SECULAR TRENDS AND TURKISH IDENTITY

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THE CONCEPTUAL FRAME

Exploring "Beyond the Green Menace", Espesito (1994) presents a candid picture of contemporary Islam. "Political Islam" as a western attribution, however, is not a well defined concept in the Muslim ethos. For Islam --besides being a world civilisation comprising several cultures-- is politics par excellence. Although many observations in the Espesito essay are relevant for the Muslim world at large, there are no direct references to Turkey, "the only Muslim Democracy" (Lewis 1994). Turkey's omission in this review may appear to be due to the secular history of the young republic. Secularism or laïcité, which has been the main pillar of the Turkish Republic and democracy, may also be treated as the core of ongoing controversies, such as "anti-laïc versus laïc", "sacred versus secular" and more significantly perhaps, as "Muslim versus Turkish -- nationalism." The laïcité principle of the Republic that has so far kept Turkey out of the "Green Menace", may be seen as a tributary -- if not the main-stream - of problems facing Turkish nationhood or identity such as the Turkish Muslim, Muslim Turk and the "Turk-Islam Synthesis" (Güvenç et al. 1991).

While Islamism and laïcism have been competing for the top prize, the Turkish notion of laïcism has gradually transformed itself to a religion like, political ideology. Two cosmologies are hereby treated in a historical-cultural perspective: first, an overview of highlights from the Empire to the Republic; second, a review of secular trends from the Republic to the present. The conclusion is that, as regards the quest for national identity, laïcité may well be an arbiter for the peaceful co-existence of contenders like the Turk and Islam.

Hence the key words of the essay are (1) Turk (Turkish, Turkey) (2) Identity (personal, cultural, national), and (3) Secular(ism) or laïc (ism). A brief annotation of these basic concepts may aid the brevity of discussions that follow.

Turk: Turkish and Turkness

As a noun or adjective, Turk refers to citizens and institutions of the Turkish Republic, founded in 1923. A Turk is one who (a) speaks the Turkish language (Roux 1979) and (b) sees self or ego as a citizen of the Turkish Republic. The multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottomans, also known in the West as the "Turkish Empire", had disowned this ethnic (or nationalistic) identity. Because of the millet (milla) system, Ottomans regarded all Turkish speaking subjects as Muslims. In fact most Turks were Muslims, but all Muslims were not Turks. Furthermore, "Turk" and "Turkmen" were used in a contemptuous sense (Lewis 1961: 333). Hence, Turkish identity or identities (Turkness or Turkishness) as used in this paper, refers to modern Turks' official identity rather than their historical images prevailing in the world today or the Ottoman Turks' denial of their pre-Islamic, pastoral

origins.

Identities and Identification Processes

Identity of an individual or community is used here as a modality of answers given to the question "Who are you?" Most of the answers may be qualified as "personal" choices; the modality of collective identities on the other hand, may be described as either "cultural" (linguistic, ethnic, religious or vocational, i.e. inherited from within), or "national" (regional, official or ideological, i.e., ascribed from without). Affiliation to, or identification with, a social group, whether voluntarily or imposed, deploys the subject against others (the "ego vs autre" structure named by Lévi-Strauss, 1969). While the diversity of identities is often considered as a cultural asset for the "survival of co-existence" – rather than of "the Darwinian fittest" –, the imposition of any one of identities on the society often leads to rejections, rebellions and conflicts. So observed Milan Kundera "What is at hand is man's enigmatic attitude towards his own identity." Though related historically, identities and images are neither congruent nor similar and should be so distinguished. That is, we-Turks' concept of "Turk" is likely to be quite different from external images of it. Moreover, in contrast to individual or personal identities, which readily respond and adapt to circumstantial and temporal changes, modal identities and stereotype images appear stable and durable (Smith 1991:58-59)

Secular or laïque?

Concepts of "secular" (from the Latin secularis) and "lay" (from the French laïque and the Greek laikos) are often treated as synonyms. Etymologically, politically and legally speaking, there are subtle differences. Whereas secularism, originating from the north European (Protestant or Lutheran) countries, signifies the state of being secular or non-religious, an ethical system founded on natural morality as opposed to religious education (Webster's and Cassels's); laïcité, as a distinctly French innovation, contends to insure the freedom of belief and conviction, in addition to secular separation of jurisdictions (Larousse). The laïcité, which has come about by the sharing of Church functions by the State, the French Enlightenment distinguished philosophical, political and juridical implications of the concept. The philosophical laïcité holds that faiths and beliefs should be replaced by rationality; the political laïcité stands for the supremacy of the State power over the religious establishments. The juridical laïcité in this context implies a hands-off accord between the State and Churches and a fair treatment by the State of all religions and denominations. While secularism is based on the Reformation and a formal exclusion of the clergy (klerikos) from the public sphere; the laïcité stands, in a more positive and democratic sense for the enlightenment of laïque (laikos) classes and their participation in public affairs or domain.

Political consequences of laïcité , which was translated by Gökalp as "la-dini" (meaning irreligious or anti-religious), unfortunately survived to the present day. A Turkish MP, for example, seriously proposed the "secularisation of the laïcité " --without realising that laïcité means in fact the reformation of the Orthodox (Sunni) Islam in Turkey. The Turkish modernisation, inspired mainly by the French, has followed the road of laïcité. For the convenience of English readers, however, I am using here secular but meaning laïque.

SECULAR TRENDS FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

The Ottoman Empire was founded as a theocratic state and remained one to the very end. If not a case of 'Oriental Despotism' as seen by the West, it certainly was a 'patrimonial state'. Although

there were always some martial (secular) laws decreed by Sultans, in later stages, this dichotomy increasingly leaned towards the Sharia. The co-existence of the semi-autonomous communities and territories inevitably leads to speculations about whether or not the Ottoman State was in fact a secular one? _nalc_k (1990:5) thinks that state craft and administrative laws were independent from the Sharia. Religious communities, (millets) of the Empire, were under the jurisdiction of their own faiths (churches). The Sultan's supreme authority was confined to his corps of recruited slaves. Though under the Sultan religions and state were not separated, the overriding cosmology gradually became more sacred than martial (Timur 1986:64).

In the year 1770, when the steam engine was becoming the symbol of the British Empire, when the scholars of the French Enlightenment were busy with new editions of the Encyclopaedia, and the German philosopher Kant was probably working on Kritik der reinen Vernunft, a Russian battle fleet, circumnavigating Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, burned the Ottoman Navy lying at anchor in Çe_me Base. In confusion or desperation, the Ottomans protested to Venice—presumably for letting the Russian fleet pass through the Adriatic. In 1771 the first naval engineering school was opened in Istanbul with a scientific curriculum based on geometry. Since then Turkish engineers are known as 'geometricians'. The philosophical and scientific curricula of the Medrese, proposed earlier by Gazali and Ibn Khaldun, had apparently been either discontinued or had since become dysfunctional. Ottoman ulema (Muslim scholars) were members of the military (askeriye) corps and educated in the Medrese, where all Islamic sciences were based on the Koran; scholars either interpreted the Koran or the interpretations thereof. The French Revolution, sending the Christianissimus to the Guillotine, must have alarmed the Ottomans. Sultan Selim III, trying hurriedly to modernise the state, the army and the imperial household, was stopped short and disposed by a conservative plot (1807). The sultan, who dared to say that "prayers cannot buy victories", had underestimated the power and solidarity of vested interests. Except for abolishing the Janissaries Hearth and shunning the Bektashi Order, deemed necessary for the establishment of a new army corps (1826), the Ottoman ulema opposed almost all measures intended for the renovation of the Ottoman house, including two attempts to establish a constitutional monarchy, the first between 1876 and 1878 and the second, 1908 and 1918. Back in 1830, Admiral Halil R_fat Pasha had reported to Sultan Mahmud II that "unless the European [ie. rational and secular] course is adopted right away, there will be no alternative left other than heading back to Asia." The sultan was trying his best for a complete overhaul but progress was slow. On the home front, the Medical School (established in 1827) and the War School (1835) were at first succesful (Palmer 1993: ch. 6). _brahim Hakk_ Erzurumlu's (1835) Marifetname, a book about Divan culture, was printed in Egypt, with the author's reminder that "Any refutation of such views on religious grounds would be a crime committed against the faith itself." In the Turkish edition of the same text (in 1970) this cautionary note was discreetly edited out (Güvenç 1996:198).

When the Gülhane Decree of 1839 guaranteed life, honour and property to all subjects of the Sultan, the Empire did not have sanctions to ensure such guarantees. Under the Sharia, non-Muslims were equitably recognised but not treated equally. Egalitarianism required secular statutes, the making of which was the policy of the Tanzimat period (Findley 1989: 31-39). Berkes (1964) described the disruption of religious identities by secular or national identities as "cultural bifurcation". Responses to the western oriented reforms of the Tanzimat first came from the Young Ottomans, later from the Young Turks. Mustafa Faz_l Pasha, a Young Ottoman, had written to Sultan Abdülaziz—in French—that "Unless separated [ie. secularised] both the State and Islam are likely to fall or fail together." Young Ottomans, however, seeing the Tanzimat as secularisation, ie. a threat to the state,

tried to stop all such attempts and developments (Mardin 1989).

A generation of western educated statesmen, scholars and intellectuals, striving for modernisation, encountered tangible obstacles. Mustafa Re_it Pasha, after duly consulting with the Seikhulislam (the top religious authority) and the Sultan, for example, had to postpone the installation of lightning rods on minarets, to a more opportune time. The breakthrough for a secular state and society came with the General Education Bill (Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi) of 1869. For the first time the state acted decisively—if not swiftly—to establish modern secondary schools for all, including girls, and revise the school curricula by introducing modern maths and natural history (sciences) in Turkish language.

Such reforms, conceived by the Education Minister Saffet Pasha appear to have been supported by _brahim Edhem Pasha (1870), a western-educated engineer with marked secular views. Spirits were high, but the means rather meagre. Once again the Medrese aborted several attempts for the establishment of a university. The secular Galatasaray lycée along with the military, medical and technical schools, generations of Young Turks paved the way for the Turkish Revolution. Sadrazam Küçük Said Pasha speculated in the 1890s that a secular university could perhaps be founded without risking the fate of the Throne. Terakki (Progress), published by the Ottoman Society for Sciences, declared (1869) that

If the long-haired short-minded women appeared inferior to men,
it was due to the lack of education and seclusion from public life.

At the fall of the Empire and the birth of the Republic, a mere ten per cent of men and less than one per cent of women were estimated to be literate. The Tanzimat was no doubt pushing for a secular progress but not for Turkish nationalism. Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha's Turcs ancients et modernes, covering pre-Islamic eras, had limited access or circulation. The minister of military schools, Süleyman Pasha, whose "World History" (Tarih-i Alem) was banned, confided to a colleague that the "Language of the Turkish nation should be Turkish" (Gökalp 1970: 9). Friction and rivalry surged between the western-oriented mektep (school) and the Koran teaching Medrese, and western literature like Milton's Paradise Lost was seized at customs. The historian Akçura (1904), in his epoch-making 'The Three Policies' essay, appearing in the Turk, a journal published in Egypt, had summarily concluded that the Ottomanism of the Tanzimat had failed simply because the independence fury infecting the Christian millets had convinced the statesmen that Muslim and Christian Ottomans could no longer live together. The policy of Islamism followed by the Sultan—though perhaps not impossible—was very difficult indeed (Mardin 1989). Hence the only viable alternative left for the Ottoman Turks to follow was Turkism.

A young officer of the War College, Captain Mustafa Kemal, who apparently knew Akçura's 'Three Policies' essay and the final stage of laïcité reached in France (1905), confided to his friends "Time come, this is exactly what we are going to do." Yet the Young Turks, who succeeded in declaring the Second Me_rutiyet declaration (1908), soon split into Ottomanist and Islamist factions. Akçura's secular or national Turkism did not reach the imperial agenda. While, in the Genç Kalemler "Young Pens", (a modern periodical published by young Turkish writers, intellectuals and poets). Ömer Seyfettin, was inviting his generation of writers to write in folk language (ie. Turkish), a devout Turkish nationalist, Tekinalp (Moiz Kohen, 1912), was reporting in Mercure de France that "Turks are searching for an 'Ame nationale' [national spirit]." Looking for a way out of the impasse, some young poets published Gökalp's famous poem, 'Turan', which in later years became the symbol of

pan-Turkist aspirations. Secular nationalists or Turkists of the 1910s, who belonged to the Türk Ocağ_ (Hearth) and wrote to the Türk Yurdu (Home), never gained a political influence to reckon with (Arai 1985: 197-244). Hence, Tevfik Fikret's call for a secular, humanistic identity in his enlightening poem titled 'Prometheus':

I am I, and you are you
No God nor slave are we

just faded away without tangible effects. In a public debate with Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1972), an ardent Turkish nationalist from Kazan (in Russia), Süleyman Nazif, a prominent Ottoman scholar, proudly declared that (Safa 1981: 24):

I [Nazif] am first an Ottoman, then a Muslim and lastly a Turk. I would consent to my sister's marriage to a non-Turkish Muslim, but never to a non-Muslim Turk.

Gökalp, the chief ideologue of the Young Turks' Union and Progress Party _ttihad ve Terakki, observing that:

While Turkish people were of Shamanistic origins, Medrese scholars were of the Islamic civilisation and Modern (school) graduates of western civilisation,

had resolved that he himself belonged, simultaneously, to the

Turkish nation speaking Turkish,

Muslim community, praying or worshipping in Arabic, and Western civilisation working and communicating in French

Gökalp and Akçura, the two leading proponents of Turkish nationalism, who, in their contributions to Türk Yurdu, had mutually refrained from challenging each other's views, during the decade of the war years (1912-1922 - Ten Year's War) finally appeared in agreement: "the nation [ie. millet] should be the basis of the state" (Georgeon 1986). In retrospect, Gökalp also reflected that prior to the Second Me_rutiyet (1908), there was no Turkish nation because there was no notion of Turk or Turkness in the ethos (Güvenç 1996: 28). Professor Karpat (1970: 56) justly observed that, instead of integrating under one overall concept, Gökalp had merely presented his views with each other.

TRANSITION FROM TURKISH REPUBLIC TO DEMOCRACY

This was the state of affairs when the National Assembly of Representatives convened for the first time (1920) in Ankara, where Mustafa Kemal Pasha proclaimed on a festive poster 'Sovereignty belongs to the People!', by inference, not to God nor to any imperial (human) dynasty!

Early declaration of Res-publica ie. Cumhuriyet was a signal of the Turkish Revolution—without scaring people and provoking premature opposition from the Muslim scholars. An inspection of political events in Table 1 may reveal some of the basic issues underlying or ensuing from the Turkish Revolution:

1) Ottoman (loyalists) versus Turkish (nationalists),

2) Sacred versus secular (in world views or cosmologies),

3) Patrimonial versus Republican—in purposes and policies.

The mainstream of all such conflicts came down to a dichotomy of "Sacred versus Secular". Mustafa Kemal, the moving spirit of the Turkish Revolution, saw the salvation of his "semi-colonised, agrarian" nation in the creation of a new Turkish man, a new Turkish society and a new Turkish culture. Within this trio, each directly acted and depended on others.

That is why, advocates of Turkism were proposing that Turkish nationalism be founded on a cultural and ideological consensus (Tachau 1962: 171-72). How then, was the cultural (Islamic) heritage to be reconciled with the revolutionary (ie. secular) Republic? There appeared, at the outset, two distinct strategies: first, an "Islamic Republic of Turkey"; second, a national culture to sustain the secular republic. Though the first seemed difficult, the second was not easier.

TABLE 1

SECULAR TRENDS IN TURKEY: 1919-1989

1919 War of Independence launched by the war hero Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

1920 Ottoman Empire divided and partitioned by the Treaty of Sèvres.All Kemalist Nationalists condemned to death by the Seikhulislâm.The General Assembly in Ankara declares "Sovereignty belongs to the people"

1922   War of Independence won, the Ottoman dynasty fell and was exiled.

1923   Republic proclaimed and Mustafa Kemal elected the first president.

1924   Caliphate abolished, Caliph exiled, duties delegated to the government.All educational institutions put under the Ministry of Education.Ministry of Pious Foundations, religious courts and titles abolished.Constitution confirms "Islam is the religion of the Turkish Republic".

1926   Islamic Mejelle replaced by a new Civil Code adapted from the Swiss.Public registration of all weddings was required at municipal bureaux.Bill for Peace and Order, Independence Tribunals and Izmir Trials.

1927   President Kemal Atatürk first spoke of secularisation, in Nutuk.

1928   Islam dropped as the state religion, Arabic replaced by Latin alphabet.

1929   Public instruction in Arabic and Persian forbidden.

1932   Secularism accepted as one of the "Six Arrows" of the Republican People's Party.

1937   Turkish Republic declared a secular state by Constitutional amendment.

1938   İsmet İnönü, Atatürk's comrade in arms, elected president (by acclamation).

1940s   Village Institutes and Technical-Vocational Education launched.

1941 Arabic ezan (call to prayer) forbidden, first Village Institutes opened.

1945 Democrat Party born and recognised as a legitimate opposition.

1950s   After the Democrats' landslide victory, the Arabic ezan is legitimised (allowed).Islamic restoration begins with the lifting of 'secular taboos'.

1960 Military intervention by the Armed Forces to save the secular Republic.

1961 Secular foundations of the Turkish Republic confirmed by the new Constitution.

1971 Second intervention by the Army for 'peace and order' in the land.

1973 Problems of Turkey published by the Hearth of Intellectuals (AO).

1980 Third intervention by a junta to save the Kemalist Republic.

1983 'Turk-Islam synthesis' proposal adopted as the National Culture Plan.

1986 National Culture Plan published by SPO, a cover up by the state for an Islamic Restoration.

1989 Article 163 of the Penal Code banning religious parties annulled.

"The foundation of the Turkish Republic was [going to be] culture" declared the leader—not the "obsolete culture" inherited from the Ottomans—but a viable culture to be created anew by the Republic. Not an Ottoman, Islamic, Istanbulian nor Anatolian, but national (ie. secular) Republic of Turkey. The revolutionary Kemal Atatürk (1959) had in mind an unprecedented programme for the total change of culture:

The purpose of our revolution is to render the people of the Turkish Republic a modern and civilised society, in every and proper sense of the words, in substance and form.

Yet the Ottoman constitution (as amended in 1909 and 1921) was not secular. During the War of Independence (1919-22), the governments of the National Assembly in Ankara, appeared formally loyal to the Sultanate and Caliphate in Istanbul. After the final victory over the Greeks (1922), however, the Sultanate was first separated from the caliphate, then abolished. The office of Caliphate, stripped of all its authority, was allowed to stay on. Soon after the proclamation of the Republic, however, with a series of three laws enacted on 3 March 1924, the Republic of Turkey:

1) Abolished the Ministry of Pious Foundations and Religious (Sharia) Courts (Law No. 429/1924)

2) Placed all educational institutions (except Istanbul University) under the Ministry of Education (Unification of Education Act, Law No. 430/1924)

3) Shut down the office of Caliphate and exiled remaining members of the Ottoman Dynasty (Law No. 431/1924).

The rationale of the last act was justified on the grounds that the "Duties of the Caliphate were

already included in the functions and purposes of the Government of the Turkish Republic". In April, 1924 as if seeking a compromise or making peace with the Islamic opposition, the Constitution re-endorsed Islam as "the religion of the Turkish Republic". Constitutionality aside, these three acts lay the secular foundation of the Turkish Republic [Atatürk Research Centre (AAM) 1995]. To prevent the opposition from looking for a refuge, all mystical or Sufi orders (hearths and shrines, except the Bektashi), along with the hierarchical titles associated with them, were abolished (Law 677/1924). The new Civil Code (No. 743/1926) adapted from the Swiss, replacing the Ottoman Mejelle, required all marriages to be registered with the municipal population bureaus. In the Penal Code (No. 765/1926), there were specific articles (173-176) which guaranteed the free exercise of religion (beliefs and practices) and protected the security of the established (ie. secular) order of the Turkish Republic. With Article 163, however, both (a) the founding of Religious Associations based on sacred values, and (b) acts of propaganda using religious symbols or icons, were strictly forbidden and punishable by law.

In Nutuk, the six-day 'Speech' read in 1927 before the Grand National Assembly, the leader pronounced laïcité (secularism) for the first time. After 1928, Islam as the official religion of the Republic was taken out of the Constitution. In 1932, secularism was incorporated into the by-laws of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the secularist Akçura was installed as president of the newly founded Historical Society (TTK). Before the death of President Atatürk, the Turkish Republic was declared, by another amendment to the Constitution, to be a secular state (Law No. 3115/1937). An old dream had finally come true.

Although, from inception to implementation, Turkish secularism guaranteed full freedom of belief, conscience and conviction, the legal divorce from a powerful state machinery was an open blow—if not an offence—to Islam. For, without the state organisation and the Vakıf (pious fundation) revenues, Islam was now helpless. The dream of secularity was fulfilled at the expense of some political drawbacks. The so-called legal restrictions and persecutions of religious practices, however exaggerated as they may appear today, were not totally groundless. Peace and order was maintained by the Peace and Order Bill (Takrir-i Sükun, Law No. 578), Independence Istiklal Tribunals and the famous Izmir Trials, all of 1926 vintage.

As a graduate of the Cumhuriyet Ilkokulu (Republic Primary School), I remember asking our young headmaster (who always wore a bow tie): "Is it true, sir, that there is no God but Nature?" In the true spirit of secularism, the headmaster said, "In years ahead, my boy, you will find out and decide for yourself." If there were a state oppression of Islam, it was not in the public schools. I don't recall any clues as to the origin of the "No God but Nature" whispers going around us; they might be traced to the bitter memories of the Izmir Trials of anti-Kemalist opposition, or severe persecution following the Kubilay lynching (in Menemen, near Izmir, in 1930) and harsh scolding of the devout Muslims demanding back the Arabic ezan (1933).

My generation of the Republic grew up in this secular mode or milieu, without formal indoctrination, either for or against Islam. Such was the climate prevailing in Anatolian towns when the Republic came in touch.

Beyond this boundary lived the eternal peasants, or 75 to 85 per cent of the population (Table 2). During the Second World War, the Turkish Republic launched an 'educational mobilisation programme for social change', better known as the 'Village Institutes'. I remember, too, my high school years in Istanbul when we were all convinced that the Turkish Republic had already become a

modern nation and the poor peasants out there were being educated to join the nation.

The Democratic Party, born as a legitimate heir to revolutionary parents (1945), came to power in May 1950 with the combined support of religious opposition to secularism and the overwhelming peasant majority. (Table 2)

TABLE 2
TURKEY 1945
LANGUAGE, RELIGION, SETTLEMENTS 1

Variables	%		
	%		
	%		
Mother tongue			
	Turkish 88		
	Others 12		
	100		
Religion			
	Islam 98		
	Others 2		
	100		
Settlement			
	Rural 85		
	Urban ** 15		
	100		
Settlement			
	Rural 75		
	Urban * 25		
	100		
Population (averages)			
	Village 413		
	City 10168		
	(inhabitants)		

Population criterion for city : +2000 inhabitants
Population criterion for city : +10.000 inhabitants
Source : State Institute of Statistics (SIS), Population Census, 1965

In June 1950, the Democratic majority cancelled article 526 of the Penal Code, amended in 1941 to prohibit the ezan in Arabic. The rationale for restoring the ezan in Arabic was that "Republicans had misconstrued secularism as restriction of the 'free exercise of religion'". The 'Spirit of 1946', using the motto, "Secularism is not paganism nor atheism", remained in power ever since, except for interim coalition and three interventions or interruptions by the Armed Forces (1960, 1971 and 1980), all on behalf of the secular Republic, entrusted to youth by Atatürk.

The democratic platform rose and rode on a "5-point programme": water, roads, land, credit and the mosque, all for peasants (Frey 1963). Roads allowed the peasant to walk down to discover the city. Land and credit improved the daily and yearly cycle at the homestead. Domes and renovated minarets symbolised the strength of Islam, surviving in the countryside. According to the freelance

writer Peyami Safa, the transition from Republican to democratic Turkey could be seen as either a "counter- revolution" or a "popular restoration" of Islam, eventually leading to the "Turk-Islam synthesis" in the 1980's. Having defended the Turkish Revolution from Gökalp's (1924) foundations to the Democrats' landslide victory in 1950, Safa (1963) suddenly turned against it in his East-West Synthesis. He accounted for this change of heart:

"In the 1930's, under State oppression and the discipline of writing, I had to comply with the revolutionary ideology. Today, however, enjoying the freedom of thought provided and protected by the 1950 Democracy, I do express my true convictions."

During the 1950s, Safa (1963) questioned the "historical and ideological foundations" of the Turkish Revolution, which he had approved of back in the 1930s. Here is a sample of the critical arguments he raised:

• No true progress is possible without some sense of history
• Nationhood is impossible without some philosophers around
• Transition to pluralism is the true criterion of a revolution
• Literacy should be functional (ie. serve a useful purpose)
• Denial of the past may be disastrous for national life.

Lack of philosophy was an Ottoman legacy which could not be blamed on the Republicans alone. Both Gökalp (1970: 186) and the later Eri_irgil (1957) agreed that freedom of scientific enquiry was a prerequisite of philosophy. If science were tolerated then philosophy would follow. After valid observations as above, Safa fully committed himself to the Democrat Party platform:

• After 35 years, we stand neither industrialised nor modernised
• Secularism cannot be a prerequisite to modernisation
• There is no conflict between science (ilim) and religion
• There is no civilisation which is not based on religion
• The Turkish Revolution had no book and the Republicans have no faith
• Revolutions from above lack the support of popular wisdom
• The Turkish Revolution is not the work of a single leader (ie. Atatürk).

This has been the manifesto of popular (Muslim) opposition to secularism in Turkey. Point-blank but not fair! Except for Japan perhaps, no nation, starting from scratch has industrialised in one or two generations. Without secularisation, would not the Turkish Revolution reduce itself to an 'Anachronistic Tanzimat'? The purpose of revolution was not ideology but survival of the nation. To Atatürk, the best defence against western imperialism was western civilisation itself. There has always been an unresolved conflict, between religion based on dogma and faith and science based on doubt and enquiry. A professor of theology, was recently quoted as saying that, "If one believes in God and Creation, one has the right to reject theories contrary to his belief." In this controversy, the State of Tennessee, prohibiting the teaching of the Darwinian theory of evolution in public schools, is often mentioned. Major civilisations, which manifest some kind of a religion, are not necessarily based on them. The guardians of the Turkish Revolution had faith in the virtue of a secular Republic entrusted to them by the founder Atatürk. Surely, the Turkish Revolution was not the work of a single leader but could the role of leadership be denied—in any revolution? If Atatürk has become, as it were, a semi-God, is it not the work of popular fancy filling the vacuum left by Sultan-Caliphs, the 'Shadow of God on Earth'?

'Objective information' about religion and Islam, innovated in the 1950s by Democrats, developed in the 1970s into an Islamic tract in public education. Though Islam has no clergy, vocational schools for training the _mam Hatibs (pastors and preachers), prescribed in the Unification Act of 1924, have already become an Islamic alternative in education, confronting the secular Republic. Their curricula, rubber stamped by the Ministry of Education, is not compatible with the secular ideology of the Republic, to say the least. In overt violation of secularism, the 1982 Constitution went one step further and required compulsory religious (ie. Islamic) instruction in all grades of all schools.

The Hearth of Intellectuals (Aydınlar Ocagı, 1971) taking off from Safa's (1963) apologetic refutation of the Revolution, came up with a proposal for the Turk-Islam Synthesis. Soon after the 1980 intervention by the Armed Forces, the State Planning Organisation (SPO) was commissioned to develop this preliminary design into a National Culture Plan (SPO 1983). It was a comprehensive effort to restore Islam to its pre-republican role and status by de-secularising all educational, cultural, scientific, linguistic and historical institutions. Western powers, which were striving to contain the Soviet Empire, by a 'Green Belt', extending from Turkey to Pakistan, remained conspicuously indifferent and silent about this anti-democratic, anti-secular venture. The National Culture Plan and its implementation in Turkey was justified on a pseudo-scientific assumption that "all cultures have an unalterable, unalienable core which is religion." Güvenç et al. (1991) tried to expose the fallacy of this deceptive premise. After a decade long public debate, a stalemate seemed to have been reached between the secularists and Islamists (Atay 1995). Officially the plan is not in force, but proponents of the idea keep their institutional and official positions. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code, prohibiting revolutionary communism, and article 163 protecting the secular Republic against "political Islam" were dropped from the statutes. The stage was thus readied for a democratic take-over by Islamists. So declared one minister of state (ca. 1990) in charge of the Religious Affairs: "We want no religion bound by politics, but politics at the disposal of religion ... ." Who could ask for more? Was Turkey becoming another Iran or Algiers?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Roots of the Islamic Revival?

Like it or not, there has been a revival of Islam, in the daily cycle of life, in the street and at the polls, and in the who-done-it murders of several secular writers, editors and journalists. Supporters of the movement may not all be 'fundamentalists' but by and large they appear to be of some Islamic affiliation. Here is a sample of reasons advanced by, or on behalf of, them:

• Dissatisfaction with the high cost of an inflationary affluence
• Gradual polarisation in public education, Islamic versus secular
• Gerrymandering after the de-politicisation of rural and most urban areas
• Pronounced anti-Turkism in the West, pushing Turks back towards Islam
• Fellowships to 'Turbaned Warriors' by radical Muslims abroad
• Unemployment without any social security for the majority affected
• Reaction to sub-standard urbanisation and municipal management
• New World Order which offers no accommodation for Turks, etc.

A word or two may now be in order to elaborate the above. In their haste for modernisation, Turks leapt forward perhaps too earnestly: from Renaissance to Reformation (ie. secularism was in fact a reformation), to Enlightenment and urbanisation, all the way to the dolce vita of an anachronical

liberal affluence and 'anything goes' version of post-modernism, well ahead of an industrial infrastructure or productivity capable of sustaining the transition. Investment projects are financed with internal and foreign debts. More than half of budget expenditure goes towards snow-balling interests payments. After the liquidation of Ottoman debts in the 1950s, Turks began borrowing once again from abroad for a living standard well above their own means. Hence, structural problems such as high inflation and income distribution are attributed to the modern (ie. western) lifestyle.

Shorter (1995) projected that the rural/urban ratio, which was seven to three in 1950, will be reversed to three to seven by the year 2000. There is no political panacea known for coping with the problems of urbanisation of this magnitude.

Islamic resistance to secular reforms, which was well under control until 1950, surfaced and has been challenging the secular pillar of the democratic Republic. Despite the Unification of Education Act (1924), still in force and endorsed by Constitutional amendments (1937,1961,1971 and 1982), public education has switched to a dual track (secular and Islamic) system. At the secondary level, hundreds of thousands of youths (boys and girls) are now being initiated—if not indoctrinated—into an Islamist cosmology. Since Islam—unlike Judaism and Christianity—does not allow any clergy, over 90 per cent of the graduates attend secular programmes at a higher level. _nalc_k thinks that the Ottoman Seikhulislam and ulema had constituted a kind of "clerical board of trustees". In the long run, these graduates are expected to have a voice in the state bureaucracy and help restore the Muslim state. Nearly 1500 parochial mosques (four or five a day) are completed every year, but these can employ only a very small fraction of the graduates. Raising public donations for small parochial mosques has become a growing big business that disturbs even the General Directorate of Religious Affairs.

One of the shortcomings of the Turkish Revolution was the absence of a 'conspiring other', an enemy of convenience for readily allying the masses against. Islamic opposition to secularism, on the other hand, remains anti-Kemalist, anti-secular and anti-Republican. According to the main stream of Islamists, 'Sovereignty belongs to God'.

In order to prevent a nation-wide polarisation of the electorate, the military intervention in 1960 tried to de-politicise rural Turkey by banning all political activities below the township level. The 1980 intervention by the Armed Forces, in reaction to urban conflicts between left and right, imposed restrictions on the political participation of all—youth, intellectuals (writers, artists), bureaucrats, professionals, teachers, uniformed or civilian (guardians of the state) and academics, etc. Cutting off access to democratic grassroots, opened the gates to a nation-wide gerrymandering, by means of which nominally conservative (ie. Muslim) townships now have the largest number of seats in parliament (21 per cent). That may be one of the reasons that the parliament, where Islam is well entrenched, seems to have fallen behind the social dynamics.

Republican Turkey always looked West—for democracy. The closer the country moved in this direction, however, the wider yawned the gulf separating her from the contemporary (ie. Eurocentric) world. Assuming once again the role of the 'historical foe' in mythological Evropa, Turks feel that they are being pushed back into the "ante-chamber of European Union", where membership is by invitation, not application. The Turkish ethos, denying this overt rejection as a blow to her imperial pride, looks for and may find face-saving reasons for returning to Islam (Davison 1981).

The Islamic revival to the east and south of the border and petro-dollar-rich peoples, who are not especially happy with the prospects of democratic (secular) developments in Turkey, are believed to be financing the anti-secular factions in Turkey. Let us also recall that western powers, with vested interests in the Middle East, supported all national independence movements in the former Ottoman territories—from Greek to Serbian, the Romanian and Bulgarian, the Albanian, Arabian, Armenian and the Kurdish—but not that of the Turks, who were, alas, "the last nation to be liberated from the Ottoman yoke" (Lewis 1961). Double standards deployed by the western world in relation to the PLO and Kuwait, in Bosnia and Chechnya and in Armenia and Azerbaijan, do not reinforce Turkish trust in the West. Feeling alone and deserted, many Turks tend to listen and respond to calls of solidarity from the 'underprivileged' Islam—the sweet home of malcontent.

The urban way of life, represented by the industrial nations of the western World, was admired by Ottomans and Turks alike, as the citadel of contemporary civilisation. For Ottomans, Istanbul was the symbol of their imperial pride. Today more than half of Turks live in what we call urban settlements. The falling quality of life in modern Turkish cities, including the fabulous Istanbul, leaves so much to be desired, to put it lightly. Presently, globalisation and the global village associated with the free market or privatisation efforts of a parliamentarian democracy, does not have much appeal for the Turks. Thus the 'rhetorical unity of Islam' becomes once again a would-be alternative to secular and democratic diversity. The residual or cumulative effects of all these have contributed to what is today being identified as the Islamic revival in Turkey.

Current Problems and Developments

Local and by-elections recently held in the country came as a relief to social and liberal democratic parties alike. As expected, radical (anti-West) Islamists, appeared like a "house divided". The tide, if not over, seems to be losing initial vigour. On the eve of general elections scheduled for December 24 1995, the Islamists radicals were turning to moderation and conservative democrats to secular toleration. There is yet another sign of hope from the field of education. The sex ratio in public schools, which was used (by geographer Hellings, 1966) as an objective measure of secularism in Turkey, is rising in favour of girls. In the last decade or so, this ratio in secondary education went up from one girl to two boys, to two girls to three boys. Considering and allowing for regional variations of this measure, it can be inferred that in western and coastal Turkey, this ratio is rapidly approaching the ideal one girl to one boy.

Some prominent leaders do mediate by declaring correctly that secularism is not paganism, without saying, however, what in fact secularism is. The head on conflict between secularists and Islamists may also be reduced to alternatives of culture or region. If national identity may, in fact, be equated with language (Braudel's "L'identité, c'est la langue") and if a "Turk is one who speaks Turkish" (as observed by Roux in 1979), then, the centrum of polarities leans towards language and religion (as suggested by Geerz, 1963). In a parallel vein, since Arabic is the language of Koran, the national identity question may avail itself, just as readily, into a dichotomy of Turkish versus Arabic! Here, I think may lie the core of the national identity issue. Enlightened Turks find the integrity of their cultural existence in the Turkish language. Islamists—not all Muslims—however, oppose any resurrection or renaissance of linguistic (ie. cultural) Turkism. From far away, some Arab nationalists are quoted as saying that in order to better appreciate the Koran, Turks should adopt Arabic as their national language. Secular Turks, on the other hand, see their mother tongue as a symbol of their cultural identity and integrity, against intruders from without (Fishman 1973: 79-80).

Prospects Ahead

When I began my research on Turkish identity some ten years ago, I was not fully aware of the complexity of the issues involved. I was hoping, rather naively perhaps, to find a simple solution to the problem. Gellner (1983: 13) helped me realise that "In a traditional milieu, an ideal of a single overriding and cultural identity makes little sense." Resources are lacking. Then I saw the light that diversity, rather than uniformity, may be an asset towards building a democratic society. The intermediary, peaceful solution to the problem is not one but many identities, which will not strive to eliminate one another. Just as secularisation of the state back in the 1930s contributed to Islamic survival and revival, de-secularisation of the state since the early 1990s has awakened the ageing republicans to protest for secularism. They are now rapidly organising themselves into national networks of voluntary associations, like Kemalist Ideology Association (ADD), Support for Contemporary Life Association (ÇYDD), Language Society (DD), etc.

Recent studies from the field suggest that the national identity may finally be coming of age, along with nationhood. Nearly two- thirds of urban households in metropolitan _stanbul now see and identify themselves as Turks (denominations may vary). It may take conservative townsmen and solitary peasants a while longer. Rising educational levels and the socio-economic emancipation and mobility of women may well accelerate this process. The youth facing educational and employment problems cannot afford to worry about such questions. They seem to be more interested in national successes, in sports, arts and music festivals. Public education is shifting from scholastic to social (non-formal) processes—ie. to Media. The young Turks of today learn by trial and some errors and enjoy the freedom to be productive and creative. Rather than expecting everything from the state, they do prefer private and professional careers. This is a transition from a formal citizenship to active membership in civil society. Youngsters shun terror and conflict but do not volunteer to fight it. Following this road is a national challenge that the nation faces at the threshold of the information age.

Squeezing four hundred years of modernisation processes into less than four generations, the Republic of Turkey has made progress towards a modern democratic society, without resorting to a civil war, as was the case with the French, Mexican, Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Iranian revolutions. As a student of Man, I think, rather wishfully perhaps, that if we-Turks can overcome the present convolutions without an upheaval, this may well be our unique contribution and well deserved admission ticket to contemporary civilisation. Towards this goal, multi-culturalism is our asset for "Peace at home and abroad". The vital issue at hand is not religion or nationality, ie. Islam or Turk, but democratic unity in a secular diversity; unity but not uniformity, a unitas multiplex. A democratic society can, and does, in fact accommodate several distinct and rival identities.

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1 Table 2 is a grossly simplified reading of the Turkish social fabric or structure. See Taeshner (1960: 474) for a breakdown of 14 linguistic groups (eg. Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek, Circassian, Armenian, Yiddish, Laz, Georgian, Albanian, Bosnian, Judaeo-Spanish, Tartar and unknowns) by about 10 religious or denominational identities (eg. Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Gregorian, Christians of unknown denominations, Jews, without religion, others and unknown). For a more comprehensive and exhaustive inventory of the ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey see (a) Peter Andrews (1987), who listed some 47 distinct ethnic groups, and (b) Martin van Bruinessen's instructive article (1996: 7-10) entitled, 'Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey', with 14 footnotes.