam enjoined enlightenment and freedom;
religion should preach these things for the betterment and understanding of the people.

Mustafa Kemal’s experiment was not to Turkify Islam for the sake of Turkish nationalism, but to Turkify Islam for the sake of religious enlightenment. So, in the Kemalist secular framework, the believer had the ideal conditions for his religious expression.46

Secularism proved to be the main feature of modernization during the Kemalist era because of the religious character of the Turkish society. In the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal introduced systematic reform in the religious field through the steps like abolition of the Sultanate and Caliphate, Shariat Laws, religious orders, and restriction on religious education in the schools. The change in the cultural symbols and social practices, removal of Islam from the constitution, and finally change of the Turkish script from Arabic to Roman (Latin) strengthened, the trend of reform which signified a decisive victory of the secular-modernists over the religious conservatives in a struggle which had started in the nineteenth century. The immediate influence of these reforms was de-functionalization of the men of religion in the civil administration and public life, and isolation of the new generation from the traditional religious clerical class. In fact, Islam was not defunctionalized but depoliticised during the Kemalist era. According to E. D. Ellis, the Kemalist reforms were not directed against religion but social and political institutions that had developed as adjuncts to the Islamic faith.47
In the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist attitude towards religion created two types of reaction. These were:

i) A pathological phenomenon indicative of social and cultural disintegration giving rise to the need for a new set of values and ideas. This reflected crudely in the conversion of three Turkish Muslim girls to Christianity in 1928. On the basis of this situation, religion became a topic of free discussion in the secular state but with three main limitations which were:

1. Legal prohibition of the formation of associations on the basis of religion or religious sect;

2. Legal prohibition of the formation of political association or political parties seeking religious support; and

3. Legal punishment for the acts contrary to secularism.

In this particular context, the Kemalists had to lend a cautious encouragement to the progressive model of religion which was completely devoid of political implications. They accepted religion as a social institution simply to meet the needs of social-cultural life.

ii) That secular reform had faced strong opposition from various violent and non-violent groups. The violent groups’ reaction, initiated with the religious devotion, was to be stopped forcefully, the non-violent groups’ reaction became serious because it argued about the futility and superficiality of some secular reforms like that of the adoption of the European hat by the Turks. “The opposition to this law”, according to
Halide Edib, "had a note of wounded self-respect rather than of objection". Some faithful Turks have minded about this reform because European hats presented a problem during the practice of the prayer. They have no other option, so they pray with bare heads or with a cap turned backwards. Mustafa Kemal thought that a change in Turkish attire might change the people’s outlook. The change of attire and the draconian methods employed to enforce the change has been a source of great controversy and is being debated even today. In view of its importance, we have dealt with this subject in some detail later in this chapter. Anyway, this reform gave huge economic benefits to the western companies in and out of Turkey.

6. Reformation (Revolutionism): It emphasised the determination to change and bypass tradition and precedent if they did not serve national interest. In this process, “modernism was the goal and reformation the means”, and progressive-evolutionary principles as guides to the radical transformation. On 5th October, 1925, Mustafa Kemal said:

“The Turkish Revolution signifies a transformation for broader than the word revolution suggests. The Turkish revolution means replacing unity based on religion with nationality. This nation has means of survival for nations in the international struggle for existence lies in the acceptance of the contemporary Western civilization. This nation had also accepted the principle that all of its laws should be based on secular grounds only, on a secular mentality that accepts the rule of continuous change in accordance with the change and
development of life's conditions as its law. The time has come to lay the legal foundations and educate new men of law satisfying the mentality and needs of our Revolution’.\textsuperscript{52}

Through revolutionism, Mustafa Kemal’s aim was to change the overall traditional social order and revolutionise the Turkish way of life in its entirety. It also provided the stimulus and social dynamism to the process of nation-building and modernization in Turkey.

Islam rejected the principle of separation of the spiritual and the temporal; it penetrated all aspects of life and controlled all things by laws. Not only prayer and pilgrimage, but government and commerce, peace and war, sex, marriage and divorce, and even food and attire were regulated either by the Qur’ān and the Hadith or by mores and customs that had become binding. Consequently, all the reforms which are discussed have some relationship to Islam. From 1922 to the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938, the major activities of the government and the people of Turkey consisted of abolishing institutions or laws or ways of life and substituting others in their place.\textsuperscript{53}

**Some Further Thoughts on Nationalism:**

According to Gabriel Trade, the idea of nationalism has been the product of the newspapers, and it has given a common consciousness to those who speak the same language by uniting them into a “public”. In addition to this influence, which has been made rather unconsciously and unwillingly, the newspaper which has spurred the feelings of honour and sacrifice in the masses, merely to increase its circulation, has consequently aroused a
consciousness of nation traditions and of cherished ideals. The sentiment of nationality once it arises amongst the masses spreads easily over neighbouring peoples. Once awakened, it leads to revival in moral life, in language, in literature, and in economic and political life by reinforcing the feelings of solidarity, sacrifice, and struggle among its supporters.\textsuperscript{54}

The emergence of nationalism among the Arabs also played a most prominent part in the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Arabs and the Turks lived side by side for more than four hundred years in a multi-racial Ottoman Empire as members of one great community, united by their Islamic faith and their allegiance to a Muslim sovereign. But towards the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and subsequently the "Young Turks" led to increased discontent and rebelliousness in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and starting their detachment.\textsuperscript{55} Thus the Turkish intelligentsia, under the impact of the Ottoman Christian nationalism, Arab nationalism and nation-consciousness of the West also started to exhibit national awakening. It was also natural for the Turks to be the last nation in the Ottoman Empire to develop nationalism, because they were in certain respects in closest approximation to a ruling race, and for them to be nationalistic would be an open repudiation of the multi-national Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{56} Therefore, nationalism among the Ottoman Turks was started at the later stage and Mehmet Ziya better known by his pen name of Gokalp is the real father of the Turkish nationalism. Gokalp was very much influenced by the thoughts of the Young Ottomans in the form of nationalism.
After assuming the power, Mustafa Kemal Pasha later known as Atatürk was in a position to formulate the state ideology of Turkish nationalism according to his likes and dislikes\textsuperscript{57}, and builds it into a practical programme.

According to Ziya Gökalp, “each religion existing in the world constitutes an Ummet. The common connecting element in each Ummet is religion. In the grouping called, “nation” on the other hand, language, morals, law and political institutions, fine arts, economic organisations, science, philosophy, and technology, are also common unifying elements, in addition to religion. Within a certain nation on the other hand, these spheres of social life have to have a uniformity and unity.\textsuperscript{58} Thus he defines nation as a group of people sharing a common language, religion, morality, and aesthetics which are characteristics of a particular culture. Therefore, characteristics of culture, in his opinion, are the foundation of Turkish nationalism.

**Change of Attire and Recent Developments:**

A very dramatic measure adopted by Kemal was the Hat Law of 1925. The ‘Fez’ was mocked as an Ottoman ‘carnival dress’ and replaced by the European hat. This was done by the so-called Hat law which banned the wearing of fez and made it a criminal offence. The measure was enforced even in the mosques. The opposition was suppressed even with some hangings – a shock treatment to dissuade people from a relic of the Ottoman past. Some time ago on a trip to Europe Kemal had been the brunt of ridicule for his tassled red felt hat. Stating that civilized men must wear civilized headgear, Kemal chose to wear the more modern Panama hat, much like Sultam Mehmud II (The
‘Conqueror’) had replaced the turban with the more modern Fez, about a century ago. However, Mahmud’s imposition of the new headgear on his new army proved remarkably problem-free. The Fez was already worn by the military forces of the Maghreb provinces and Egypt, as it was by the troops in the retinue of the Sharif of Mecca. So there was no religious objection to it. The Fez had already made its appearance in the Ottoman army worn by musketeers fighting against rebellious Balkan notable Pasvanoglu Osman Pasha of Vidin. Then its wearing was extended to government employees in 1829. The support of Islamic scholars was sough and preachers in the mosques convinced the people that it was acceptable. However, the Clerics out-rightly rejected Mahmud’s demand that they too wear fez in place of turbans. Mahmud’s reform was gradual, based on persuasion and even Ottoman Jews and Christians also wore the fez. Kemal’s military approach ‘Do or die’ may not be a viable approach while dealing with age-old traditions and mores of the community. The European hat was more than a symbol, “it was a psychological tool – perhaps the head under a western hat would think western thoughts.” In regard to veil worn by women. Kemal’s approach was quite sensible; he discouraged it but left it to the changing fashion of the people themselves.

But Kemal’s legacy in the matter of dress is still a serious issue in Turkey. Headscarves worn by ladies were banned from University campuses in 1990s. With the coming into power of the pro-Islamic political parties things started changing. The present ruling party(AKP: Justice and Development Party), with its Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah
Gül, got a law passed by the Parliament in February 2008 allowing women to attend Universities wearing headscarves. The Republican People’s Party challenged this in the Constitutional Court, the highest court in Turkey. The Court held that the parliamentary legislation violated the principles of secularism as laid down in the Constitution and was, therefore, unconstitutional. The ruling states the stage for a showdown between Turkey’s secular elite and Mr. Erdogan, an observant Muslim with an Islamic past. The RPP hailed the verdict as a triumph of justice and said that it showed that secularism and democracy were constitutional principles which cannot be separated from one another. Mr. Erdogan calls the case a matter of individual rights contending that all Turks should be able to attend universities no matter what they wear or believe. The interesting, rather unfortunate, thing is that the voice of the women, the concerned party, has been lost in the debate. The Muslim women, who are good practising Muslims, are playing an important role in the social and economic life of Turkey. They are doing well in the field of education, business, trade, commerce, and professions. More and more headscarves women can be seen driving cars and other means of transport and working in government offices and business houses. Many secular Turks fear that there is still a group within the AKP that is remembered for their Islamic past. But should this be a reason for headscarf ban?

Reform of the Legal System: Importing European Law

Mustafa Kemal dictatorially introduced a new legal system, as the fundamental to the functioning of a new state. As mentioned earlier, some
portions of western law had already been introduced during the Tanzimat and Young Turk periods in a gradual way. But the process was pushed to a sudden climax in 1926 by Kemal with the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code, the penal code based on Italian model, and the commercial code modelled after German and Italian codes. The most fundamental was the importing of Swiss Civil Code, whose content and language Kemal thought to be the best in the world. This Code was principally the work of a single scholar, Eugen Huber of the universities of Basle and Berne. This Code is simpler and easily comprehensible compared to codes of other countries. Under orders of Kemal this code was translated into Turkish, passed by Parliament, and became the law of the land. According to various observers this was the core of the Turkish Revolution. Kemal expressed his viewpoint, while inaugurating the new Law Faculty at Ankara in 1925:

This nation has accepted as an immutable truth the principle that the knowledge and means to create vitality and strength in the arena of the general international struggle can be found only in contemporary civilization. In short, gentlemen, the nation ... esteems as a condition of the very existence of the principle that its general administration and all of its laws be inspired solely by temporal necessities and a secular administrative mentality. 61

The new civil code which replaced Mejelle embodied the above statement of Kemal and extended the Swiss family law and divorce to Turkish women. Family is the nucleus of a nation and the law governing it is the most important and influential law regulating family relations. The Muslim family
law being a part of Islamic law is based on the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In India, despite the provision for a uniform civil code in the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Republican Constitution, Muslims have all along fought and not allowed their personal law to be integrated under one common civil code. Further, Islamic law contains within itself enough flexibility to accommodate new situations. For example, the Hanafi law being strict in matter of dissolution of marriage which caused hardship to women, Muslim scholars found a way out within the Shariah. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, a great Muslim jurist and scholar, wrote a monograph titled Al-Hilatul Najiza which was circulated amongst Muslim scholars within and outside India and on its basis a law, called the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939 was enacted by the Indian legislature. Principles from schools of Muslim jurisprudence, other than the Hanafi School, were borrowed which Shariah permits and in this way the problems were solved.

With the westernisation of law on European lines, the millet system was also done away with and all non-Muslims in Turkey were now under one code.

This reform aroused great opposition. In fact, the civil code was not uniformly followed throughout Turkey. Kemal’s reforms were not so effectively followed in the rural areas where bulk of the Muslims lived. Law and particularly the law relating to family relations grows and evolves according to the customs, traditions, mores, religious practices, ethos and aspirations of the community. It cannot be just imported from an alien
environment and bulldozed in a different social set-up. The Mormon Christians in U.S.A. have been practising polygamy, as a part of their denominational faith, for years despite the fact that polygamy is strictly prohibited. In India, recent legislation reforming the Hindu law of succession whereby men and women given equal share in property caused great heartburning and violence, particularly in the rural areas involving agricultural land. In order to make the law really effective, we have first to change the mind-set of the people, create a favourable social environment to internalise the new law and then introduce legislation, otherwise it may remain law on paper and cause great friction in society. Before transplanting law of a non-Muslim society to a Muslim community, one has to see if it is really possible to graft elements of an alien culture onto a Muslim society which stands on the bed-rock of the Qur’ān and Sunnah? Can a viable synthesis be achieved?

Confrontation of non-European societies, including Muslim society, with European modernism has created what Samuel Huntington calls in his well-known work on ‘Clash of Civilizations’ “the tier” in the non-European societies by creating a new elite of natives in a European image. The European colonizing powers did that and sowed the seeds of conflict. For example, the Britishers tried to create a race of “Brown Englishman” ruling over India thereby tearing a segment of Indian society from itself culturally, linguistically and religiously. The French and other colonisers did this in their areas of influence. Where external colonialism did not succeed, as in Turkey and Iran, Westernized locals such as Mustafa Kemal in 1920s and Shah of Iran
in 1930s militantly Europeanized their societies. The process created a cultural tier between the society and its rulers who belonged racially to the indigenous civilization but aspired mentally and culturally to the West, thereby belonging fully to neither. In Huntington's language, Atatürk and the Shah of Iran "tore" their societies. They were European in mind-set and sought to forcibly transform their societies according to a western image. Sometimes this was done in absurd ways. The Shah, for example, used his police force to compel women to remove their veils/'chadors' and Atatürk forced Turks to wear European hat in place of Fez. But not all leaders are swept away in this fashion. A notable example of someone who was brought up in the colonizer's traditions (Barrister-at-Law who studied in England before being called to the Bar and practised Law outside India), but who did not turn his back on his native traditions was Mahatma Gandhi. Returning to India, he did just the opposite: he gave up western dress; he knew how to draw the line between the identity of the colonizer and the colonized and how to champion the dignity of the native, holding the native identity equal with that of the foreign in a way that was appreciated by people on both sides of the divide. Which of these examples has history demonstrated to be more truly resonant with native traditions and aspirations and at the end of the day more admired, even in the West? 63

Turkey Since Atatürk

A recent 3-volume biography of Atatürk is entitled "Tek Adam" Unique Man - no one like him. The word 'Tek' means unique and also solitary/alone.
which he was. This charismatic war hero and statesman by his single-minded driving force brought about such a big transformation in such a short time is amazing. He is a great leader. Leaders confer great benefits; they also cause harm. They are not demigods; they are not infallible. Under his leadership, the republic was firmly established; independence and national sovereignty achieved; foreign relations placed on a sound footing; westernisation made progress; secularisation was thrust but it had had problems; economic progress was slow. Atatürk’s revolution mostly affected the urban elites; it did not make significant dent in villages where majority of Turks live.

President Inonu, who assumed office in 1938, followed the policies of Atatürk. However, in view of growing criticism against the monopolization of power by a single political party (Atatürk’s RPP), Inonu conceded a multi-party system. Democratic Party took birth and in the 1950 elections, they won 396 seats in the National Assembly and RPP got only 68. After 27 years rule, the party founded by Atatürk, was thrown out of office. The DP stood for greater freedom for traditional religious practices During its 10-year rule, several changes were made, e.g., the call of prayers were restored in Arabic (since 1934 it was in Turkish), religious instruction was allowed in primary schools, about 5000 new mosques were constructed and old ones repaired at government expense. In 1951 government schools were established for students who had completed elementary school. In the late 1980s there were eight faculties of divinity in Turkey. In 1985 the faculty of divinity of Ankara University had 1311 students (1040 males and 271 females) Religious
education of primary and secondary school children was made compulsory in the 1982 Constitution. In the late 1980s, the Presidency for Religious Affairs continued to organise and finance Qur'anic schools which had a completely religious curriculum. In 1983-84, 102,523 students (60,175 females and 42,348 males) were studying in 3,047 Qur'anic Schools.\(^\text{66}\) In 1984, the Presidency for Religious Affairs administered 54,667 mosques. In spite of concessions made to the religious sentiment of the population, the split between secularism (the official policy of the state) and religion continued to exist. The religious-secular controversy arose when the Council of Higher Education prohibited female students from wearing headscarves in the classes in 1987. The controversy continued until the present government got a law passed by the Parliament permitting girl students to cover their heads in the campus of universities. But, as already discussed, the Constitutional Court of Turkey found the law violative of the principle of secularism and held the parliamentary legislation as unconstitutional. This gave a jolt to the progress which suggested an open reappearance of the religious sentiment which was present all along but was repressed under Atatürk's secularism.

However, the military, the self-appointed guardian of secularism, has thrice thrown out of power the elected governments. In 1960, the DP government, a duly elected government was overthrown in a military coup on the pretext that it has deviated from the philosophy of Kemalism. Again in 1965 the new Justice Party got elected but was removed from the office in 1971. The military returned Turkey to civilian rule and this time it was the
RPP. But it could only form a coalition government with the support of National Salvation Party which proved to be a marriage of inconvenience. The NSP in 1980 held a massive national rally in which the crowd demanded the return of the Shariah and they refused to sing the national anthem. Once again in 1980 the military intervened to uphold the principles of Kemalism. The 1983 elections were won by Motherland Party composed of Islamic revivalists and liberal secularists. In the November 2002 elections of Turkey’s 58th government, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won 363 out of 550 Parliamentary seats. The Republic People’s Party secured 178 seats. In the July 22, 2007, elections the AKP won 46.6 % votes, followed by CHP 20.9%, MHP 14.3%, and Independents 5.2%. The new parliament sworn on August 4, 2007, included 341 AKP members, 97 CHP, 7 Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), 20 Democratic Society Party (DTP), 13 Democratic Left Party (DSP), 1 Freedom & Democratic Party (ODP), 1 Grand Unity Party (BPP), 5 Independents. Edrogan re-appointed Prime Minister and Abdullah Gul became the President. The AKP is considered an Islamic-oriented party though its approach is very cautious and it does not want confrontation with the military. However, in March 2008 the Constitutional Court agreed to hear a case to close down the AKP because of its alleged anti-secular activities that contravened the Turkish Constitution. Seventy-one AKP members, including the President and the Prime Minister, were named in the case and if the case would have gone in favour of the petitioners, all the 71 members would have been barred from politics for 5 years. On July 30, 2008, the Court voted 6 in favour and 5 against
closing down AKP. Seven votes were required to close down the Party. The Court, however, decided to cut down the party’s state funding worth about $58 million in half. None of the AKP members were barred. This was a very narrow escape. But it presents the political scenario of Turkey in which the confrontation between secularism and religion continues. The ruling pro-Islamic party is proceeding cautiously and its efforts to continue courting Turkey’s membership of European Union (EU) augurs well. It has been remarked in EU circles that Turkey’s army should be placed under civil control like all other armies in EU member-states. But it is always easier for the military to take over than to abdicate it.

The resurgence of Islam at the global level in the late twentieth century has been a testimony to the vitality of Islam. It is the dominant symbolic and ideological force in the Muslim world, informing social institutions, education, banks, commercial and financial institutions and politics. Islam has re-emerged as a significant force in public life. Secularization of society has not proved a necessary pre-condition for social, political and economic development.

Everywhere religion keeps returning. After Atatürk’s death, Secularism was increasingly criticized in Turkey. The Turkish specialist Udo Steinbach observes, “at the end of 1940s it became evident that they (the Kemalists) had applied too rational, too European, a standard to Turkey.”67 Why was there a return of religion, a constant growth of religious parties in Turkey, the resurrection of Sufi schools and brotherhoods and revival of religious institutions? Atatürk and his followers could not and would not understand the
rule that Islam played and still plays for the personal identity of Turks, which has always also had an emotional existential component. 68

We conclude our discussion by quoting extensively the concluding remarks of a recent researcher: 69

The military and their civilian supporters who appointed themselves to share the burden of guarding the Turkish state and the fanning of the flame of Kemalism perpetuate and interpret Mustafa Kemal’s legacy to convince the citizens of the modern republic to conform to the values which he embodied – not only its secularism and forward-looking modernity in public life, but also such authoritarian inclinations as the crushing of dissent and constraints on the freedom of speech. Mustafa Kemal’s actions were informed by the perils of the years during which he was in power, but times have changed, and solutions prompted by the ideals and fears of the 1920s are not best suited to the problems and challenges of the twenty-first century. The past weighs heavily, however, and many Turks would disagree with the disparaging western view associating Kemalism with "militarism, authoritarianism and ethnic nationalism; for them, Kemalism is "synonymous with progress and, therefore, with freedom." Emphasis added)

There are encouraging signs today that greater diversity of expression is becoming acceptable and the place of the military in public life is receding. Over the past five years, as Turkey has tried to harmonize its laws and government structure with those of the EU as part of the process of becoming a candidate for EU membership; the military profile in Turkish life has been
trimmed. For example, its weight in the National Security Council has been reduced; military courts have been abolished; the defence budget is now subject to Parliament’s review. Since its February 1997 “post-modern coup” to bring down the Erbakan government, the military has largely stayed out of Turkish politics. Atatürk held the same view: military should stay away from politics.
Notes and References:


2. Davis, Roderic H., *op. cit.*, supra n 1, pp 128-129


4. Mango, Andrew, *Atatürk*. London (1999), p 462, cited in Finkel Caroline, *op cit* supra n. 3, at p 553 n.80. When an extended version of Kazim Barabekar’s memoirs was published in 1960 (the year of the first military coup which toppled an elected government – the other two coups took place in 1971 and 1980), the publishers were sued and memoirs impounded which were released after 9 years when the trial ended.

5. Finkel Caroline, *op. cit.*, supra n 3 551-52, citing Zurcher, Erik-Jan, supra n.3


23. *Ibid*.


33. Armajani, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

34. Berkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.


40. Armajani, *op. cit.*, p. 244.


44. Encyclopaedia, p. 411.


47. Ellis, *op. cit.*, vol. 29, p. 92.

48. Adivar, *op. cit.*, p. 224


53. Armajani, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245.


55. Algeria was the first among the Arab states to be detached from the Ottoman Empire.


59. Finkel Caroline, *op. cit.*, supra n 3, at p 441

60. Davison. R.H., *op. cit.*, supra n 1, at p 131


62. Huntington, Samuel, “The Clash of Civilizations” in *Foreign Affairs* 72-3 (1993); it has also come out in book form. We agree with the concept of “tier” of societies as referred in the text, but that does not mean that we agree with his main thesis of his study.


68. Hans Kung, p. 463

69. Finkel, Caroline, *op cit.*, supra n 3, p 554