ISLAM IN TURKISH POLITICS:

TURKEY'S QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY WITHOUT ISLAM*

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Recent Turkish politics have witnessed an outstanding and unexpected triumph of political Islam. Under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, a senior politician of the Islamist cause, the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) emerged from the national elections of December 1995 as the largest party in parliament. After a six month struggle, it came to power in June 1996 as the senior partner in a coalition government with Ciller's True Path Party (TPP) and with Erbakan as prime minister. Before that, in March 1994, Welfare Party (WP) won municipal elections in several large cities. These developments vexed the Turkey's secular establishment; at first they attempted to block Erbakan's efforts to form a government. That is why Erbakan's search for a coalition partner took six months.

After forming government, the military, who views itself as the main guardian of the secular "Kemalist" state, tended to become involved in daily politics in order to protect the secularist state from so-called Islamicist infiltrations. In fact, on February 28, 1997, the military dominated National Security Council issued a decree that required curbs on Islamic minded political, social, cultural, and economic groups. In the end, the military's "supervision" of Erbakan's government resulted in its forced resignation in June 1997. Following this, the pressure on the Islamist groups increased, with the some secular leaders hoping for a "settling of accounts" with political Islam.

It is interesting that the rise of Islam in recent Turkish politics, particularly in the case of Welfare Party, was considered a surprising event by both Turkish and foreign scholars. Just as an "Islamic revival" after the Democrat Party's coming to power in 1950 meant (among other things) adopting a relatively liberal policy towards Islam, so today "Islamic fundamentalism" is on the agenda not only of political circles, but also of academics. As the Turkish State elite began to think how to handle this "threat" to the secular Republic, it felt ready to find a "scientific" treatment for this "disease". Some felt a need to address the issue of reconciling Islam and democracy. Consequently, the literature on political Islam in general and the Welfare Party in particular, started to increase. Nevertheless, one thing remained unchanged: the advance of Islam in Turkey has been considered an accidental even pathological phenomenon. In this article I want to examine this approach that sees pro- Islamic tendencies as an abnormality and try to introduce a better way to understand this phenomenon.

Paradigmatic Error

According to the dominant paradigm in Turkish scholarship with regard to Islamic case, the rise of Islam is an exceptional phenomenon that must have a reasonable explanation. The main task for Turkish Social scientists is to reveal the real causes that helped political Islam emerge so that it

would be possible to cope with it "scientifically". If it is possible to find out those factors, it could be possible to prevent the politicization of Islam. This approach seems to be derived from the modernization theory and Kemalist doctrine, which presupposes that as modernization process advances religion will lose its social its social appeal. A typical Turkish scholar heavily influenced by positivist outlook sees religion in general and Islam in particular as a reactionary force, "some evil and irrational force of mere orthodoxy and blind tradition".[1] In his/her opinion, in a modern society there is no place for religious institutions. For this reason, all religious-inspired social movements are considered "fundamentalist". If some movements inspired by religion begin to appear in public and/or political sphere, then some unusual   factors must have created this. From a sociological perspective and with special reference to modernization theory, it is argued that people thrown into the margins of metropolitan areas as a result of urbanization and migration to the cities experience "unfair" income distribution, a quest for identity or an escape to an urban way of life. According to Sabri Sayari,[2] "(a)s a result of social and economic changes, particularly through urbanization and emigration, growing numbers of Turks appear to have developed a sense of "homelessness" following the disintegration of communal solidarities."

Some scholars believe that the ascent of political Islam in Turkey was aided by foreign financial and/or ideological dynamics. Arab money in particular is seen as one of the main sources of support for Islamic social and political movements. For example, Birol Yeşilada maintains that "the flow of Saudi Arabian capital into the Turkish economy strengthened the power position of Islamic fundamentalists."[3] Another social scientist, Sencer Ayata, implies the same: "The Islamic bourgeoisie who are, it is argued, the Turkish collaborators with international Islamic capital is politically significant "due to its finance of Islamist activities."[4] Besides, Türker Alkan referred to Iran's "attempt to spot the next country to experience the convulsions of a resurgent and militant Islam" and its seeing Turkey is an appropriate target of this effort.[5]

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[1] Nur Yalman, "Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Eastern Turkey", *Archives Européennes de Sociologie,* 10, 1969. p. 47; quoted in Richard Tapper, "Introduction", in Richard Tapper (ed.), *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State* (London: I.B. Touris & Co Ltd: 1991). p. 7.

[2] Sabri Sayari. "Politization of Islamic Re-traditionalism: Some Preliminary Notes", in Metin Heper & R. Israeli (eds.). *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 25.

[3] Birol Yesilada. "Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East", in A.Eralp & M.Tunay & B. Yesilada (eds.), *The Potitical and Socioeconomic Transformation of Turkey* (Westpoint, CT: Praeger Publishers. 1993), p. 189

[4] Sencer Ayata. "The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and its Institutional Framework", in *ibid.,* pp. 58-9. In another occasion, he writes: "The flow of capital from the Gulf States was used to found new banks to finance primarily investments undertaken by people in Naksibendi circles." See Sencer Ayata, "Traditional Sufi Orders on the Periphery: Kadiri and Naksibendi Islam in Konya and Trabzon", in R. Tapper (éd). *op. cit.,* p. 224. For a similar view, see Ali L. Karaosmanoglu. "The Limits of International Influence for Democratization'. Metin Heper & Ahmet Evin (eds.), *The Politics in the Third Turkish Republic* (Boulder/USA & Oxford/UK, 1994), p. 124).

[5] Turker Alkan. "The National Salvation Party in Turkey", in M. Heper & R. Israeli, *op. cit.,* p. 79.

Sometimes, the "exceptional" appearance of Islam in public and political realms is attributed to the government's favored conduct towards Islamic groups and activities: "Turgut Özal wanted to promote Islam in the country. Indeed, in forming the Motherland Party, he chose 'fundamentalists'[6] as partners in early 1980s. Ozal saw himself as the person who could promote fundamentalism in the country…"[7] Sencer Ayata makes a similar argument: A new social class "grew as a result of the conscious efforts of Islamicists in the Motherland Party governments who provided the Islamicist bourgeoisie access to credit from official sources… Many such firms benefited significantly from state directed patronage and these companies, in turn, financially backed Islamist movements."[8]

However, other scholars seem ready to understand the meaning of Islam's involving in politics and to give Muslims their due. For example, Nilufer Gole contends that, in response to excluding from public sphere as a result of "cultural shift" or "civilizational conversion" initiated by the state elite during Republican era, some Muslims engaged in a search for self identity. From this point of view, "Islamism is the formation of the Muslim subject and agency which has been excluded from modernist definition of civilization and history- making."[9] Serif Mardin calls attention to another relevant fact: The Republican state tried to dissolve traditional Ottoman- Islamic bonds and replace them by new institutions, thereby creating room for religious influence at the individual level.[10] Sabri Sayari also writes in a similar vein: "(T)he popularity of Islamic revivalist movements, religious order, traditional Qur'anic principles and fundamentalist political movements, all of which hold the attraction of reintegrating the individual into a social order where Islam provides the basis for solidarity and identity."[11] Another aspect of Islamic movements, to which Binnaz Toprak (among others) refers, is that they try to get space for themselves in the status hierarchy of society.[12]

Alan R. Taylor's judgment seems to be fair one about the rise of Islam: "The moderate return to Islam in Turkey is not resurgence but an attempt to redress an imbalance that was an integral part of the Kemalist system. It presents a desire of the Turkish people to create available synthesis of

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[6] Yesilada does not need to differentiate between pious- conservative people and genuinely fundamentalists. In his writing, conservative means fundamentalist. However, Binnaz Toprak seems to be more meticulous in using terms: "(M)ajority of those who are categorized as Islamic fundamentalists are in a misplaced category if what is meant by fundamentalism is radical politics." See Binnaz Toprak, "Islam and the Secular State in Turkey", in Cigdem Balim & Ersin Kalaycioglu & Cevat Karatas & Gareth Winrow & Feroz Yasamee (eds.), *Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), p.95.

[7] Birol Yesilada, *op. cit.*, p. 189, 178, 179.

[8] Sencer Ayata, "The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism...", p.58.

[9] Nilufer Gole, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey", in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, v. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). pp. 21-26.

[10] Serif Mardin," The Naksibendi Order in Turkish History", in Tapper (ed.). *op. cit*, p. 139.

[11] Sabri Sayari. *op. cit.*. 123.

[12] Binnaz Toprak. *op. cit.*. p. 95.

values and identities in which Islam is allowed to play a part without excluding other elements of national culture."[13]

Democratization and Islamization

The prevailing paradigm in Turkish scholarship, which considers Islamization as an anomalous fact, is based on some incorrect presumptions. The underlying mistake is to see Islam as a strange factor, an outsider, to Turkish society and polity, a factor one has to ignore in any understanding and analyzing of modern Turkey. That is not all. Some scholars even see Islam as a "dangerous" phenomenon, a threat and wish the state would suppress it is a societal force and an identity.

Islam however, is a formative component of Turkey's social and cultural fabric. Historically and culturally, Turkey is a Muslim country and most of the misunderstanding about Turkey's relationship to Islamic formations comes from the Kemalist elite's ignoring of this basic fact. By taking this history into account, Islam's visibility in public and political spheres is not a surprising phenomenon. In this context, what the Kemalist elite did not understand is that for Turkey Islam "is more than a doctrine, more than a private belief or worship. It is also a culture and institutional framework governing all aspects of interpersonal relations."[14] For this reason it is not possible to consolidate democracy in Turkey by casting out Islamic factor and curbing Islamic political, social, economic and cultural movements.

As long as Islam is not suppressed by legal and political means, it is necessarily will be reflected in Turkish politics and public debate. To put it differently, although the non-visibility of Islam in Turkish politics during early Republic (pre-1950) was the case, this was not because Islam had no societal basis but because it was not allowed to express itself publicly and politically. In this context, what is called the "rise of Islam", "Islamic revival", or "political Islam" is, in fact, simply suppressed Islam, which is embedded in Turkey's societal fabric, coming to the surface through the relative democratization of polity and "autonomization of civil society."[15] In other words, democratization has led to the political participation of religiously conservative population and a raising of their demands, while autonomization of civil society has led to modernizing elite's "loos(ing) their power to transform the society from above:"[16] This potential had been kept under the competitive elections were held and the Democrat Party came to power. As pointed out by

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[13] Alan R. Taylor, *The Islamic Question in the Middle East Politics* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), p. 91 .

[14] Alan R. Taylor, *ibid.* p. 32.

[15] M. Hakan Yavuz called this fact "normalization of state- society relations". See his article. "The Return of Islam: New Dynamics in State-Society Relations and the Role of Islam in Turkish Politics", in *Turkey: The Pendulum Swings Back* (London: Islamic World Report. 1996), p. 79.

[16] Nilüfer Gole, "Toward an Autonomization of Politics and Civil Society in Turkey", in M. Heper & A. Evin, *op. cit.,* p. 222.

Sayari, "carried out in a heavy-hand fashion… Kemalist reforms created a good deal of hostility among the staunchly religious masses. When the same masses were given the chance to express their political preferences following the liberalization of Turkish political system, Islam emerged as an important issue in the electoral mobilization of the largely peasant voters."[17]

During 1980s, a relatively pluralistic and free public debate developed, thanks partly to Ozal's liberal –conservative governments.[18] Islamic tendencies began to rise again both in societal and political levels. In this era the WP rose as "an institutional framework for the voiceless and suppressed masses of Turkey and For social movements seeking redefine and transform social, cultural and political interactions:"[19] However, Kemalist elite in both cases misunderstood this process and labeled it "reactionism" or "fundamentalism."

Some Notes on Republican History[20]

In order to understand better why the rise of Islam in Turkish politics has been getting stronger, one needs to have an idea about the political history of Republican Turkey. Contrary to the generally accepted view, Turkey already had had an experience of the republic in 1923. To an extent, a tradition of associational and political pluralism can be traced to the late nineteenth century. Both of this developments emerged from the Ottoman state's efforts to modernize its sociopolitical system in the post-Tanzimant (Reorganization) period with the imperial decrees known as the 1839 Gulhane Hatt-I Humayunu (the Royal Edict of Gulhane) and the 1856 Islahat Fermani (the Reform Edict). The first constitutional monarchy came after these measures, when Abdulhamit ll put into force a semi-parliamentarian, monarchical constitution in 1876. Although the Sultan soon abrogated the constitution (1878), the Young Turks forced him to put the constitution into effect again in 1908, and in the following years the constitution was amended to conform to that of a Western-style parliamentary monarchy.

Despite official pressures between 1878 and 1908, associational life and constitutional movement had managed to survive. Immediately after "proclamation of freedom"[21] by the Young Turks, the number of activities of political, ethnic, cultural and literary associations began to increase rapidly. In this period, many associations and parties were involved in public debate and political

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[17] Sabri Sayari, *op. cit.* p. 126.

[18] For more information about Ozal's place in Turkish politics, see my book *Demokrasi, Laiklik, Resmi İdeoloji* (Democracy, Secularism and the State Ideology) (Ankara: LDT Yayınları, 1995), pp. 1 18-130.

[19] See M. Hakan Yavuz. "Political Islam and Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey", *Comparative Politics,* v. 30 (October 1997), P. 74.

[20] This section is based mainly on my book, *Türkiye'de Anayasalar ve Siyaset* (Constitutions and Politics in Turkey) (Ankara: Liberte, 1999).

[21] "Hürriyetin İlanı". This term was popular during the second constitutional era of Turkey.

process.[22] Unfortunately, a 1913 military conspiracy led by the Unionists, whose ideology was based on a positivistic outlook, nationalism and solidarism, stopped the democratic political process and attempted to oppress all opposition movements, whether Islamist, liberal, socialist or ethnic civil groups. The First World War followed the capturing of late Ottoman polity by the Unionists, and the parliamentary process was interrupted until the end of 1919, when general elections for a House of Representatives (Meclis-i Mebusan) was held. However, soon after the new Ottoman assembly began to operate, it had to end its work (April 1920) under pressure from the British forces occupying Istanbul. Subsequently, the Sultan dissolved it officially.

The closure of the parliament prompted the national-liberationist organization of Anatolia, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, to initiate the Grand National Assembly (GNA) in Ankara on April 23, 1920. The declared purpose of GNA was to liberate the country and the sultan-caliph from the foreign occupiers' oppression. The main preoccupation of the GNA, in terms of its internal operation, was to claim exclusive authority over the "affairs of nation", and, as a matter of fact, it showed much care about keeping democratic legitimacy, even though there existed an emergency situation because of the independence war. For this reason, the GNA could hardly pass an act that made Kemal the commander-in-chief of the nationalist forces, a power that was supposed to be part of the sovereign authority of the GNA itself.

Shortly, after the ending of "national struggle", the way of doing things in politics began to change and democratic concern for legitimacy and pluralism gradually was replaced by more autocratic methods initiated by M. Kemal and his close associates. The first step in this direction happened when a majority of this GNA, under the influence of M. Kemal, passed an act for early elections in violation of provisions in the 1921 Constitution. Held in summer of 1923, the elections resulted in the "cleansing" of the parliamentary opposition the "Second Group" (İkinci Grup),[23] which consistently had resisted to M. Kemal's efforts to rule over the GNA. Thus, the GNA lost its representative-democratic feature, and this, in turn, made easier for M. Kemal and his close associates to manipulate the GNA's agenda and to dominate the policy of the nation. In this era, Kemalist ruling circle did not allow opposition groups to have a voice in Turkish polity. In fact, the first political challenge, that of Republican Progressive Party which alleged that Kemal was monopolizing political power and establishing an autocratic government,[24] came from some of M.

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[22] Authors who emphasize the lack of civil society in Ottoman empire fail to consider this point. For an example, see Ali Kazancigil, "The Ottoman-Turkish State and Kemalism", in Ali Kazancigil & Ergun Ozbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (Hamden/CY: Archan Books, 1981), p. 45.

[23] On the Second Group in GNA see Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Mecliste İkinci Grup* (The Second Group in The First GNA) (Istanbul: İletişim, 1995).

[24] Elie Kedourie, *Politics in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 108; Erik Jan Zurcher. *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris and Co Ltd. rev. paperback ed., 1997). p. 176.

Kemal's own friends, who had served with him during the war of liberation. But this party was banned by the government in 1925, only a few months after its formation, and its leading figures were sentenced to life in prison following a court martial.

In 1930, M. Kemal asked his longtime and close friend, A. Fethi, to form an opposition party on liberal lines in order to criticize the government –but not the regime, state or president, who was M. Kemal himself. However the new Free Republican Party dissolved itself in the same year after it appeared that the party had the potential to gain a considerable electoral support, a situation that could change Kemal's Republican People's Party (RPP), especially in rural areas. Those experiments showed that "neither Ataturk personally nor the Turkish political elites collectively were ready to proceed to a full-fledged multi-party democracy."[25]

In time, the process of monopolization of the polity by m. Kemal and his ruling RPP was supplemented by invading all civil society domains. The 1925 Kurdish uprising,[26] which broke out in eastern Anatolia, provided the power elite with an excuse to suppress all the autonomous elements of society, especially ones whose aspiration came from religious belief. Indeed, after 1925 the Republican state gradually became an RPP apparatus to change radically the social and cultural fabric of Turkish society in accordance with the RPP's blue-print for a secular-nationalist society and to create a new man, or, to coin a term, homo Kemalicus. For this reason, the free press was suppressed, the educational system was monopolized by the state (the Act of Unification of Education, 1924), pious endowments were brought under strict state control (1924), and all civic associations that had potential to remain autonomous from the state were banned or dissolved. Thus, dervish lodges were dissolved in 1925, the Turkish Hearths clubs were banned in 1931 and Turkish Association of Women was dissolved in 1935. To fill the cultural and moral void caused by pruning the civil and cultural formations, the government established a network of People's Houses. These were supposed to have an official mission of indoctrinating society along secularist- nationalist lines, that is, to provide the state with a cultural – ideological hegemony over the society. Moreover, as a part of the project to cut off all linkages of the society with traditional institutions and knowledge, a form of higher education was introduced. A major aim of this reform was shutting down of the Darulfunun, the Ottoman university located in Istanbul.[27]

With the oppression of civil society, the authoritarian one-party government lasted until 1945, when the ending of Second World War started "the second wave of democracy" throughout

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[25] Dankwart Rostow. "Atatürk as an Institution-builder", in A. Kazancigil & E. Ozbudun, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[26] Being a Muslim people and an active participant in liberation war, Kurds were assumed to be one of the founding peoples of the new state, the other being Turks

[27] Given this state of affairs, it is surprising that Heper writes as follows: "From 1923, when the republic was founded, until the mid-1940s, democracy itself gradually established". See. Metin Heper, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation", *The Middle East Journal,* V. 51 (Winter 1997). p. 33.

the world and, in turn, created a favorable foreign milieu for Turkey to transform its system into a multiparty government. The ruling RPP, led by Ismet Inonu, heir to Kemal Ataturk as a president also decided to open up the political system in order to get popular support for its domestic program. Turkey then needed support from the Western world, especially from the United States, not only on account of its security problems with the Soviet Union but also an account of its bad economic situation. In order to handle the Soviet threat and to speed up economic recovery-Turkey's economy had been affected badly by the war even though it had not become involved in the conflict. It seemed to be a good decision to introduce competitive politics and to liberate the legal system. The 22 years of the one-party government had left a poor record, not only with respect to the economy but also in social and cultural terms. The general welfare level of the population was barely above subsistence, except, of course, the growing class of big business, thanks to state support and wartime profiteering, and, to an extent, state officials. The oppression of civil and political activities, especially religious-inspired ones, had created a deep resentment and discontent among the rural population. In these conditions, there was a real need for the ruling elite to channel the widespread discontent into democratic institutions. Thus, the RPP allowed the social and political opposition to form parties and, the Democrat Party (DP) was established by some former RPP members, who had criticized policies of the government.

In the first free elections held in May 1950, the Democrat Party came to power, gaining a majority of seats in the parliament. However, although DP governments followed relatively liberal policies in terms of religious liberties and improved the general welfare of the population, its general record was far from the full **liberalization** and democratization and even was illiberal in some respects. Basically two reasons hindered genuine democratization. First, since the DP leaders came from the RPP tradition, their political career had been shaped by the RPP's authoritarian style of ruling. Second, while RPP paved the way to multiparty government, it was not really ready to cede control over the political system. It seems that Inonu and his close associates wanted to introduce "democracy" under the tutelage of the RPP, or a "limited democracy"[28], rather than a genuine competitive political system. In his project there were no place for giving up the ideological nature of the regime and allowing social forces to work according to their own dynamics. RPP leadership was certain that real power, in any case, would remain in their own hands in this new era because since the founding of the Republic the party had strengthened the system with ideological, legal, and institutional mechanisms and guaranties in favor of the Kemalist elite. Thus, DP governments were bound to operate within this limited or "contained" space.

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[28] Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton, NC: Princeton University Press, 1959). p. 147."

In the post-1950 period, one of the most effective ways of containing democracy was to charge DP governments with favoring "reactionism" whenever liberal policies toward the religion initiated or whenever the exercising of civil rights by devout Muslims were tolerated. To make clear what RPP meant by the label "reactionism", the party accused the government of "endangering secularism", or fomenting an "uprising against the Republic" whenever religious people were allowed to enjoy the same liberties that were, and are supposed to be, usual in any Western democracy. The RPP charges culminated in military coup d'etat of May 27, 1960. The coup was led by army officers and supported by civil bureaucrats, intellectuals, and scholars who shared the same political outlook as RPP. Even though the DP had come to power by popular consent, the military junta retaliated and, in effect, returned political power back the pro-RPP state elite.

The new 1961 constitution appeared to be a liberal one, with guaranties for civil and political liberties and a strengthened judicial review. In some respects, however, it provided Kemalist state elite with the means of controlling over the political system by instituting procedures for the civil and military bureaucracy to check the decisions of elected bodies, which conservative parties were expected to control. The constitution also preserved the Kemalist ideological nature -secularism- of the regime. This new semi-liberal era again ended by military intervention in 1980. As a matter of fact, some liberal aspects of the constitution already had been trimmed in 1971-1973 period, when the political process operated under the military's supervision. The 1980 coup finally abrogated the constitutional order as a whole. The top generals pronounced one leading excuse for their intervention that the state again was endangered by "the escalation of reactionary activities" and "rising threat to secularism".

Between 1961-1980 Islam had begun to gain visibility, not only in societal and cultural spheres, but also in the political realm, thanks to the new constitution's relatively liberal overtones which made it easier for the formerly oppressed religious groups to voice their demands. During this seemingly favorable atmosphere some Islamic-oriented politicians led by Necmettin Erbakan established the National Order Party (NOP) in 1969. However, the Constitutional Court disbanded the NOP in 1971 on the grounds of "capitalizing on Islam for political ends". The Court considered the NOP an anti-secularist party in terms of Turkish state creed of secularism, which means not just separation of religion and state, but also the state's domination over religion (Islam). In effect, the secular elite rejected granting civil and political liberties to the people who claimed to be inspired by the Islamic faith. This conception of democracy "has often excluded not only the radical but also moderate Islamists".[29] In other words, Erbakan and his associates were wrong to think that the regime's "liberal" orientation embraced the Islamists as well.

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[29] Metin Heper, *op. cit*, p. 45.

Erbakan's close associates reformed their party in 1972 under the name of the National Salvation Party (NSP). According to Ilkay Sunar and Binnaz Toprak,[30] in terms of its socioeconomic background, the party represented "the protest of those who wanted larger political and economic role in the expanding world of modernity." But NSP's rhetoric was pro-Islamic and, it seemed to be a religious-conservative party. What NSP really sought to do was to help religious people, who had been excluded from the public and political realms since early days of the Republic, to influence the political processes and to feel themselves insiders to the system, or real citizens. Although the electoral record of NSP during 1970s was not impressive'; Kemalist intellectuals, scholars, and military saw it as intolerable party in a secularist system. Thus, the NSP was shut down by the military government in 1981.

Following the military intervention, the military junta, institutionalized as the National Security Council (NSC), designed a "constitution", which came into effect in November 1982. The main preoccupation of the framers of the 1982 Constitution was to consolidate the secularist-Kemalist characteristic of the regime and to narrow the space for political competition and civil society. Therefore, the NSC was given constitutional status as the basic platform for the military to influence political process. The constitution also strictly narrowed the room for the social and political expression of religiously-inspired civic organizations. A series of Kemalist "Reform Laws" that aimed to protect the secularist nature of the regime were equipped with a status of inviolability. During 1982-1983, the NSC amended many basic laws related to the framework of the political system so as to facilitate military supervision over the political process. However, while the coup leaders meant to curb political Islam, in some respects they favored Islamic belief, with the hope of "create(ing) a more homogenous and less political Islamic community", and they considered Islam "a pacifying and submissive ideology preferable to the threat of communism."[31] At the same time, the coup leaders' action "indicates that the tendencies and preferences given a relatively free rein in the three decades following Menderes' assumption of power can no longer be suppressed or ignored by the official classes who stand guard over Ataturk's legacy."[32]

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[30] Ilkay Sunar & Binnaz Toprak, "Islam in Politics: The Case of Turkey", *Government and Opposition*, n.18,-(Autumn 1983), p. 438.

[31] Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam..:', p. 67.

[32] Kedourie, *op. cit.*. p. 148. According to another reading, "that approach which was adopted is an effort to overcome the serious division that then characterized Turkish society and had left more than 5.000 people dead and 20.000 injured from 1977- 1980. A combination of religion and nationalism was perceived as a means of linking both the moderate right and left wings of the Turkish political spectrum." See Ben Lombardi, "Turkey: The Return of the Reluctant Generals?", *Political Science Quarterly*, v, 112, n. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 196.

The 1980's were, in one respect, the years of Turgut Ozal, first as prime minister and later as president. Ozal, who had been one of the top bureaucrats during the governments of Suleyman Demirel in 1970s, formed Motherland Party in 1983 and came to power at the end of the same year. Although as Prime Minister Ozal's liberalism in terms of economic policies did not reflect in political realm in same degree, his concept of state was considerably liberal in terms of the goals of state and the relationship between individual and state, and he had a tolerant attitude toward Islam. These facts contributed to the development of civil-societal activities, especially among Islamists, in post-1984 years. During his presidency, Ozal challenged the official Kemalist ideals and introduced new issues to the public debate that up to his time had been considered forbidden subjects to discuss. For example, he questioned the appropriateness of the state having an ideology, of the military controlling the policy of nation and of the Kurdish policy followed by previous governments. Moreover, being a devout Muslim, Ozal helped to change the official hostile policy toward Islam and religious people and normalized access of religious people to civil service jobs. According to Taylor, "what seems to be most appealing to a large number of Turks is Ozal's ability to reaffirm his commitment to Islam in a secular setting with which he is comfortable."[33]

Shortly after Ozal's death in 1993, the political atmosphere started to change and the military, through the NSC, gradually reassumed the initiative in government policies. Thus, a policy of oppression concerning civil liberties, especially free debate and freedom of association, has increased. In this milieu, the members and the elected parliamentary deputies of the pro-Kurdish party, which represented Kurdish concerns in the parliament, were prosecuted and their party disbanded.

Another important event during these years was the rise of Islamic-minded Welfare Party (WP), which was organized in 1983 by some friends of Erbakan after the NSC permitted the formation of political parties. Interestingly, as the heir to the NSP of the pre- 1980 period, WP had limited public appeal and little .electoral success during Ozal's years. After Ozal's death, however, the party won the municipal elections held in March 1994. Subsequently, the WP received 21 percent of the vote cast in December 1995 parliamentary elections, a higher percent of votes than that obtained by any other political party.

Even though the WP held the largest number of seats in the parliament, it was not easy to find a coalition partner with which to form a government. The Kemalist-secularist sector (the military, professional organizations, academia, parties of the center, big media and some sections of

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[33] Alan Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 91 .

the civil bureaucracy) argued that as an "anti-system" party, WP could not be a legitimate partner to any other "secular" party. However, the Motherland Party, led by Mesut Yilmaz, did try to form a coalition government with the WP but eventually gave up its initiative. After the fall of a short-lived Motherland-True Path Party (TPP) coalition, the WP at last managed to form a coalition with Ciller's conservative-populist TPP in the summer of 1996 despite the harsh criticisms of the media and other Kemalist circles. These criticisms grew during the course of the WP-TPP coalition government, and by early 1997 the military-dominated NSC began to involve itself actively in daily politics. To the top generals, who saw the army as prime guardian of the secularist Republic, the state of affairs was no longer tolerable. In February they issued a memorandum through the NSC that required the government basically to persecute so called reactionary organizations and activities.

In the end, the NSC forced government parties to resign in June 1997. The military's main target was WP, rather than the TPP. The generals' priority was to drive the WP from the office. This was the case, because "the system of values inculcated by the armed forces is deemed to be inseparable from Ataturk's conception of the secular state. When those ideals have been threatened, or public order threatens the stability of the Kemalist republic, senior military officials have felt it necessary to intervene."[34] The next step was to file a suit against the WP in the Constitutional Court, which ordered the disbanding of the party in January 1998. It might be worthwhile to note that, in this process, the big business and associated big media interests willingly supported the generals. Otherwise, it would not have been so easy to drive the WP out of the government. However, this does not mean that political Islam is excluded from Turkish politics permanently. As Atilla Yayla put it: "Refah is a sociological reality that cannot be made to disappear through legal bans because it is the political expression of a huge opposition movement."[35] But the Kemalist army officers had intervened directly in the political arena again, this time by using a "constitutional" platform, NSC.[36] Thus, now the military once more is planning to do what it considers an "easy" business, that is, "reestablishing democracy".[37]

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[34] Lombardi, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

[35] Atilla Yayla, "Erbakan's Goals", *Middle East Quarterly,* v. 4, n. 3 (September 1997). p. 25.

[36] A foreign observer wrote in mid -1996: "All seem to be setting the stage for a return to military rule." See, Lombardi, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

[37] Ernest Gellner gives such a nice sketch as follows: "I think it was Mark Twain who said. 'Giving up smoking is easy, I 've done it so many times." The Turkish army could say, 'Reestablishing democracy is easy, we have done it so many times." See his article "The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective", in Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 243. For a more detailed account of the Turkish politics during the years of 1995-1997, see my book, *Rejim Sorunu* (The Regime Question) (Ankara: Vadi Yayinlari. 1997).

Radical Secularization in Turkey

From outset, the Kemalist state had reacted severely to all pro-Islamic and civil organizations. Its attitude toward Islam remained unchanged, albeit in a more moderate mode after the transition to multi-party government. The key reason for this, it seems, is the ideological orientation of the Republican state, which from the beginning has been unfavorable to Islam. The state viewed Islam as the principal cause of Turkey's underdeveloped status. In fact, in the first two decades of the Republic the power elite tried to destroy Islam and its culture as a force in Turkey. After transition to multi-party government, the Kemalist elite continued its hostility to Islam, and even in the so-called constitutional periods based on 1961 and 1982 constitutions did not give up that policy. In the view of Kemalists, all they did originated from the dictates of secularism. However, as Kedouire observed, Turkish secularism is different from the Western model: "(I)t is not the state of affairs encountered in modern European politics and usually described by the phrase 'a free church in a free state'.[38]

In order to understand this policy better, it would be useful to glance at D. E. Smith's account of secularization policies in the modern world. In his analysis,[39] there are four aspects of secularization in the modern state: polity-separation, polity- expansion, polity transvaluation, and polity-dominance. These can be considered as stages, although a given secularization process may or may not follow each stage. At the first stage, the polity is separated from religious ideologies and ecclesiastical structures. "Polity separation secularization involves the severance of connection... between religion and the polity.... Polity separation frequently results in the contraction of the polity, as the government ceases to perform traditional religious practices".[40] In the stage of polity expansion, the state begins to perform regulatory functions in the socioeconomic sphere that formerly were performed by religious structures. "Here the polity extends its jurisdictions into areas of social and economic life formerly regulated by religious structures. The polity expands its functions at the expense of religion."[41] Polity-trans valuation secularization, that is the third aspect or stage, involves the support or creation of secular political values. Through the polity-transvaluation secularization process the state provides secularization of political culture, of the basis of legitimacy, and of national identity.

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[38] Elie Kedourie, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.
[39] Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Political Development* (Boston: Little Brown and Company. 1970), pp, 85-123.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 91
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

According to Smith, while "these three aspects of secularization are universal in the development of modern polities over the past century and a half', only in profoundly religious societies do we see a more radical form of secularization attempted: "the dominance of polity over religious beliefs, practices, and ecclesiastical structures. This involves the expansion of the polity into what is recognized as the purely religious sphere in order to destroy or radically alter religion."[42] In other words, "polity-dominance secularization involves an open governmental attack on the religious basis of the general culture and the forcible imposition of a secular ideology on the political culture... In denying any autonomy to the religious sphere, the state operates on totalitarian premises, although its overall philosophy need not be explicitly totalitarian."[43]

In the Turkish case, Kemalist secularism rested not on the separation between religion and state but on government control over religion. According to Levent Koker, the state sought to replace the Islamic value system with a "scientific" one.[44] The Republican state followed the "polity-dominance", or radical secularization, pattern as Smith himself[45] and Turkish scholar liter Turan[46]have stated. With a number of radical reforms, which included abolishing Caliphate, outlawing the tarikats (Sufi lodges), omitting Islam from the Constitution as the state religion and replacing Islamic law with an adaptation of the Swiss civil code, secularizing and monopolizing education, abolishing religious and traditional dress, and replacing the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet, the "Kemalist government systematically dismantled Islam as the institutional basis of Turkish life in 1920s and 1930s."[47] In this era, radical secularism became "one of the key principles of

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[42] *Ibid.,* p. 85, 86.

[43] *Ibid.,* p. 119.

[44] See Levent Koker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (Modernization, Kemalisin and Democracy) (Istanbul: İletişim, 3rd rep. 1995), p. 166, 168, 224.

[45] Smith, *op. cit.,* p. 86, 118, 121,268

[46] liter Turan, "Religion and Political Culture in Turkey", in Tapper (ed.), *op. cit.,* p. 34. "The Turkish state was the most radical example of modern secularization. The republic of Atatürk was found on nationalist and republican principles and undertook a veritable cultural revolution to liquidate the attachment of the Turkish people to their Islamic past." See Ira M. Lapidus, "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam", in Charles Butterworth & 1. William Zartman (eds.), *The Annals: Political Islam* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 21

[47] See Taylor, *op. cit.,* p. 31. Another (Turkish) scholar gives an overall account of the measures that were meant to sweep religious inspirations away from Turkish socio-cultural and political lives: "the abolition of Caliphate (...); the abolition of the office of the Seyhul-Islam, the highest in the religious hierarchy of the Ottoman Empire(...); the abolition of the medreses, the Islamic educational institutions for higher learning; and the secularization of the educational system; the abolition of the religious courts and the secularization of the legal system; the outlawing of the mystical Sufi brotherhoods, the tarikat(...). and the closing of their places of worship and gathering: (...) the outlawing of the veil for women working in civil service jobs; the change in official oath, to be taken on one's honour rather than on the Koran; the change of weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday; the adoption of the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic; and the abolition of the Muslim lunar calendar in favour of the Gregorian. At the same time, a scries of laws were implemented to prevent an organized political movement based on Islam:' See Binnaz Toprak, *op. cit.,* p. 91 . See also Richard Tapper, *op. cit.,* p. 2

Ataturk's new state and religious expression came under strict government supervision and control;"[48] any autonomy to Islam was denied.

Radical secularization of Turkish politics originated with Kemalist ideology, which developed during the early Republic. The formation of Kemalism as an ideology seemed to be a complex phenomenon, influenced in part by nineteenth century positivism, which had much appeal to the Young Turks, of whom M. Kemal was one. Kemalism incorporates a positivistic vision of the Enlightenment and peculiarities that emerged from the project to create a new nation based on mainly secularist lines in place of a traditional Islamic society. This is why Kemalists "advocated social and political progress through a positivist pursuit of science, which it was hoped would replace God-centered politics with an enlightened public mind... (Therefore) the legislation enacted in the first two decades of the republic was designed to replace Islamic communalism with a new mode of social solidarity constructed along the lines of progress."[49] In their opinion, "any kind of preoccupation with Islam" was "irrational" and Islam was "the antonym of enlightenment."[50] Thus, a suspicious, even hostile, attitude toward religion, a strong belief in positive science as a means of progress, nationalism, and a strict commitment to secularization of politics shaped the ideology of the ruling Kemalist elite.

Turkish Secularism: A Political Religion?

Not content with just separating Islam from politics, M. Kemal also sought to remove Islam's power base in society and subordinate it to the state. For this reason, secularism was introduced as the main political doctrine early in republic. In fact, the process of secularization of Turkish polity resembles the formation of "political religion". The term "political religion" was coined by David Apter, who observed: "States with monolithic structure, autocratic government and a wide range of community imperatives face a particular political problem" which results all social life being politicized in some degree. "When social life is heavily politicized, government requires exceptional authority. Such authority tends to be monopolistic. Monopolistic authority needs to replace older belief about other forms of allegiance. Now political forms are developed that have the effect of providing for the continuity, meaning, and purpose of an individual's actions. The result is a political

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[48] Richard Tapper, *ibid.*

[49] Faruk Birtek. "Prospects for a New Center or the Temporary Rise of Peripheral Asabiyah?", in M. Heper & A. Evin (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 224.

[50] Metin Heper, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

doctrine that is in effect a political religion. The effects of political religion are such that they strengthen authority in the state and weaken the flexibility of the society."[51]

In a society in which a political religion prevails, "oppression obliterates freedom, fear replaces spontaneity, and everything is politicized, from family and kinship to voluntary associations."[52] In such cases "(h)armony in the political sphere derives from the messianic leader who points out the dangers and noxious poisons of faction. Many such leaders are charismatic who represent the 'one'. They personify the monistic quality of the system. To achieve such oneness, mobilization systems begin by politicizing all political life. As a result, politics as such disappears. This is in keeping with monistic political belief. Conflict is not only bad but also counterrevolutionary. It runs counter to the natural evolution of human society, and ideas of opposition downgrade and confuse the power of positive thinking. Ideas not only are dangerous, challenging the legitimacy of the regime or charisma of the leader. They also represent unscientific vestige wherever they run counter to those of the regime."[53]

Christel Lane, who studied political religion in the Soviet case, called our attention to the differences between political religion and civil religion.[54] First, civil religion links the political order with a transcendent power derived from the traditional religion of the society, whereas political religion presents a sacralization of the existing political order. Second, while civil religion confines itself to the political affairs of a society, political religion claims authority over all social life. "Consequently, political religion has a system of specific values and norms while the content of civil religion is at such a high level of generality that it conflicts neither with conventional religious nor with political norms and values."[55] The distinction becomes more clear when we turn to C. B. Bryant, who says:[56] "Society is the prime mover of the civil religion; the state is the prime mover of political religion. The collective representations in a civil religion are genuinely representative of society as a whole, or at least of many sections of it (...) By contrast, the collective representations of a political religion are superimposed on society by those who control the state. The one is historically rooted; the other is politically contrived. Alternatively, with civil religions it is ultimately the state which heeds society; with political religions it is ultimately society which submits to the state."

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[51] David E. Apter, „vPolitical Religion in the New Nations", in Clifford Quest (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Qtrest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe. 1963). pp. 58-59.
[52] *Ibid.,* p. 68.
[53] *Ibid.,* p. 78.
[54] Christel Lane. *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society- the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 42.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Christopher G. A. Bryant; "Civic Nation, Civil Society. Civil Religion", in John A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History Comparisons* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 150.

So, we can find most elements of political religion in Kemalist secularism and this fact made the early Republican regime closer to totalitarianism. In fact, Republican state was built in the form of monolithic structure, and had an autocratic government until 1950. Formerly M. Kemal and later Inonu, with the help of the RPP apparatus, monopolized political power and eliminated factual and potential rivals. In Kedourie's words,[57] "(Republican) People's Party was meant by its founder (that is, M. Kemal) to be an instrument for the political control of the masses, and as a transmission-belt, auxiliary to the administration, the purpose of which was to promote Mustafa Kemal's secularist project." The RPP was not of the kind of party that we see in Western constitutional and representative democracies, but an apparatus through which the population could be indoctrinated into Kemalist outlook, secularism being most prominent in it. In order to mobilize the masses, in addition to the party apparatus, People's Houses were established and they were supposed to work in the same direction, and, as a matter of fact, they did so.

The Kemalists also had charismatic leaders, Kemal Ataturk himself, and later Inonu, even though the latter never enjoyed the same degree of respect and authority as did Ataturk, who represented the "one" and personified the monistic character of the regime. Indeed, from 1922 M. Kemal, "who was like a sultan",[58] had been called officially "Gazi". Although that title refers to any man who fought for a holy cause in the context of Islamic culture, in this case it implied that M. Kemal was the Gazi, not just one of many Gazis. In 1934, the Grand National Assembly, which then was controlled by M. Kemal's RPP, gave him the surname Ataturk, which means "the ancestral father of Turks". And M. Kemal's charisma was propagated and strengthened through the educational mechanisms, the press that was under strict control of the government, and in many ceremonial occasions.

Another interesting similarity to the political system with political religion is that conflict was considered heretical, "not only bad but also counterrevolutionary" in the Kemalist ideological context. During the single-ruling-party period, any opposition to the Kemalist tenets, in terms of ideas or actions, regardless of their Islamic, Kurdish, liberal, or socialist origins, was regarded as "unscientific", "subversive", or "reactionary". To the ruling elite, challenging Kemalism and the "draconian methods"[59] that were used by the government to consolidate secularist policies was challenging the national goal of "rising to the level of contemporary civilization", and disclosing the intention of making the society go back to the "darkness of the Middle Ages".

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[57] Elie Kedourie, *op. cit.*. pp. 107-108.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 106, 108. Lombardi called those methods "Ataturk's brutal repression of religion". See Lombardi. *op. cit.*, p. 197.

However, for any ruling elite, political religion could not be an end in itself. The final objective of creating a political religion is to incorporate a new value system and code of conduct-a civil religion to replace traditional religion. The term, but not the idea, of civil religion is a modern one, coined by Jean Jacques Rousseau in eighteenth century. In his account, civil religion refers to a distinction between "the religion of man" a s a private matter and the "religion of citizen" with its public connotations. However, the term was given contemporary currency with Robert N. Bellah's works, "Civil Religion in America"(1967) and *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (1975). By civil religion Bellah refers to "that religious dimension, found... in the life of every people through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality."[60] According to J. A. Coleman, civil religion is "a set of beliefs, rites and symbols which relates a man's role as citizen and his society's place in space, time and history to the conditions of ultimate existence and meaning".[61]

In the case of Turkey, it seems that the long-term goal of the Kemalist elite was to replace Islam with a new civil religion that was to grow up from secular ideas and institutions. In designing a political religion such as Kemalism, the elite tried to make a secularist outlook and values rooted in the fabric of society, and this was expected to become the basis of new citizenship and public morality. M. Kemal tried to replace religion with a modern secular ideology and the values of Republican nationalism and that ideology "came to constitute a 'civic religion' (with its public ritual to an extent that Islam probably never did under the Ottomans,"[62] The new system of secular norms, says Şerif Mardin, were to serve as a civic bond that was supposed to fill society's "ethical vacuum", which resulted from eliminating the traditional religious norms and to bring and keep the citizenry together as a political society.[63] Thus, a new mode of social solidarity would replace "Islamic communalism".[64] In this context, what Heper called "to socialize the people into becoming patriotic citizens of a secular republic"[65] was, in fact, this very process of creating a civil religion. In this regard

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[60] Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", Daedalus , v. 96 (1967), p. 13. "Rather than Anglo-Saxon liberalism. French lacobinism, with its highly centralized model of change, became the prototype for reform of Turkish modernists. Hence, secularization itself became part of that process of social engineering rather than an outcome of the process of modernization and societal development" See Nilüfer Gole, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter-Elites", *The Middle East Journal*, v. 51 . n. I (Winter 1997), p. 48.

[61] Cited in Bryant, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[62] Richard Tapper, *op. cit..* pp. 5-7.

[63] Şerif Mardin, "Religion and Politics in Turkey", in James P. Piscatori (ed.). *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1983). p. 142. 156.

[64] Faruk Birtek, *op. cit..* p. 224.

[65] "By means of the mass media, education, flag saluting, national anthem singing, state parades and nonreligious holidays on national anniversaries, attempts were made to socialize the people into becoming patriotic citizens of a secular republic rather than pious members of a Muslim community" See Metin Heper, *op. cit..* p. 3:1

Kemalism resembles the French Revolution which, according to Bellah, "was anticlerical to the core and attempted to set up an anti-Christian civil religion".[66]

Though Republican state's efforts to replace Islamic-inspired traditional culture with a secular civil religion, Islam did not lose its appeal to the Turkish society at large. As a matter of fact, Islam is still the main basis of social solidarity, of mobilizing people for national goals, and an important source of legitimacy in politics. Therefore, making reference to Islam in Turkish politics is not, as Kemalists think of it, an indication of a conspiracy to "use" religion for political purposes. Perhaps, as Mardin pointed out,[67] Turkish Islam, which has been influenced by the general secularization, is going to transfer into a civil religion.

Conclusion

If it is true that Islam has penetrated Turkish social fabric deeply, has shaped interpersonal relations and an individual's conduct, and has remained the main reference for Turks in terms of the meaning of life, then it is not surprising that Islam has been able to find spaces for itself in Turkish social, cultural, public, and political life. Not only as a religious faith, but also as a code of conduct for individual and public concerns... Islam is embedded in Turkish society. If one considers Islam to be an outsider, then he fails to understand what is really happening in Turkish society and polity. And any ruling group that treats Islam as a stranger would be surprised to see Islam continue to grow consistently and must be ready to use force if it wants to suppress it. The Republican history shows that it is imposible to undermine Islamic social base and Islam's overall appeal to the population. By contrast, any attempt to suppress social and political movements motivated by Islamic concerns would lead to increased fundamentalist inclinations among Muslims.

Moreover, there is no strangeness in the growth of Islamization during democratization periods. If this process means a widening of the base of participation, with guaranteed civil and political liberties, certainly, democratization would enable the citizenry, including devout Muslims, to express their demands and make their access to public debate and polity easier. Since the transition to competitive politics in 1946, this has been the case in Turkey. But the Kemalist elite considered this trend a counter- secularist uprising and reacted to it by force, as in 1960, 1971, 1980 and finally 1997. However, it is not a wise policy to apply the politics of coercion in response to social dynamics, rather than allowing these dynamics to express themselves politically.

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[66] Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975). p. 3.
[67] Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975). p. 3.

Finally, an important point what Kemalists have overlooked is that many citizens always will see Islam as a source of knowledge, inspiration, guidance and action, even as a valuable way of life. This, in turn, will necessarily be reflected in the public and political spheres. Some people might define themselves through religious belief and choose Islam as a system of values to govern their lives. This is not a pathological phenomenon, as Kemalists seem to assume. As long as it allows things to operate in natural ways and is not tempted to exercise violence, the state is not fated to see such things as "fundamentalism", or a "reactionary threat". Turkey's political elite has to learn to live with Islam. If Turkey really wants to be a democracy, it will do so successfully only with Islam, not by attempting to cast it off. Indeed, its history forces Turkey to be a "Muslim democracy". Labeling any Islamic minded movement as "fundamentalism" is not only a false diagnosis of the state of affairs in Turkey, but also a fatal act that would destroy the chance for democracy in Turkey, as Republican history showed so far.

* First published in *Islam, Civil Society, and Market Economy, Atilla Yayla (editor), Liberte Books,* 1999, Ankara.

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