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Until recently, although they did not subscribe to political Islam, religiously-oriented political parties in Turkey were closed down because their leaders could not prevent some militant members from making statements provocative to the secular and democratic regime in that country. Turkey has had a cultural-cum-civic nationalism; consequently, even Turkey's long-standing Kurdish problem, which in recent years has been brought under control, did not give rise to ethnic nationalism. Nonetheless, the military, which in the post-1960 period has intervened in politics several times, has continued to perceive political Islam and the ethnic question as critical threats for Turkey. Here the generally inept performance of political actors was a major contributory factor. On the eve of the twenty-first century, however, Turkey has begun to be governed by a stable and effective coalition government that has enabled the Turks to look into the future with greater optimism.

THE OTTOMAN BACKGROUND

The founders of the Turkish Republic (established in 1923) wished to jettison the republic's Ottoman heritage altogether. They thought they had a good reason for acting in this manner: in their opinion, Islam, the backbone of the Ottoman heritage, had been the basic obstacle to progress.

From the late eighteenth century onwards, the Ottoman elite came to the conclusion that they as Ottomans were not intrinsically superior to their adversaries in Europe. They decided that it was not wrong to 'use the infidels' ways in order to overcome them'. Thus, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, they took measures to reform the army along Western lines. This was followed, during the *Tanzimat* (reform) period of 1839–76, by attempts at thoroughgoing administrative and governmental reforms. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century,

the educational system was overhauled; in particular, modern institutions of higher learning were set up.

In these endeavours of theirs, the Ottoman elite was only partially successful. Although they managed to set up institutions such as courts and schools based on secular premises, they could not do away with the Islamic counterparts of these institutions. Islamic jurisprudence (*sharia*) and higher institutions of learning (*madrasas*) existed side by side with an ever widening set of secular rules and regulations, a modern, in-service school of higher learning for civil servants (*Mülkiye*), and a Western-type university.

Parallel to this development, the Ottomans could not hold their realm intact. During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan followed one another in attaining their independence. Towards the end of the century, the Ottomans lost their financial autonomy *vis-à-vis* the Great Powers. By setting up the notorious, from the Ottoman perspective, Debt Administration, the major European countries obtained the privilege of exercizing close control on Ottoman revenues. They could thus at least partially retrieve the loans they had extended to the Ottomans. Finally, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, Turkey faced the danger of being carved up by the Great Powers and being left only a small area in mid-northern Anatolia.[1]

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Turks' response to these developments was not that of turning their back to the West and closing ranks with the Muslim camp. On the contrary, they chose to 'free themselves from the clutches of Islam', which, they thought, was an obstacle to progress. Their motto was that of 'catching up with the Western civilization and even surpassing it'.[2]

It followed that although they were Muslims, the Turks came to have no qualms about being an integral part of the West. Among all of the contemporary Muslim states, that of the Ottomans had historically been the least Islamic.[3] From the fifteenth century onwards, secular rulers had begun to take their place alongside the religious ones. Being rulers of an empire that consisted of various ethnic, religious and even sectarian groups, the Ottomans could not afford to cling on to the rules enunciated by one school (*hanefi*) of one religion (Islam). In any case, since Islam had set down rules primarily in the private sphere, it could not provide adequate guidelines for the public realm. Last, but not least, Atatürk and his associates talked about reaching a 'civilization', but not about 'Westernizing'. They assumed that in the past, the Turks too had

contributed to the flourishing of the civilization that all advanced contemporary countries shared. For them, what was going to take place was no more than a second awakening.

In the process, as noted, the so-called Turkish revolution took as its target the *ancien* values that the republic had inherited from the Ottoman times. The *secular nation* was going to replace the *Islamic community*. The Turks were no longer going to deduce their decisional premises from Islam; the only source for those premises was going to be the nation. What the founders of the republic had in mind here was the collective conscience of the people. In their submission, the latter reflected the long-term interests of the community. The founders placed a primary emphasis on the general interest because they concluded that, in the final decades of the Ottoman Empire, the sultans' personal interests had attained paramount significance, and that this had paved the way for the collapse of the empire.[4]

NATIONALISM

What did 'nation' in itself mean to the founders of the republic? It is true that the republic was structured as a unitary state. Such a constitutional patterning was a consequence of the fact that for several centuries the Ottoman Empire had gradually come apart at the seams. Yet the republic did not opt for ethnic nationalism. Atatürk explained the rationale behind their not adopting that particular version of nationalism as follows. For centuries the peoples in Anatolia, who not only belonged to different ethnic groups but also subscribed to different religious beliefs, had gone through a mutual *acculturation* process, or the voluntary adoption of each other's values and attitudes. Consequently, when the republic came into being, what these groups shared as cultural attributes were far more substantial than those on which they differed. The entity that these groups together constituted had to be given a name. For this purpose the term 'Turk' was chosen. This was because at the time it was the 'most familiar term'.[5]

It follows that the founders used 'Turk' as a nominal term, as a means of *reference*, not of *definition*. For them, the term 'Turk' subsumed in itself different ethnic and religious groups. The 'Turkish nation' expressed a mosaic. Both Atatürk and İnönü talked of the Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Lazes and the like as entities that together made up the Turkish nation. Consequently, at the Lausanne Peace Conference convened in the wake of the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22), the founders were not averse to granting cultural rights to all the elements of the mosaic, including the rights of expressing oneself in one's own language and celebrating one's special days.

It is true that in the late 1930s and the early 1940s, several Turkish intellectuals such as Nihal Atsız talked of Kurds as 'mountain Turks' (the Kurds had for centuries had lived in the far away corners of the high country in southeastern Turkey), and some statesmen such as Prime Minister Şükrü Kaya had mentioned 'blood' and 'descent' as the primary constitutive elements of nation.[6] Yet, the intellectuals in question did not belong to the inner group of the statesmen that formulated public policy. Furthermore, these intellectuals constantly complained that the likes of Kaya did not follow up in their deeds what they implied in their various statements on ethnicity.

This was not surprising. Kaya and others in government did not subcribe to ethnic nationalism. At the time, they were only trying to appease the Germans. As soon as it became apparent that the German armies were doomed, Kaya and others in the government dropped the ethnic rhetoric, and intellectuals such as Atsız were prosecuted for their 'racist views'.

Then, as well as earlier and later, the Turkish political class in general did not subscribe to ethnic nationalism. In the Ottoman Empire, ethnicity was an alien concept. The basic social divide in the empire was along Muslim and non-Muslim lines. The terms 'Turk' and 'Turkey' were coined and used for a long time by the Europeans. The Ottomans did not use them in the sense the Europeans did. For the Ottomans, the term 'Turk' only evoked the image of an unrefined person – a country bumpkin. As late as the nineteenth century, the Ottomans tried to salvage the empire by first adopting Ottomanism (to hold the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the empire together) and then clinging on to Islamism (to prevent some Muslim subjects of the empire, such as Arabs, from 'exiting').

The Ottomans began to use the terms 'Turk' and 'Turkism' only in the last quarter of the nineenth century, and then for a *defensive* purpose. It is true that there was an effort to show the good qualities of the 'Turk'. However, the goal was not to prove that the Turks were inherently superior to other ethnic groups. The basic aim was to enable a people, that had shown signs of an inferiorty complex as a consequence of having constinuously lost against their European adversaries, to regain their self-confidence and maintain their independent existence.

At the turn of the century, there were two competing conceptions of nationalism. One was that developed by Ziya Gökalp. It was based on shared culture. Gökalp sharply differentiated indigenous culture from universal civilization. In his opinion, the former constituted the basic dimension of nation. The second version of nationalism was that formulated by Yusuf Akçura. It was premised on language which, in the last analysis, was assumed to have derived from common descent.[7] Akçura, a Turk who had emigrated from Russia, longed for the

integration of the Turkic peoples of central Asia with the Turks in Anatolia. This was why, in his formulation of nationalism, he placed an emphasis on language. On the contrary, Gökalp, a Kurd upon whom Ottomanism seemed to have had a major impact, attempted to forge a bond among the remaining Muslim subjects of the empire on the basis of common culture, even though they had different native languages – Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and the like.

Atatürk and his associates adopted Gökalp's perception of nationalism based on shared culture. As already noted, they thought that for several centuries the peoples living within the boundaries of the new republic – including the non-Muslims – had gone through an ages-long process of mutual acculturation. Atatürk and his associates, however, rejected Gökalp's distinction between culture and civilization. As noted, they opted for contemporary civilization (read, 'technology plus culture') with its 'roses and thorns'. Their preference was for total modernization because, as noted, Islam was not in their opinion open to change and, therefore, it was the single most important impediment to progress.

ISLAM AND NATIONALISM

The founders of the republic thus came to have a somewhat paradoxical view on culture as a constitutive element of nationalism. On the one hand, since in empirical reality Islam continued to be an integral element of Turkish culture, the founders were against viewing culture as a defining element of nationalism. After all, the basic principle on which the republic rested was secularism, not Islam. The founders did not wish culture-cum-Islam to play an effective role at the public, community or even personal levels. The only role that was assigned to religion was that of being a *belief* system for the individual.

On the other hand, since in the Ottoman Empire Islam had played a critical role at the individual and community levels and also to a certain extent at the level of the polity, in the republican period too, Islam unconsciously creeped into the definition of the 'Turk'. In the late 1930s, the then Turkish Ambassador to Romania, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, discovered that there were in that country 'Gagauz Turks', who spoke Turkish but were Christians. He suggested to Ankara that these people should be encouraged to emigrate to Turkey. The response he received from Ankara was in the negative: Ankara did not consider 'Gagauz Turks' as Turks because they were not Muslims. A few years later, when Bosnian 'Turks', who were Muslims but did not speak Turkish, wished to emigrate to Turkey, Ankara enthusiatically opened its arms to them.

Also, from time to time, one came across a cultural understanding of nationalism in the lower echelons of government and at the level of community, even though on the whole Ankara seemed to have no such intentions. One example of cultural nationalism in the lower echelons of government was the notorious Capital Levy of the 1940s. The government had reached the conclusion that some people had made extensive use of the black market during the Second World War, and thus amassed an enormous amount of 'unearned' wealth. The government thus decided that these people should be taxed on this 'improperly obtained wealth'. In practice, the tax collectors at the localities exlusively picked on non-Muslims, who as a consequence suffered a great deal. An example of such narrowly conceived cultural nationalism at the level of community was what took place during one stage of the Turkish–Greek conflict over Cyprus. In the mid-1950s, when the Cyprus question began to be critical, a demonstration against Athens in Istanbul was initiated by the government. Suddenly, the carefully planned demonstration got out of hand; crowds pillaged a great deal of Greek-Turkish property in that city. The government remained helpless in the face of this catastrophe, for it had not expected it to go that far.

From 1984 onwards, Turkey faced for the second time (the first time being 1925–38) the problem of Kurdish separatism. The separatists challenged the basic assumption of the founders of the republic on nationalism – that as a consequence of the long process of mutual acculturation those cultural characteristics that different ethnic and religious groups living in Turkey *shared* was far more substantial than those cultural characteristics on which they differed.

The government adopted a twin strategy against this renewed challenge to the national unity and territorial integrity of the country. One was to claim that the separatists did not represent the majority of the Kurds. This argument was based upon the premise that the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) killed Kurds in Turkey too, in order to obtain their support and/or create the impression that the government's authority had collapsed and the Kurds as a whole should better 'take care of themselves'. The second strategy was to shift to a more inclusive definition of nationalism than the one based on culture. In the 1990s, then President Süleyman Demirel argued from time to time that in Turkey one comes across 'constitutional [that is, 'civic'] citizenship' (*anayasal vatandaşlık*), where one is considered a citizen regardless of one's cultural characteristics by expressing loyalty to the state. Demirel added that in Turkey the Kurds too have always been 'first class citizens' (*birinci sınıf vatandaş*), arguing that everybody in Turkey was treated equally.

This second strategy was adopted in the wake of the president's overt recognition of the 'Kurdish reality'. The Kurdish reality had also been recognized early in the republic. After all, as mentioned, Atatürk and his associates had talked about the Kurds as one of the distinctive elements of the Turkish nation. However, when in the 1925–38 period Turkey faced intermittent Kurdish separatist uprisings, governments placed an emphasis on what the 'distinctive elements' in question *shared* rather than on those dimensions on which they *differed*. Governments continued to have such an approach to ethnic issues when, in the wake of the 'time of troubles' (1938–44), Turkey faced the German threat. To reiterate, even during those difficult years, however, official circles remained unsympathetic to the argument made by some racist intellectuals in Turkey that the Kurds were no more than 'mountain Kurds'. The Turkish state never viewed the Kurds as a *minority group*. In Turkey, as stipulated at Lausanne, only non-Muslims were considered as minorities.

The idea of constitutional citizenship seems to have led to mixed feelings among the state elite. It was not rejected out of hand, because it provided a useful formula for maintaining national unity. Yet there must have been doubts about the wisdom of adopting it, because it implied that the cultural difference between the Turks and the Kurds was greater than traditionally believed. As a consequence, during the 1990s, 'constitutional citizenship', and along with it 'Kurdish reality', was repeatedly declared, forgotten, and then remembered again.

During the same decade, Turkey also faced the difficult choice of whether to grant to the Kurds not only *cultural* (that is, individual) rights but also *group* rights, the most critical among the latter set of rights being education in one's own language. Turkey had granted group rights only to its non-Muslim citizens because, as mentioned, according to Lausanne, they only had minority status. In 2000, some state officials talked of the need to grant group rights to the Kurds. They seemed to come up with this proposition basically because they wanted to see Turkey conform with the Copenhagen Criteria on this matter, so that Turkey would eventually be admitted to the European Union (EU) as a full member. These officials were opposed by others who argued that the recognition of group rights to the Kurds would be tantamount to relegating them to second class citizens; in their submission, Kurds should enjoy the same rights as Turks, no less no more.

THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the fact that Turkish nationalism had been a defensive rather than an offensive one had a particular impact on

the nationalist right in Turkey. The previous leader of the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), Alparslan Türkeş, had, when young, toyed with the idea of ethnic nationalism. For a while he had considered those who did not have a proper accent as non-Turks.[8] Later, however, he turned to cultural nationalism. He viewed nationalism as a phenomenon of having the same feelings and aspirations. He noted that the Turks and the Kurds had a common culture and, thus, together they constituted a nation.[9]

In the 1960s and 1970s, the NAP was preoccupied with the threat of Communism and adopted a strong stand against it. During those decades, Türkeş adopted defensive nationalism – one that aimed at elevating Turkey to a contemporary level of civilization. Türkeş was interested in the indigenous characteristics of the Turks, and called for a return to authentic communitarian values. He thought that Turkey was going through a spiritual crisis and that this situation worked against Turkey's efforts at development. He believed that a re-adoption of authentic values would revitalize the Turks and help them to catch up with the advanced countries. Türkeş's problem was that of modernization, not that of assimilation. Consequently, Türkeş and the NAP did not take the Kurdish citizens of Turkey as targets. In the post-1984 period, too, when Kurdish separatism got under way under Abdullah Öcalan, the NAP and its leader criticized Öcalan's separatist PKK, but had no adverse feeilinsg towards Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin as a whole.

The present leader of the NAP, Devlet Bahçeli, has followed the same line. He bluntly declared: 'It would not bother us if a Kurd is called a Kurd as long as that statement is not made with the ultimate aim of doing away with national unity in this country and changing the unitary structure of the Turkish republic.' Echoing those who did not wish to relegate the Kurds into second class citizens, Bahçeli added: 'Nobody should use being a Turk as a means of discriminating against other ethnic groups. In ... [Turkey], the word "Turk" is being used in a nominal sense: since we need to call everybody who lives in this country by a common name, it is only for this reason that we call everybody in Turkey a "Turk".'[10] In September 2000, as Deputy Prime Minister, Bahçeli visited southeast Turkey and had rather cordial encounters with mayors from the Kurdish-oriented People's Democracy Party.

For the NAP in the first months of 2000, the 'sensibilities of the people on different issues, including Islam', was very important. Among other things, the NAP was against the legal provisions that prevented female students with headscarfs from attending classes at the universities. On the other hand, the party did not encourage political Islam. Consequently, the relations between the NAP and the military have not

been exactly cordial, nor have they been particularly tense. Bahçeli chose not to adopt a confrontational style *vis-à-vis* the military; he preferred to place the issue on the back burner.

RELIGIOUSLY ORIENTED POLITICAL PARTIES

In 1970, when the first religiously oriented political party in the republican period (National Order Party – NOP) was allowed to be formed, its approach to the issue of religion was not much different. The religious Nakşibendi Order encouraged the founding of the NOP and played a significant role in the formulation of its world view. The then Sheik of the Nakşibendi Order, Mehmet Zait Kotku, had developed an interest in the political, economic and social problems of the country.

In the 1960s, the Nakşibendi Order had been close to the centre-right Justice Party, which was in government from 1965 until 1971. Towards the end of the 1960s, Kotku came to the conclusion that the Justice Party was unable to solve the problems of the country. He thought that in order to save itself from the situation of being just a market for the Western economies, Turkey had to industrialize while maintaining its indigenous culture.

In the process, the NOP came to adopt a programme which evinced traces of the philosophy to which Türkeş had subscribed. According to the NOP programme, Turkey needed 'persons who had faith'.[11] It was assumed that morality and virtue were the innate characteristics of the Turkish people. There was a need to revive those characteristics. New generations had to be patriotic and self-sacrificing, showing respect for property and (canonically) legitimate profit as well as being equipped with the latest know-how. This would have enabled Turkey to carry the torch in the scientific, technological and civilizational race.

In the 1980s, this particular goal was adopted intact by the National Salvation Party (NSP), the successor party to the NOP, and was referred to as the 'national view' (*Milli Görüş*). According to the 'national view', the state was obliged to prepare the ground for both material and moral development. Moral development was a prerequisite for material development. Moral development would have led to the emergence of a national conscience, that is, the capacity to make great efforts for the benefit of the community at large.

As is apparent, what the NOP-NSP project aimed at had an affinity to the Protestant ethic. Some tenets of Islam, perceived as dormant in the conscience of the people, were going to be revitalized in order to bring about a mental transformation in the community. Islam was to be a means to moral development that, in turn, would have made material

development possible. In this endeavour, Islam was not an end in itself; the idea behind the project was not Islamic fundamentalism.

The theme of moral development resurfaced in the programme of the Welfare Party (WP) of the 1990s, the successor party to the NSP, under the name of 'just order' (*Adil Düzen*). The aim of the WP was a social order that was both *rational* and *just*. Again, the discourse was one that was coloured by Islamic themes, but Islam itself was not an end, rather it was a means to a secular goal of economic development and political stability.

However, when in government, both the NSP and the WP not only tried to engender moral development in Turkey, but they also attempted to Islamize the community and, to some extent, the state. As part of their efforts to Islamize the community and the state (without success), for instance, they tried to turn the (former Byzantine church) Haghia Sofia in Istanbul from a museum to a mosque, make Friday a weekend day, and object to the compulsory eight-year secular education.

As noted, the original impulse behind the founding of a religiously oriented party (NOP) in 1970 was that of fostering moral development. There were several reasons why the political leaders of the successor parties to the NOP diverted from this original aim. One factor was the pressure exerted on the leadership cadres by the more Islamically oriented rank-and-file. Second, a radical Islamic press pushed the leadership cadres of these successor parties to extreme positions. Third, Necmettin Erbakan, who had been the leader of not only the NSP and WP but also of the NOP, pursued a policy of appeasement; he was unwilling to alienate both the orthodox old guard and the radicals within the party for fear of losing votes. Last but not least, the leadership cadres in question felt a sense of frustration because any attempt on their part to carry their parties to the centre of the political spectrum was perceived by the secular establishment (comprising of most of the other political parties, the military, the bulk of the media, and the leading business groups) as no more than *takiyye*, the Islamic strategy of concealing one's true intentions until it is safe to make the final strike.

As a consequence of this shift from the goal of moral development to the practice of attempting to tinker with the secular premises of the republic, the NOP and the WP were closed down by the Constitutional Court, in 1971 and 1997 respectively. The NSP was closed in 1980, along with the other parties, when the military intervened. The military also exerted considerable pressure before the closure of the WP.[12] The successor party to the WP has been the Virtue Party (VP).

With the closure of the WP, Erbakan was also banned from active politics for five years, so the VP was led by Recai Kutan, a moderate Islamist. For instance, he is not against the flourishing of intra-party

democracy in the VP. He is engaged in a balancing act between orthodox and liberal factions within the party. The former was represented by Erbakan and his followers in the party; a reform minded group became the champion of a more liberal line. The former wished to maintain the traditional line the VP had inherited from the former religiously oriented parties; the latter believed in moving the party from its too close attachment to Islam. Erbakan's group had the upper hand. Consequently, this party was also closed by the Constitutional Court (July 2001) on the grounds that it had acted against the secular provisions of the constitution.

It must be noted that, while the post-1970 religiously oriented parties abandoned the original goal of moral development and began to be engaged in (unsuccessful) attempts to alter some of the secular premises of the republic, from the NOP to the VP these parties gradually moved towards the centre of the political spectrum. As compared to the NOP period of 1970–71, in the NSP period of 1973–80 there was a tendency to view the then European Economic Community in a positive light, an inclination to engender reform in some political institutions rather than effect sweeping changes in the constitution, and to act more carefully about what to say, where and when.

In the WP of 1983–97, secular and Islamic world views were seen as compatible for the first time. Secularism was defined as the 'freedom to practice one's religion according to one's beliefs without harassment'.[13] Members of the other parties were criticized as 'imcompetent politicians', not as 'false Muslims'.[14] On party posters one no longer came across the word 'Islam'. Political discourse revolved around 'socio-economic' rather than 'cultural' cleavages'. The party slogans included 'pluralist society', 'basic rights and liberties', 'more democracy', 'privatization', 'decentralization', 'the state in the service of the people, not vice versa', and 'globalization'. On a symbolic but no less significant level, women began to attend the party congresses, though with their hair covered, and men began to wear neckties.

During the VP period (from 1997 to July 2001), secularism was once more defined, this time in an Anglo-American direction: 'religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state while the state will leave religion alone'.[15] Party members were told that politicians were expected to make *policies*, not to deliver *sermons*. Intra-party criticisms started to take place; party members now asked, 'where did we go wrong'? Although it was criticized harshly by orthodox cadres within the party, at party congresses, those other than the incumbent chairperson competed for leadership. Women, including those who not only uncovered their hair but also consumed liquor openly, took their places both in party-controlled municipalities and in Parliament.[16]

The adaptation of the religiously oriented parties to the secular-democratic state in Turkey may gain further momentum in the years to come. Following the closure of the Virtue Party, an institutional split occurred among Islamist political cadres. The Erbakan group – now known as the Traditionalists – formed the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi* – SP), and the more liberal group – the Innovators – led by Tayyip Recep Erdoğan, formed the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP). Erdoğan who, between 1994 and 1998 served as the mayor of Istanbul, leads all the other political leaders in opinion polls. He sees Islam as a means for the moral development of man, but not as the basis of the state. The often used acronym for the name of the party, AK, figuratively means clean. Erdoğan plans to enable the AKP to embrace everybody in Turkey. He is particularly careful to stay away from the Islamic rhetoric of the earlier religiously oriented parties. If the transformation Erdoğan has in mind does take place in the AKP, it would become a democrat Muslim party, not unlike the Christian democratic parties in Europe. However, the secular establishment continues to be suspicious of the religiously oriented parties.

THE MILITARY

It has already been noted that in the republican period the military took power into its own hands three times – in 1960–61, 1971–73 and 1980–83.[17] In addition, in February 1997, through the means of the National Security Council in which it had at the time equal representation with civilians,[18] the military insisted that the coalition government, led by Erbakan as Prime Minister, should take stern measures against the 'rising political Islam' in the country. When the government dug its heels in, the military, in concert with several civil societal groups, increased the pressure on the government, and obliged Erbakan to resign in June 1997.

In the late ninetenth century, thanks to the modern schools opened at the time, the military emerged as the leading Westernizing group in the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, officers played a critical role in putting an end to the absolutist rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). During the ensuing rule of the Committee of Union and Progress (particularly in 1912–18), the military became very much involved in day-to-day politics. The founders of the republic, led by Atatürk, did not look sympathetically at the military's increased political vocation. Particularly after Turkey joined NATO and officers began to have education in the latest military technology, the military too valued professionalism and shunned street politics. They did not

wish to take power into their own hands and run the country indefinitely.

On the other hand, as already noted, their world views and the force of circumstances led them to intervene in politics several times. For them, Westernization meant subscribing to both republicanism and democracy. As supporters of democracy, they believed in the ultimate authority of civilian governments. As republicans, they perceived themselves as the ultimate guardians of the national unity and territorial integrity of the country and, relatedly, of such republican principles as secularism and (cultural) nationalism. In 1960, they intervened because they thought secularism was in danger and Democratic Party rule (1950–60) was on the verge of turning into a single-party authoritarianism. In 1971, they were once more on the political stage because, in their opinion, the armed left-right conflict posed a deadly threat to Turkey. In 1980, when the officers took power into their own hands for the third time, they figured that this time around the threat came from the ethnic uprising of the PKK and political Islam. As noted, in February 1997, the 'increased resurgence of political Islam' led to the clash between the military and the Erbakan-led coalition government.

It is true that from 1960 to the present, the military has continued to play a significant role in Turkish politics. On the other hand, during the four decades in question, military-civilian relations have steadily moved towards liberal democracy. The 1960–61 military intervention was a 'colonels coup'. Following the coup, a group of officers within the ruling National Unity Committee toyed with the idea of the military remaining in power indefinitely in order to undertake some 'structural reforms', particularly in the economy. This group, which was led by Alparslan Türkeş, was in the minority in the committee and was overpowered by the moderates. The 1971–73 and 1980–83 interventions were 'generals coups'; in each case, officers had more limited goals in mind and on each occasion their return to their barracks was smoother and on designated times.

The 1997 initiative was a watershed in military-civilian relations in Turkey. It showed that officers were no longer interested in taking power into their own hands directly. Most importantly, officers had come to the conclusion that military interventions were no cure to the ills of the political system and, moreover, each time the military intervened its prestige was adversely affected. As one member of the five-general junta that carried out the 1980 intervention explained to this author in 1983, the military intervenes, practically everbody is jubilant, at least in some cases the military to a great extent solves the then most pressing problem(s) of the country, it retreats to its own barracks, many start directing harsh attacks at the military, and the politicians revert back to their old ways.

Also, as long-time Westernizers as well as patriotic nationalists, officers have recognized that, at the turn of the century, liberal democracy has become the unquestioned political philosophy in the West, and they therefore came to the conclusion that, to the extent possible in Turkey too, civilian supremacy over the military should be maintained. In their opinion, this became all the more necessary when Turkey was designated as a candidate country for full membership in the European Union.

At the same time, however, officers have continued to think – more often in the past and less so in the post-1997 period – that civilian politicians have at times proved themselves not competent and/or patriotic enough to deal with such critical problems as secularism and ethnic cleavages. This has placed them in a dilemma. On the one hand, an obligation now to steer clear of political involvement; on the other hand, 'their responsibility' for safeguarding the republic against what they thought were deadly threats. In the circumstances, both in the past and more recently, officers have thought that if they were going to exert some influence on politics, this initiatiative should have a *de jure* basis. Here the organic legislation on the military became handy. Indeed, according to Article 35 of the Internal Service Act of the Turkish Armed Forces (enacted in 1961), the 'military is responsible for defending both the Turkish Fatherland and the Turkish Republic as defined by the Constitution'. In addition, Article 85 of the Internal Service Regulations of the Turkish Armed Forces stipulates that the 'Turkish Armed Forces shall defend the country against the *internal* as well as the *external* threats, if necessary by force'.[19]

Since such legislation was not in force when the military intervened in 1960, the military's claim at the time that democracy and secularism were in peril was fortified by a report obtained from a committee of professors of public law from Istanbul and Ankara Universities. The military justified its 1971–73 and 1980–83 interventions with reference to this legislation. Officers argued that, concerning the vital responsibility of protecting the country and the republic, they were directly responsible to the people, giving the impression that on such occasions they thought their ultimate hierarchical superior was the people (because the legislation in question was enacted by the representatives of the people), and not the civilian authority structure.

In the post-1983 period, the military began to act in a more tactful manner. There is still reference to the military's responsibility for safeguarding the republic. However, officers are now careful to fulfil that responsibility by 'going through the channels'. As mentioned in passing, the instrument they now use is the National Security Council (NSC). This Council comprises of the prime minister, deputy prime ministers,

minister of foreign affairs, minister of internal affairs, minister of defence, minister of justice, chief of the general staff, and commanders of the army, navy, air force and gendarmerie. It is chaired by the president of the republic. The council makes recommendations to the Council of Ministers on matters related to threats to the internal and external security of the country. The Council of Ministers is obliged to give top priority to recommnedations made by the NSC. However, final authority rests with the Council of Ministers.

While using the NSC, officers also seem to act from the premise – once stated by Demirel when he was president (1993–2000) – that top commanders in the NSC are not there as the spokespersons of the military but as top experts on the internal and the external security of the country. This is part of the effort not to make it seem as though the military itself is involved in the public decision-making process. Even more significantly, in the 1997 clash between the the military and the Erbakan-led coalition government, the military basically put pressure on government by giving several briefings to the members of such state and semi-state agencies as the judiciary and universities as well as to the mass media and the business circles. In the event, the military acted as a semi-pressure group trying to mobilize public opinion against the government.

POLITICAL PARTY DYNAMICS AND DEMOCRACY

To reiterate, the military is unwilling in principle to be embroiled in civilian politics. If this is the case, why have officers from time to time jumped into the political fray? Did the nature of political party dynamics in Turkey indeed oblige the military to double occasionally as political actors?

Some aspects of Turkish political party dynamics in the multi-party era (1945 to the present) hark back to Ottoman times. In that empire, the basic cleavage in the polity and society was between the centre and periphery. The ruling group in the centre was sharply differentiated from the periphery on a cultural dimension. In the heyday of the empire, circa 1400–1550, most members of the so-called 'ruling institution' – the sultan and his palace officials and those who served in the military and civil service – had weak social links to those in the periphery. The former had a 'high culture', an important dimension of which was orthodox Islam, and they used a stilted language that derived primarily from Persian and Arabic. As such, the language they talked was largely unintelligible to the people. The latter were not citizens, but the subjects of the sultan. Their 'low culture' consisted of folk Islam, and they talked a simple Turkish little affected by loan words from Persian and Arabic. There was thus a great rift between the rulers and the ruled.

In the Ottoman Empire, there were also no social classes with political efficacy. Political power was translated into economic power, and not vice versa. Power struggles took place only at the centre, not at the periphery. For instance, the transition from absolutist rule to constitutional monarchy in 1908 was not a consequence of demands made by a rising social class; it was the upshot of an initiative taken by some members of the military and the civil bureaucracy.

Similarly, the so-called Turkish Revolution of 1923 was brought about by the bureaucratic elite. It did not envisage the transfer of political power from the centre to the periphery. The revolution in question was a cultural one. It took as its target the values of the *ancien regime*.[20] It aimed at creating a new Turk who acted rationally, by not taking his/her cues from an Islam 'that had not kept pace with changing times', but by utilizing his/her own reasoning faculties to the full.

Consequently, during the single-party years of 1923–45, the Republican People's Party acted as the foremost guardian of republican principles, the most important of which was secularism. For the party leaders, acting as the representatives of 'interests' was no more than 'street politics'.

Not unexpectedly, the impetus for the transition to multi-party politics in the mid-1940s came from the centre, and not from the periphery. This time it was President İsmet İnönü who started the process. A splinter group from the RPP formed the Democratic Party. In the late 1940s and 1950s, when the Democrats were in power, the basic conflict between the two parties was about politico-cultural rather than socio-economic issues. The Republicans – in particular İnönü – placed an emphasis on the long-term interests of country, with virtually no attention paid to particularistic interests. The Democrats did virtually the reverse; they tended to place an emphasis on particularistic interests, with virtually no attention paid to the general interest.

This elite conflict on politico-cultural issues – in particular democracy and secularism – at the virtual expense of socio-economic matters, often created a deadlock in the polity. As compared to conflict on socio-economic issues, disagreements on politico-cultural issues were more difficult, if not impossible, to resolve. In the 1950s, the conflict between the opposition RPP and the DP government over secularism and the DP's drift towards authoritarianism led to the 1960–61 military intervention. The upshot of the intervention was political party fragmentation, particularly on the right. In the 1960–80 period, the continuing tense atmosphere between the political parties ended up in ideological polarization and political violence that in turn triggered another military intervention.

Matters were made worse because, as a result of political fragmentation, the country was now to be ruled by coalition governments. Neither left-right cleavage, nor groupings with respect to critical issues, nor, of course, a responsible stance *vis-à-vis* the long-term interests of community, informed coalition formation and maintenance. Uppermost in the minds of the relevant political actors and actresses were short-term political party, if not personal, interests.[21]

Consequently, beginning in the 1950s and becoming more widespread in the later decades, political patronage and clientelism came to have priority over responsive-cum-rational policy-making.[22] Also, hardly having a need for an efficient and effective bureaucracy that would also have contributed to rational policy-making, politicians saw no harm in excessively politicizing the civil service.[23]

The Motherland Party governments of the 1983–87 period, which were led by Turgut Özal, were a partial parenthesis in this evolution. Those governments had a clear-cut economic policy, executed that policy relatively consistently, and created a fairly well-functioning economy bureaucracy.[24] With the return to active political life in 1987 of the pre-1980 political leaders, Turkish political party life reverted back to its old ways. Furthermore, now not only the centre-right but also the centre-left was divided within itself. To make things worse, some of the major parties began to be led by ideal-less and/or simply inept politicians. Some of these politicians were accused of corruption. The re-emergence in 1984 of ethnic terror in the southeast and its acceleration in the ensuing years did not help to improve the situation. These developments were partly responsible for the religiously oriented Welfare Party capturing a plurality of votes in the 1995 general elections, its leader Erbakan becoming Prime Minister in a coalition government, and, as noted, for the showdown between that government and the military in 1997.

In the post-1997 period, the bleak picture presented here began to change considerably. In that period, Turkey was ruled by the coalition government of the centre-left Democratic Left Party of Bülent Ecevit, the centre-right Nationalist Action Party of Devlet Bahçeli, and the centre-right Motherland Party of Mesut Yılmaz. Prime Minister Ecevit and Deputy Prime Minister Bahçeli in particular have displayed moderation as well as firmness in governance, and responsiveness as well as responsibility in politics. As compared to the earlier periods, the military came to have greater trust in the civilian government. The coalition government has adopted an austerity programme and has not reverted back from it. The government's successes on various fronts were capped by Turkey's being designated as a candidate country for full membership in the European Union.

On the other hand, in February 2001, Turkey was hit by one of its worst economic crises. This was coupled by the disclosure of several corruption cases in the banking sector as well as in the government. This has had a tremendously adverse effect on the Ecevit-Bahçeli-Yılmaz coalition government. In fact, party life in Turkey almost faces a crisis of legitimacy. This seems to be one of the reasons why the modernist-Islamist Erdoğan gained in popularity. At the time of writing (September 2001), Turkey was struggling to get over its worst economic woes.

CONCLUSION

Despite the latest economic crisis, Turkey has entered the new millenium with considerable self-confidence and new aspirations. The country has come close to a consensus on its national identity. Apart from some isolated incidents, political Islam no longer poses a threat. Military-civilian relations have consistently developed towards a pattern that one comes across in liberal democracies. In addition, the country has now been governed by a government that is far more stable than the ones it has had since the mid-1980s.

Turks now aim at a unitary state that recognizes the 'other(s)', as long as they do not pose a genuine threat to national unity and the territorial integrity of the country. They long for a marriage between the secularist republic and Islam, in which both partners would have respect for each other. They are hopeful that on the one hand, they would have comptetent governments, and that on the other hand, they would have a military that, even if it perceives civilian governments in unvafourable terms, would not come out of its barracks. The recent developments in Turkey outlined above makes one optimistic about the fulfillment of these aspirations in the forseeable future.

NOTES

1. On the Ottoman period, see, *inter alia*, İnalcık, Halil (1978): *The Ottoman Empire: Conquest, Organization and Economy – Collected Studies*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Stanford J. Shaw (1976 and 1977): *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. See Lewis, Bernard (1961): *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford University Press.
3. İnalcık, Halil (1954): 'The Ottoman Methods of Conquest', *Studia Islamica*, 2, pp.104–29.
4. Heper, Metin (1985): *The State Tradition in Turkey*, Walkington: Eothen, ch.2.
5. Tezcan, Nuran (ed.) (1989): *Atatürk'ün Yazdığı Yurttaşlık Bilgileri* [Notes on Civics by Atatürk], Istanbul, pp.13–26; Sarınay, Yusuf (1990): *Atatürk'ün Millet ve Milliyetçilik*

Anlayışı [Atatürk's Conception of Nation and Nationalism], Ankaraü: Türk Kültürünü Arastimma Enstitüsü, p.50ff.

6. Erdoğan, Günay Göksu (1990): 'The Case of Racism-Turanism: Turkism During the Single-Party Period, 1931–44', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boğaziçi University, pp.98–117.

7. Arai, Masami (1991): *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, Leiden: Brill.

8. Türkeş, Alparslan (1968): *1944 Milliyetçilik Olayı* [The 1944 Event of Nationalism], Istanbul: Hamle, p.13.

9. Türkeş, Alparslan (1996): *Milliyetçilik* [Nationalism], Istanbul: Hamle, p.72.

10. *Hürriyet* (Istanbul daily), 21 June 1996.

11. Sarıbay, Ali Yaşar (1985): *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası: MSP Örnekolayı* [Modernization, Religion and Party Politics in Turkey: A Case Study of the NSP], Istanbul: Alan, pp.103–4.

12. I elaborate this point below.

13. Şen, Serdar (1995): *Refah Partisinin Teori ve Pratiği: Adil Düzen ve Kapitalizm* [The Theory and Praxis of the Welfare Party: The Just Order and Capitalism], Istanbul: Sarmal, pp.121–2.

14. Yalçın, Soner (1999): *Hangi Erbakan: Milli Nizamdan Fazilete* [Which Erbakan? From the National Order Party to the Virtue Party], Istanbul: Su, p.202.

15. *Yeni Yüzyıl* (Istanbul daily), 19 Dec. 1997.

16. On the increased accommodation of religion in secular Turkey, see also Göle, Nilüfer (1997): 'Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites', *Middle East Journal*, 51, pp.46–58; Heper, Metin (1997): 'Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation?', *Middle East Journal*, 51, pp.32–45.

17. My analysis of the military draws heavily upon Heper, Metin and Güney, Aylin (1996): 'The Military and Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic', *Armed Forces and Society*, 22, pp.619–42; and Heper, Metin and Güney, Aylin (2000): 'The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience', *Armed Forces and Society*, 26, pp.635–57.

18. I discuss the composition of the NSC below.

19. My italics.

20. Mardin, Şerif (1971): 'Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2, pp.197–211.

21. Heper, Metin and Başkun, Filia (2001): 'The Politics of Coalition Government in Turkey, 1961–1999: Toward a Paradigmatic Change?', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 7/1–2, pp.68–89.

22. Sunar, İlkay (1990): 'Populism and Patronage: The Demokrat Party and its Legacy in Turkey', *Il Politico*, 60, pp.745–57; Sayarı, Sabri (1977): 'Political Patronage in Turkey', in Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (eds.), *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, Cambridge, MA.: Duckworth; Güneş-Ayata, Ayşe (1994): 'Roots and Trends of Clientelism in Turkey', in Luis Roniger and Ayşe Güneş Ayata (eds.), *Democracy, Clientelism and Civil Society*, Boulder, CO and London: L. Rienner; Heper, Metin and Keyman, Fuat (1998): 'Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34/4, pp.259–77; Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin (2001): 'Turkish Democracy: Patronage versus Governance', *Turkish Studies*, 2/1, pp.54–70.

23. Heper, Metin and Sancar, Selçuk (1998): 'Is Legal-Rational Bureaucracy a Prerequisite for Rational Productive Bureaucracy? The Case of Turkey', *Administration and Society*, 30, pp.143–65.

24. Heper, Metin (1990): 'Motherland Party Governments and Bureaucracy in Turkey, 1983–1988', *Governance*, 2, pp.460–71.