

From Ottoman to Turk

From Ottoman to Turk:

The Transition from Caliphate to Secular Republic in Turkey

By

Qaisar Mohammad

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2019

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-3059-0
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-3059-1

To my family

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express thanks to my teacher and supervisor Dr. Sheikh Jameil Ali who has been very much supportive by his innumerable reviews, recommendations, feedbacks with a higher research aptitude. He played a crucial role in the completion of this task. I am indebted to my instructors including Prof G. N. Khaki, Dr. Afroz Ahmad Bisati, Pir Abdul Rashid and Dr. Pir Sameer Shafi Siddiqui.

My distinct thanks goes to Dr. Inaayat Rasool, Dr. Tauseef Ahmad Parray, Prof. Aadil Amin Kak and Mr. Raouf Rasool who continued to advise on this work. They constantly encouraged me to move further in my studies. I am thankful to Mr Mustafa Julfa who accommodated me in a Dersshane (Nur Study Circle) and provided me with some critical works on Ottoman History.

Without my parents Mr. G.M. Rather and Mrs. Mehmooda and my wife Zaynab, I could not have settled this journey successfully.

I am happy to express my deep gratitude to all of them.

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GLOSSARY

- Adab* - polite code of conduct and taste
- Adalet* - fairness; characteristic of a government that remains within its *hudud*
- Agas* - chief officers of the Janissary troops
- Alayli* - officer who has risen from the ranks
- Alevis* - adherents of a syncretistic form of *Shi'a* Islam
- Alti ok* - 'Six Arrows'; principles of Republican People's Party
- Aman* - safe conduct under Islamic law enabling non-Muslims who are not *Dhimmi*s to reside in Muslim countries
- Askeri* - member of the arms-bearing, tax-exempt, ruling elite of the *Devlet*, consisting of the sultan's servants
- Ayan* - provincial notables
- Bab-i Ali* - 'Sublime Porte' or 'Porte', both the main building housing the Ottoman government and its collective name
- Bayah* - oath of allegiance
- Berat* - document recognizing someone as subject of a foreign power, entitled to *aman casus*
- Bey* - commander
- Damat* - son-in-law, a man who has married into the imperial family
- Devlet* - state (*Ottoman*)
- Devsirmes* - recruitment of Muslim and Christian boys for training in military and civil service of the *Devlet*
- Din* - way of life and code of conduct
- Divan* - imperial council
- Dokuz umde* - 'Nine Principles'; 1923 programme of People's Party
- Enderun* - The Ottoman palace was divided structurally and symbolically between the isolated rear areas, the *harem*, and the Inner Section (*Enderun*), on the one

		hand, and the more accessible Outer section (<i>Birun</i>), on the other.
<i>Evkaf</i>	-	plural of <i>Wakf</i>
<i>Fatwa</i>	-	legal opinion based on <i>Shar'ia</i>
<i>Firmans</i>	-	a royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in Ottoman <i>Devlet</i>
<i>Fitne</i>	-	disorder, rebellion
<i>Ghazi</i>	-	'conquering hero', title for a successful soldier
<i>Hanafi</i>	-	one of the important schools of Islamic Jurisprudence having the largest number of followers among Sunni Muslims
<i>Harbiye</i>	-	military academy
<i>Harem</i>	-	women's quarter in a Muslim household
<i>Hatt-i</i>		
<i>Humayun</i>	-	imperial decree
<i>Hatt-i Sherif</i>	-	see <i>Hatt-i Humayun</i>
<i>Hayduks</i>	-	outlaws
<i>Hudud</i>	-	bounds within which any individual or group had to remain in order not to trespass on others' rights
<i>Hurriyet</i>	-	freedom
<i>Idadiye</i>	-	secondary school for boys
<i>Iltizam</i>	-	tax farming
<i>Imam</i>	-	Muslim prayer leader; also successor to the Prophet recognized by <i>Shi'a</i> Muslims
<i>Iqta</i>	-	a form of administrative grant
<i>Irtica</i>	-	reaction
<i>Jizya</i>	-	poll tax payable by <i>Dhimmis</i>
<i>Kanun</i>	-	see <i>Orf</i>
<i>Kapikulu</i>	-	members of the military and civil bureaucracy, known as the <i>kapikulu</i> , were, as the term suggests, literally regarded as the servants of the sultan. In other words, the sultan had absolute authority over them
<i>Kariye</i>	-	village
<i>Kaymakam</i>	-	governor of a county
<i>Kaza</i>	-	district

<i>Khedive</i>	-	hereditary governor-general of Egypt
<i>Kizilbash</i>	-	<i>Safawi Shi'as</i> with a distinctive red headgear having twelve folds commemorating the twelve <i>Shi'a</i> imams as the distinctive insignia of their followers
<i>Klephts</i>	-	brigand
<i>Mabeyn</i>	-	palace secretariat, apartments between the inner <i>Harem</i> and outer quarters of the Imperial palace where the sultan usually received viziers
<i>Madrasa</i>	-	religious college
<i>Majalla</i>	-	'Law Collection' in the form of a book not in Arabic but in Turkish under the direction of Ahmed Jevdet Pasha (the major pieces of legislation that established the beginnings of a secular court system in the <i>Devlet</i> for the first time - new civil law code based on principles derived from Islamic law, modernized to meet current realities)
<i>Mektep</i>	-	traditional primary school
<i>Mektepli</i>	-	officer who has graduated from military academy
<i>Mihimme</i>		
<i>Defteri</i>	-	registers containing copies of orders addressed by sultans to officials throughout the Ottoman <i>Devlet</i>
<i>Millet</i>	-	nation, community of <i>Dhimmis</i>
<i>Mir</i>	-	prince, specifically in Kurdistan
<i>Miri</i>	-	state-owned real estate
<i>Muhajir</i>	-	emigrant
<i>Muhassil</i>	-	tax collector
<i>Mujaddid</i>	-	renewer of faith
<i>Mutasarrif</i>	-	governor of a county (see also <i>Sanjak</i>)
<i>Mufti</i>	-	expert of religious law, who pronounces <i>fatwas</i>
<i>Mulk</i>	-	privately owned real estate
<i>Mulkiye</i>	-	civil service academy
<i>Nizam-i Jedid</i>	-	reform programme of Selim III ('new order'). Also the name of his new Western-style army
<i>Nizamiye</i>	-	regular army
<i>Orf</i>	-	legislation by sultanic decree

<i>Osmanli</i>	-	<i>Ottoman</i>
<i>Pasha</i>	-	a higher military and political rank
<i>Philiki</i>		
<i>Hetairia</i>	-	a Greek patriotic society founded in Odessa in 1814
<i>Qadi Shar'ia</i>	-	judge
<i>Qadi Sijilleri</i>	-	local court records
<i>Qiyas</i>	-	analogy
<i>Riaya</i>	-	the tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman state
<i>Redif</i>	-	army reserve
<i>Reis-ul-kuttab</i>	-	chief scribe, secretary to the grand vizier
<i>Rushdiye</i>	-	school for boys aged between 10 and 15
<i>Sadr-e azam</i>	-	grand vizier, the sultan's chief minister
<i>Sanjak</i>	-	county scribes administrative corps of Ottoman central government before the transition to a modern bureaucracy
<i>Sarai</i>	-	city
<i>Sarrafs</i>	-	treasurer or paymaster
<i>Serasker</i>	-	commander-in-chief (under the sultan)
<i>Sheikh</i>	-	spiritual master
<i>Seyhulislam</i>		
<i>or</i>		
<i>Sheikh</i>		
<i>al-Islam</i>	-	chief <i>mufti</i> of the <i>Devlet</i>
<i>Shi'a</i>	-	Muslims who only recognize the male descendants of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law and nephew, as legitimate leaders of the Muslim community
<i>Sipahi</i>	-	member of semi-feudal cavalry
<i>Softa</i>	-	student at <i>madrassa</i>
<i>Sultaniye</i>	-	college (lyceum)
<i>Sunni</i>	-	Muslims who recognize the succession to the Prophet as leaders of the Muslim community of elected caliphs. The vast majority of Muslims in the Ottoman <i>Devlet</i>
<i>Shar'ia</i>	-	Islamic canon law

- Tanzimat* - reforms, especially the centralizing and westernizing ones of 1839 C.E. to 1873 C.E.
- Tariqat* - Islamic mystical order or fraternity
- Tekke* - lodge of a *Tarikat*
- Terjume*
- Odasi* - translation office of the Porte (see also *bab-ı Ali*)
- Timar* - fief
- Turbe* - religious shrine, tomb of a Muslim saint
- Turk* - refers to Turkic peoples
- Ulama* - doctors of Islamic law
- Vali* - governor-general of a province (see also *vilayet*)
- Varlık vergisi* - discriminatory wealth tax, imposed during the Second World War
- Vekil* - commissar, minister in the nationalist government between 1920 C.E. and 1923 C.E.
- Vilayet* - province
- Wafd* - delegation
- Wakf* - religious charitable foundation
- Yenicheri* - salaried standing infantry, known in the West as Janissaries
- Zulm* - tyranny, oppression

INTRODUCTION

In Western languages, the Ottoman Empire from the earliest times was called Turkey, a term that the Ottomans never used for themselves. Furthermore, on no occasions, did they use the term ‘Empire’.¹ For the Ottomans, their empire was the ‘Sublime State’ (*Devlet-i Aliyye*), the ‘Well Protected Imperial Domains’ (*Memalik-i Mahruse-i Shahane*), or the ‘Ottoman State’ (*Devlet-i Osmaniyye*). These terms convey the apparent lack of an ethnic element in Ottoman self-perception.² On the other hand, the founding dynasty and the ruling elite during the first century of the empire’s formation was of predominantly *Oghuz*³ Turkish ethnic origin. The Western notion of the ‘Turkishness’ of the empire may be related either to the Turkishness of the founding element or perhaps to the fact that term ‘Turk’ was synonymous for ‘Muslim’ or ‘Islam’ until the nineteenth century. Thus, in this work, instead of the term ‘Empire’, the word ‘*Devlet*’ shall be used for the Ottoman State, for the reason that the Ottomans never called their state an empire but used various expressions to refer to it—all with the word *Devlet* (state).

The story of Ottoman history is a complicated and complex one. It involves not only the Ottoman dynasty itself but also the many peoples who operated and ruled the *Devlet* and were ruled by it—the Turks, the Arabs, the Serbs, the Greeks, the Armenians, the Jews, the Bulgars, the Hungarians, the Albanians, and many others. It constitutes the history of the major religious groups among the subjects, the Muslims, the Jews, and the Christians. It takes into account relations between the Ottomans and their neighbors in Europe and Asia, complicated stories of wars, conquests, diplomacy, and territorial losses that much later were called the ‘Eastern Question’. It includes the history of the political, administrative, and social institutions incorporated into this multinational and multicultural *Devlet*.

¹ Mehmet Maksudoglu, “The Ottoman Socio-Political Entity - Empire or Devlet,” *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol. XVIII, No. 2 (Summer 1995): p. 41.

² Selcuk Aksin Somel, *The A to Z of the Ottoman Empire* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2003), p. lxxxv.

³ For details, see Chapter 1.

There is always the thread of continuity which runs through the history of virtually every nation and there is rarely a total break with the past. Yet it is vital not to lose sight of the turning points. This is particularly true in the case of modern Turkey where there has been a conscious effort to break with the past, especially on the part of the founders of the republic. Atatürk laid stress on the fact that the regime they were creating had nothing in common with the former Ottoman *Devlet* and was a complete break with the corrupt past.⁴

An investigation of modern Turkey's roots, of its political traditions, socio-economic transformations, and cultural heritage, can reasonably start in the early centuries of the Ottoman *Devlet*. The Ottoman *Devlet* had been in retreat since 1699 C.E.⁵ by the peace treaty of Karlowitz.⁶ The external threat posed by its two neighbours, the Habsburg and Tsarist empires, was enlarged by internal apathy. Unruly local governors, seditious preachers and rebellious tribes had been a constant problem since the inception of the state. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this familiar danger was aggravated by the gradual spread of the ideology of nationalism among the sultan's Christian subjects. The intervention of the Christian Great Powers in favour of Greek rebels led to the creation of a small Greek nation-state under European protection in 1830 C.E. This intervention set an example that was followed when Montenegro, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria broke away from the Ottoman dominions. In every case, local rebellion was followed by European intervention. When the Greek nation-state gained its independence it expelled all Muslims from its territory, while elsewhere the loss of Ottoman control was accompanied by mass killings of Muslims and followed by the exodus of many of the survivors of the former 'dominant nation'.⁷ These people sought refuge in remaining Ottoman territories, where they were joined by Muslim refugees fleeing before the inevitable southerly advance of the Tsarist Empire.

⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 1993), p. 3.

⁵ Andrew Mango, "Ataturk", in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Vol. 4: Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Resat Kasaba (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 150.

⁶ By the peace of Karlowitz (1699 C.E.), Hungary becomes part of the Habsburg domain, the Peloponnese to the Venetians, Podolia to the Poles and a year later Asow on the Black Sea to Russia.

⁷ Mango, "Ataturk", p. 150.

The fall of the Ottoman *Devlet* was marked by its territorial decline. The state's weakening, which started in the late seventeenth century, accelerated throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Then, the Ottoman Government (*Bab-i Ali* or Sublime Porte)⁸ lost its Central European territories in the Vojvodina, Hungary, Croatia, and Dalmatia to the Habsburgs, and later, its northern Black Sea and Caucasus possessions to the Russians. These events were followed by the persecution of the Ottoman Muslims in the lost territories.⁹ Respectively, Hungarian and Slavic Muslims in Central Europe, Tatars in the Crimea and the Steppe, Circassians, Abkhazes, Chechens, Daghestanis, and other Turks and Muslims in the northern Caucasus faced extermination by the Habsburgs and the Russians. Those who survived often emigrated to the remaining Ottoman territories. This territorial decline accelerated in the nineteenth century with the emergence of the new Balkan states. The rise of nationalism among the Balkan Christians produced devastating results for the Muslims (and the Jews) on the peninsula because nationalisms in the Balkans, like nationalist movements elsewhere, aimed for homogenous national entities, each "with its own political roof."¹⁰

The Ottoman state, which emerged with its full outlines between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, was an institutional achievement of major dimensions. As builders of a large state, the Ottomans confronted a number of obstacles which earlier Middle Eastern empires had only partly overcome. One major task they faced was to establish effective government in a geographic setting which comprised a large variety of religious communities, ethnic groups and sub-cultures hidden in ecological niches that were difficult of access. The Ottomans had to make nomads and city-dwellers contribute to a common purpose transcending their individual interests; they had to reconcile the requirements of imperial taxation with the autonomy of local magnates, who were often residual elites of earlier independent territories incorporated into the *Devlet*; and they had to find the means of integrating millions of Christians into a Muslim state. In these tasks they seem to have succeeded better than their predecessors, an achievement which was, in great part, due to their ability to build a Sultanic state. They created a class of military and administrative officials whose generous allegiance went to the Ottoman dynasty and sometimes even gave precedence to the state over the dynasty. They established a

⁸ For details on *Bab-i Ali* see Chapter 1.

⁹ Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

network of judicial and administrative positions staffed by district judges (*Qadis*) trained in Muslim law. They planned means of mobilising the land resources of the state, which were now integrated with a system of taxation and with military organisation. They elaborated complex sets of regulations for commerce, and established control over a network of roads linking garrisoned cities. Subject populations such as the Christians, which the Ottomans had incorporated during their drive through the Balkans, were classified by their religious affiliation designated as *Millet*¹¹. The settlement of their civil concerns was delegated to their own ecclesiastical authorities which the government used in order to secure access to their non-Muslim subjects. Having added the Arab lands and Makkah and Madina to the *Devlet* in the sixteenth century, the Ottomans began to see themselves as heirs to the Islamic Caliphate, and the Ottoman sultan assumed the role of protector of the entire Muslim world. In consequence, even though the Turks had been converted to Islam long before and had given a central place to Islamic institutions in their state, religion now acquired a new royal dimension. However, Islam was far from a unitary concern. A central Islamic tradition, which in its essentials showed great similarities, prevailed in cities throughout the Islamic world. But in the wider span of that world, as in many regions in the Ottoman *Devlet* proper, this unity disappeared, and heterodox doctrines, charismatic leaders and cults with deep local roots and only an Islamic appearance became items to reckon with. This religious heterogeneity was a source of deep worry for Ottoman statesmen a pattern which had changed very little even by the twentieth century.¹²

For those at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, politics—as would be expected—was pervasive. Because the rulers of Islamic societies had been designated heads of the community of believers, and because the law of the land in these societies was basically law drawn from the *Qur'an*, the Muslim religious hierarchy did, theoretically, have an organic connection with what may be termed the constitutional law of Islamic states. In the Ottoman *Devlet*, *Ulama* were much more clearly integrated with the apparatus of the state. Through their control of education, of the judiciary and of the administrative network, they acted as agents of the state and thus indirectly ensured the state's control of social life.

¹¹ Nation, community of *Dhimmis*.

¹² Serif Mardin, "Religion and secularism in Turkey", in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, et al. (eds.), Albert Hourani (California: University of California Press, 1993), p. 193.

The Ottoman government was, therefore both Islamic and bureaucratic. It was Islamic in the sense that Islam was the religion of the state and that the sultans' primordial role was that of the leader of the Islamic community; it was bureaucratic in the sense that working for the preservation of the state coloured the practice of Ottoman officials. At times, such as during the seventeenth century, the style of government was more Islamic, but by the middle of the eighteenth century the pendulum had inclined to a more bureaucratic style.

When the Ottoman *Devlet* began to decline, two different perceptions of the causes for this decline emerged among the bureaucrats and the *Ulama*. For the doctors of Islamic law, the reason for the decline was religious; the Ottomans had neglected their duties as Muslims and, therefore they had lost the power, they commanded when their faith had been strong. For the military and central bureaucratic apparatus, the *Devlet* had declined because the machinery of the state had deteriorated. Incompetents had been placed in positions of responsibility; prebends had been distributed to the undeserving; bribery had become a common practice. It will be remembered that a third category of officials also existed: *Ulama* who, by the very nature of the posts they occupied, had acquired a sophisticated knowledge of governmental affairs: these tended to give discreet support to the secular thesis.

To arrest the decline of the *Devlet*, the secular bureaucracy and the military officials undertook reforms which gave highest priority to military reorganisation and the building of a new tax structure which would support it. At the beginning of the *Tanzimat* (reform movement), some of the *Ulama* sided with the reformists, and such an alliance was not unknown even in later years. Two reformist sultans, Selim III (1789 C.E. - 1807 C.E.) and Mahmud II (1807 C.E. - 1839 C.E.), were clearly of the same mould that had established the tradition of practical politics in the bureaucracy. They had little patience with arguments against the partial reform they were undertaking.¹³ Although the body of Ottoman secular bureaucracy had shared the elaboration of policy with the higher *Ulama*, they had long since disagreed with them on a number of issues. Now, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they seized the initiation of change and embarked on a program which had the aim of introducing into Turkey—administrative institutions and economic incentives which European enlightened despotism had used for some time. The changes thus brought about were eventually to undermine completely the prestige

¹³ Ibid., p. 195.

and position of the *Ulama*: progressively eased out of the central processes of decision-making after the middle of the nineteenth century, they were eventually to be denied all but minimal roles in administration, the judiciary and the educational system.¹⁴

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, in theory, the law of the land in the Ottoman *Devlet* was the *Shar'ia*, the religious law based on the *Qur'an*. Verses from the *Qur'an*, the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} and the rationalistic expostulations of the great Muslim jurists were the sources of this law. In fact, bureaucratic practice had created a fund of secular legislation which even the circuit judges—trained as they were in the *madrassa*—had to take into account. This practice predisposed the designers of the reform movement to visualise statutory regulations as the lever which would ensure that their reforms would become part of the law of the state. The *Tanzimat*¹⁵ was, therefore, characterised by a flood of statutes, regulations, ordinances and by-laws.

Like a number of Middle Eastern empires before them, the Ottomans had a system of administration which was two-headed. In one respect it was territorial—the Ottoman *Devlet* was divided into provinces—but in another respect the system was based on religious distinctions. According to this classification, non-Muslims were dealt with on the basis not of ethnicity or language but of their religious link, thus, for instance, one basic Ottoman administrative unit was the Orthodox Church through which Ottomans had access to a large number of their Christian subjects, the state left the internal administration of persons belonging to the Orthodox Church to the Orthodox Patriarchate.¹⁶ Armenian Gregorians and Jews were also governed in their civil affairs by their highest religious dignitaries. In this sense, the Muslim Community too was conceptualised as one unit, even though it incorporated Arabs, Turks, Albanians, Kurds and Circassians.¹⁷

During the nineteenth century, the European great powers increased their influence in a role they had assumed for some time, that of the protectors of the various Christian population, of the Ottoman *Devlet*. This was a political manoeuvre aimed at gaining a foothold on the territory of the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For details, see Chapter 1 and 3.

¹⁶ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 13-14.

¹⁷ Mardin, "Religion and secularism in Turkey", p. 199.

‘Sick man of Europe’. The states who actively partook in this policy were seeking a share in the division of spoils which would follow the sick man’s demise.¹⁸ Beginning with the middle of the nineteenth century, internal developments in the religious communities in the *Devlet* changed the structure of their internal administration. The laity increased its power, and lay assemblies took over many of the functions which till then had devolved upon the ecclesiastical hierarchy. One by one, also, the communities obtained the recognition of their new civil constitutions by the Ottoman state. These communities were granted corporate personality in the law of the *Tanzimat*. The highlighting of community boundaries in this fashion gave a new relief to the religious heterogeneity of the Ottoman *Devlet*. The *Tanzimat* statesmen were expecting that they could arrest this process, which set religious communities in a harder mould and which became the source of ideas demanding separation of these communities from the Ottoman *Devlet*. Indeed some of the states carved from Ottoman territory at the beginning of the nineteenth century such as Greece and Serbia had such antecedents. The very course of ‘community cohesion’ led a number of Ottomans to ponder of their own future in terms of a more unified Muslim community.

We now come upon a third variant of the Muslim attitude towards the decline of the Ottoman *Devlet*. This was the idea that Ottoman Muslims should begin to look after their own interests qua Muslims. Such a procedure might provide the cement that would at least keep the Muslims of the *Devlet* unified; together, Muslims might keep the *Devlet* from further disintegration. By the year 1871 C.E., and the demise of the Grand Vizier Ali Pasha¹⁹, two factions had already formed among statesmen, one supporting the continuation of the institutional modernization of the Ottoman *Devlet* as a means of providing the fidelity of all Ottomans towards an Ottoman state, the second ready to use Islam as a new political formula.

From then on and this is vital for an understanding of Atatürk’s attitude towards Islam—Islam was to be judged by men belonging to either party

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ali Pasha [Mehmet Emin Ali] (1815-1871) entered chancery as apprentice aged 15. Secretary at embassy in Vienna in 1835. Became a protégé of Rashid Pasha. Official translator to the imperial council. Secretary and later ambassador in London (1841). Seven times minister of foreign affairs after 1846. Five times grand vizier after 1852. Worked in tandem with Fuat Pasha on the formulation of the reform programme.

as viable to the extent that it provided an effective political formula, a means of rallying the population of the *Devlet*. Atatürk rejected this choice in the second decade of the twentieth century because he believed that attempts to implement it had proved an illusion. Part of his response had to do with the discord between his own conception of time span and that of the Islamists. He thought in terms of decades Muslim publicists were discerning in terms of millenia. This sensitivity to a time dimension is one of the features of the thinking of his generation which places it in a different category from the reformism of the early *Tanzimat*. What could and what could not be done with Islam as a political formula was demonstrated during the sovereignty of sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876 C.E. - 1909 C.E.).

By the time the truce of Berlin had been signed in 1878 C.E., further territory had been carved away from the Ottoman *Devlet*. In the remaining territories, the Muslims constituted a clearer majority than before. Faced with this demographic pattern and the growing resentment of the Muslim and Christian populations, sultan Abdul Hamid II decided to navigate a middle course among the contending formulas for the *Devlet's* rescue. He continued the work of the *Tanzimat* statesmen for the rationalisation and the modernization of the state apparatus. He lent his backing to the expansion of the system of secular courts and secular education. He left the *madrassa* to stagnate: by the end of his reign they were poorly manned, poorly funded institutions which served as a refuge for draft-dodgers.

In the traditional system, knowledge was a limited thing: the basic outlines of Islamic knowledge had been established once and for all. This stock of knowledge was transferred, like that of a form of artisanship, through a mastery of known techniques. The new knowledge—geography, physics, chemistry, and biology—was an expanding body with its own energy which one had to keep up with in order to be well informed. Techniques for its use were regularly changing. Thus, change came in at the beginning as a datum of Western positive science. In this light, the *Ulama* who had not kept up with the expansion of the intellectual horizons came increasingly to be seen as ignorant impostors rather than as fountains of ancient wisdom. This was one of the reasons which prompted the students into a clear conflict with religion. In the future, references to the need for change and to the way that religion was an impediment to progress was to become a leitmotif in Atatürk's writings.

Another, possibly more important, feature of the new learning was that the book, the classroom and the school now operated as what Irving Goffman

terms a ‘total institution’.²⁰ Each school was a self-contained universe in which students were isolated from Ottoman everyday life. In the training system of the bureau, students had culled their knowledge from actual official transactions. They were immersed in a complex skein of knowledge, practice, intrigue and planning. The new generation of officials was cut off from all this; they were studying principles and laws which were abstractions from reality, and had an artificial internal consistency.

The generation of the 1890s began to think of society in terms of both an abstract model and a blueprint for the future, albeit in the direction of progress. Social projects now became an intellectual exercise. A striking example of the centrality of hypothetical situations and of projects may be seen in a prefiguration of modern Turkey by the Young Turk, Abdullah Jevdet, entitled *A Very Wakeful Sleep*.²¹ While the outline of a new type of social thinking began to emerge with the generation of the 1890s, the generation of the Young Turks, it does not become effective until the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Even then we see the Young Turks impelled to work with the familiar pieces of the Ottoman mosaic: various ethnic and religious groups, and Islam as the thin thread keeping the populations of the Ottoman *Devlet* together. As to the second use of the Islamic formula, its role as a raiser of consciousness, we see them become increasingly skeptical of this approach. It is because of this skepticism that the Young Turks—in keeping with their ‘scientific utopian’ world view—entrusted one of their colleagues, Zia Gokalp, with research carried out to find an alternative formula to Islam. The Young Turks were thereby doing something *Tanzimat* statesmen had never dreamt of: they had initiated a search for a systematic, internally consistent theory of reform.

Zia Gokalp’s investigations made him a focus on two ideas; that of the ‘nation’ and that of ‘civilization’. According to him, ‘Civilization’ consisted of the technological and cultural implements which a number of societies could share. Modern Western Civilization, for instance, marked by industrialisation and a number of new social institutions, was shared by many Western Nations. Nationality was another constituent of the Western system of states, and this Zia Gokalp linked to the concept of culture. A culture was the latent pattern of values, beliefs and institutions which defined a people. Whenever such a people had been incorporated within a

²⁰ Erring Goffman, *Asylums* (London: Pelican Books, 1978), p. 17.

²¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 236.

multi-ethnic, plural state, its values had remained in the background. A modern state was a state which coalesced around one of these peoples and boldly made use of its characteristic institutions. Turks were such a group whose specific cultural values had receded into the background when they had established the Ottoman *Devlet*. As to Islam, Gokalp indicated that a number of items which were accepted as integral aspects of religion—particularly the commands associated with the proper Islamic organisation of society were in fact aspects of Arabic culture which had nothing to do with pristine Islam. Islam, therefore was a religion that demanded of its follower's faith, and it did not confine its followers to any form of social organisation.²² Zia Gokalp's blueprint for the future which never emerged as a completed proposal—was to draw out the latent Turkish culture of the Turkish nation, to establish a Turkish state based on it, to accept Western Civilization and to make Islam a matter of conscience, a private belief. A memorandum Zia Gokalp had written for the Young Turks in 1916 concerning the role of Islam in Turkey was implemented by the Young Turks.²³ It led to the exclusion of the *Sheikh al-Islam*—the highest religious functionary in the Ottoman *Devlet* from the cabinet, the separation of the religious courts from the *Sheikh al-Islamate* and their attachment to the ministry of justice; the placing of the administration of pious foundations under the authority of a member of the Cabinet; and the separation of the *madrasa* from the *Sheikh al-Islamate* and their administration by the ministry of education.²⁴

With the defeat of the Ottoman *Devlet* in the First World War and the loss of the Arab lands, a new situation arose. For all practical purposes Turkey now consisted of the Anatolian peninsula. Part one of the Islamic formula its function as a link between Turks and Arabs—could now be discarded. It is remarkable, however, Mustafa Kemal did not immediately dispose of this formula when he was organising resistance against the terms of the treaty that were about to be imposed on Turkey. During the years when he was leaving this resistance movement, between 1919 and 1922, he was dependent on the sympathies of Muslims outside Turkey, and often used the theme of the unity of Islam. He also made use of it to mobilise the feelings of Anatolian religious notables against an Ottoman administration which continued to function in the capital as a virtual prisoner of the allies. He took advantage of the prestige of the Caliphate at the time when,

²² Mardin, "Religion and secularism in Turkey", p. 208.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 207.

paradoxically—he was about to suppress it. But in both cases he had made up his mind very early concerning the Turkey he visualised in the future.

The sequence of events which eventually led to the secularization of Turkey is well known and does not need to be related here in detail. However, one characteristic of the way in which Mustafa Kemal tackled the issue from the very beginning shows the depth of his political talent and should not be overlooked as a foreshadowing of his policy of secularization. We find this prefiguration of his political genius in his use of the concept of a Grand National Assembly (GNA) as a source of political legitimation for the resistance movement. The Sultan-Caliph was theoretically invested with his power because he was the leader of that Muslim community which held the most effective power in the Muslim world. Since the person occupying the position of Sultan-Caliph was now a prisoner of the Allied forces, he could no longer act as a free agent. The *Millet*, the concept which originally referred to the various religious subdivisions of the *Devlet*, but in this particular case to the Muslim community, would re-establish its sovereign rights as the fountainhead of legitimacy. In fact, since the end of the nineteenth century, *millet* had been used with increasing frequency to translate the word nation. Its meaning was therefore ambiguous. It is as a consequence of this ambiguity that the body which had been assembled in Ankara as a representative assembly, and which had a strong clerical representation in it passed Article I of the Provisional Constitution proposed in 1920 without any objections (20 January 1920). This article stated that sovereignty belonged without reservation to the *millet*. The ambiguity of the term allowed clerics to believe that what had been invoked were the rights of the community whereas for Ataturk it was a preparation for invoking the sovereignty of the nation. The Assembly had accepted their establishment of the primitive rights of the Muslim community, but by the same token it had accepted that the Assembly could legislate in matters both secular and religious in the absence of a Sultan-Caliph. Mustafa Kemal made sure that no one bearing these double attributes would ever emerge again.

From the image of the Sultan-Caliph as a prisoner of the Allies, the Ankara regime moved on to a new constitutional system where temporal power was effectively severed from the Sultanate. This was followed by the abolition of the Sultanate on 1 November 1922, the proclamation of the Republic on 29 October 1923, and finally the momentous laws of 3 March 1924: this series of laws, all passed on the same day, abolished the Caliphate, made all education a monopoly of the state, and abolished the *madrasa* religious affairs and the administration of pious foundations were

thereafter to be directed by directorates attached to the office of the Prime Minister.

To say that Atatürk's policy is better understood when observed against his own background does not minimise this achievement, it enables us to place this accomplishment in the frame of that celebrated meeting of East and West about which so much has been written. The historical context also brings out features which are crucial to an understanding of the future of laicism²⁵ in Turkey. 'Cultural background' or 'historical context' as used here means not only the events of Atatürk's lifetime but the longstanding traditions and institutional arrangements in which he was rooted. It is these which provide the latent guidelines for the structuring of social relations in any society, even though they are also in constant flux. Atatürk's secularising reforms show at least two facts which had antecedents in Ottoman history, namely his opinions as to the functions of religion in society and the methods which he used to translate his ideas into policy. His ideas on religion bore the stamp of the empiricism of Ottoman secular officialdom, and the method that he used to implement his ideas legislation was prefigured by the policies of the nineteenth-century Ottoman modernizing statesmen.

The present work is organized into four chapters. Chapter 1, *'The Last Days of Ottoman Caliphate'* discusses the Ottomans as an inclusive leadership where various religious denominations lived very congenially and peacefully. It will also paint a picture of magnanimous legacy of the Ottomans. Further, the smooth functioning of the state and a specific way of recruiting the army for a regular supply through a system *'Devşirme'* shall be underlined. This will also closely examine the history of the process of modernization or reformation on Western lines in Turkey during the Ottoman Caliphate—the intellectual trend that were started to reform and consolidate the Ottoman *Devlet* finally culminated into the secular republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Chapter 2, *'Religio-Intellectual Trends during the later Ottoman Period'* shall discuss the *Tarikat* structures and their influence on the people. Also, some important ideologies like that of Namik Kemal's, Zia Gokalp and Said Nursi will be highlighted.

Chapter 3, *'Socio-Intellectual Factors responsible for the Change'* will focus on the economic conditions of the declining Ottoman state. It shall also discuss how education was imported from Europe which necessitated

²⁵ Withdrawal of the Clerical Control from the State.

the modernization and secularization in the Ottoman *Devlet*. The efforts of religious people for the revival and restoration of the Caliphate and their failure shall be a point of discussion. Chapter 4, '*Political Factors responsible for the Change*' will highlight the emergence of nationalist tendencies in the Balkan states which had been imported majorly from France as a result of which strong and serious revolts erupted from there. Arabs did not remain aloof in the race of receiving the nationalist wave. The study will also attempt to provide an account of how the concepts of nationalism and population policies entered Ottoman society with the result that ultimately, a small group of Turkish nationalists, the Young Turks, theorized a large-scale nationalist transformation of Ottoman society. This is followed by the main findings and conclusions.

