# **MULTICULTURALISM IN TURKEY**

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#### Creation of the Modern Nation State

The modernization process started taking root in the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century when the Ottoman Empire started to reorganize its army and its bureaucracy to deal with European and Russian military threats. Various "reforms made in the spheres of civilian and military bureaucracy, education, and the judiciary aimed to strengthen the central state and arrest its decline and disintegration while weakening the religious establishment."1) The principle aim was to weaken the influence of the ulama or religious authorities on the state and army. As the army became the main pivot in dealing with state affairs, the ideological disposition of its military elite formed the basis of the modernization process. Ideologically there was no distinction between state and military. Unlike the Western states where modernization was mainly conducted by the elite bourgeois class, the political modernization of Turkey was carried out for the most part by the military leadership. This was mainly because during the late Ottoman period "the local bourgeoisie were unable to establish a hegemonic position, and the rural pre-capitalist dominant classes were likewise unable to alter their subservient status before the state."2) "The virtual absence of aristocratic and bourgeois classes in the Ottoman Empire meant the lack of members of the civil society who were able to transcend their private concern, and to elaborate public opinion on matters of general interest."3) Consequently only the army and the high level elite bureaucrats were in a position to demand and carry out the necessary reforms. This absence of revolutionary social classes motivated the army to act as a reformer and modernizer of the state.

High level military personnel received training in France and Germany and new military academies were established to teach western military techniques and culture to the army. Not only western military techniques but also western ideologies and economic system had a profound impact on the thinking of these military elites. Many of them were "posted to remote assignments in the Balkans or Arabia, where they received painful object lessons in the Empire's military weakness, and where daily contact with the nationalist aspirations of the Empire's non-Turkish subjects reinforced their own nationalist sentiments." "Successive shifts in the Young Turk policies from PanOttomanism to PanIslamism, and finally to PanTurkism, occurred partly as a response to these nationalist movements and partly as a response to the empire's successive territorial losses in the Balkans and the Middle East. "They believed that neither PanOttomanism nor PanIslamism but only Turkish

nationalism could eliminate ethnic conflict or separatist movements.

The French Revolution and its ideologies of secularism and nationalism damaged the Ottoman Empire's unique multi ethnic multi cultural structure. They believed that the multicultural dimension of their society was the main reason for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. "Multiethnicity and multireligiosity were two structural characteristics of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman politics/administration allowed the ethnic, religious and cultural communities of the 'periphery' to be articulated with the centre. This articulation involved neither the maintenance of the autonomous existence of ethnic, religious and cultural 'differences' at the periphery, nor the assimilation of the periphery into the centre through tyrannical rule of the centre over the 'differences' of the periphery."

In particular, positivists or functionalist socialists like Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim influenced Mustafa Kemal and the ruling elites. "The political passivity of most social classes had conditioned these cadres to a 'Jacobinist' reformism. At the same time, there were persistent and unfailing efforts to keep social classes passive." Therefore the Kemalist paradigm focused on unity of language, ethnicity and culture, without any social classes to create a modern, secular nation whose ideals were confined to the territorial limits of the state.

"Kemalist nationalism served the dual function of forging a nation state out of the multiethnic remnants of the Ottoman Empire and combating all claims of disparate ethnic identities." <sup>8)</sup> The Kemalist state based its ideology on ethno-nationalist European thought. The Turkish paradigm denied the presence of different ethnic groups in the country. National unity was strengthened by creating Turkish as an umbrella identity; this perspective ignored the existence of other ethnic groups and their rights in the new republic. "From the mid1920s until the end of the 1980s, the Turkish state 'assumed' that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory.<sup>9)</sup>"

"In the official Turkish assimilation view, the Kurds are of Turkish origin, but they have culturally and linguistically degenerated and now speak a gibberish comprised of Persian, Arabic and Turkish and incapable of expressing sophisticated though." "Turkish opposition to the Kurds was based on the refusal by Ankara to recognize the existence of ethnic minorities within its borders. As a consequence, Ankara refused to consider Kurdish requests for recognition as a national minority or for a degree of regional autonomy." Eastern Turkey's geographical difficulties weakened the socio-economic ties between the Kurdish villages, so that Kurds never had developed national unity, either political or economic. Every small village created its own literature and its own dialects. Feudal and religious identities became more a powerful symbol for Kurdish people. Because of the strong feudal structure and the lack of social or physical movements, Kurdish national identity could not find space to develop itself until the late nineteenth century. "In its

modern form Kurdish nationalism developed during the second half of the nineteenth century along parallel lines with the similar movements of the other subject races of the Ottoman Empire in Asia, the Arabs and the Armenians."<sup>12)</sup> "At all events, history tells of no serious trouble between the Kurds and the Turkish Government until 1826, when the modernizing policy of Sultan Mahmud began to antagonize the feudal chiefs and led to the insurrection of 1830.<sup>13)</sup>"

Minorities did not accept Turkish national identity in the new republic, which emphasized the identity of the nation as Turkish, and this became a major issue between the state and its citizens. Ordinary people felt allegiance either to their local ethnic groups or to the Islamic community, because the Islamic ideology of a universal nation rejected the idea of the nation-state. Each ethnic or religious group had social, political, economic, and cultural functions, with its own social and political ideology. Despite Kemalist ideology, "local leaders had secured the allegiance of individuals in their communities as the representatives of religious and cultural values, most of which had stemmed from the universalist dogma of Islam. They spoke on behalf of the universal nation, the Muslim "umma" based on religious unity." 14) Therefore dogmatic Islam and feudal ethnic groups were seen as ideological threats to the new republic by the ruling elites. "Mustafa Kemal believed that the transformation of Turkey from an Islamic state in to secular republic was essential to the process of modernization." <sup>15)</sup> Control of Islam became the main vehicle through which the state reshaped modernity in line with the ideology of the market, while also resolving the problem of legitimacy. Thus, in order to promote national culture, strengthen unity, bring the different ethnic minorities into the mainstream, and pave the way for the market economy that was to be created, the government sought to bring religion which was seen as a threat to the secularization and modernization process under state control. And in its campaign to achieve cultural homogenization and secularization, the Kemalist ruling elite also sought various ways to mitigate the possibility of future social unrest caused by ethnic and sectarian strife between Turks and Kurds and between the majority Sunnis and minority Alevis. With western positivism, "secularism became entangled with the definition of the nation as a homogeneous, uni-ethnic (Turkish), uni-linguistic (Turkish), and uni-secterian (Sunni) entity."16)

To create the modern secular nation-state, the religious *shariah* law was replaced by the new constitution which was influenced by French and Italian law. A new education system focused on the Anatolian civilizations "pre-Islamic, pre-Ottoman Turkish era" to reduce to influence of Islam and Ottomanism. It is with this ideological view that Mustafa Kemal abolished the Sultanate, Caliphate, other forms of religious authority and religious law. "In 1928, the second article of the 1924 constitution, which designated Islam as the state religion, was annulled, and the principle of secularism was inserted into the constitution in 1937." The Kemalist strategy was not to put repress Islam, but to control Islamic movements and thought by bringing it under state control in order to establish the state's own social, political and economic paradigm. "In spite of the state led

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secularization policy, Islam has remained a depository for regulating day today social life for *the* masses Secularization imposed from above alienated Turkish society from the state.<sup>18)</sup>"

These positivist reforms were too remote from public needs to satisfy public expectations. Most of these reforms came from the ruling elite and ignored the reality of the social and economic structure. By denying the existence of ethnic minorities within Turkey's borders, assimilation policies and lack of religious freedom caused social unrest and conflicts between state and public. This had a profound impact on political and social stability and the process of democratization and secularization of the country.

The first revolt against the Kemalist secular nation-state came from Eastern Anatolia, triggered by religious and ethnic diversity coupled with a high rate of poverty. "In 1925, Sheikh Said of Piran, assisted by tribal elements from Syria, led a revolt in Eastern and Southern Turkey." "Sheikh Said, revolted in 1925 in the name of the caliph and against the reformist regime in Ankara which was dedicated to uprooting the traditional power system in the country." Prof. Yegen argued that Sheikh Said insurrection was a revolt against the processes of the centralization of the power in the Turkish Republic. He argued that "Kurds had almost always enjoyed some autonomy in the Ottoman political structure. This prevented the full integration of Kurdish regions into the centre. The removal of the Caliphate by the Ankara government in 1924 radicalized the question of the lack of integration between the Kurds and the central power.<sup>21)</sup>"

Said's revolt was not a Kurdish nationalist uprising; Sheikh Said's support was based on tribal and religious allegiance. But this uprising influenced later Kurdish Nationalist movements. In 1927, other bloody Kurdish revolts began in Eastern Turkey which shared a border with Iran and the Soviet Union.

The Kemalist state saw this uprising as an attempt to create a Kurdish state within its territory. "The revolt was ruthlessly suppressed by the state, underlining the centrality of the use of coercion in Turkish policy on the Kurdish issue."<sup>22)</sup> Since then the Kurdish independence movements have become the biggest threat to the integrity of the new republic.

After the 1927 revolt, Turkish government and Turkish military strictly controlled Kurdish towns. The Kurdish language and folklore was forbidden. Turkish policy-makers believed that keeping the Kurdish area underdeveloped would keep the government on good terms with the Kurdish tribal leaders and landlords in power. They also believed that the containment of Kurdish nationalism would keep the region under state control and that this state of underdevelopment would force Kurdish people to migrate to more prosperous regions in western Turkey and assimilate with the Turkish population. In 1937, the Turkish Parliament passed a new law aimed at the assimilation of

the Kurdish population in eastern Turkey. This new policy of assimilation was mainly designed to change the demography of eastern Turkey through the migration of a large part of the Kurdish population to the western Turkey and by the settlement of Turkish immigrants from Balkans and Kafkasya to the eastern Turkey.

# Economic Policies and Reforms in the Early Period of the New Republic

After the creation of the Turkish Republic, the first priority of the new government was a development strategy to improve living standards in the country. The ruling class under the leadership of the military believed that modernization could be achieved successfully through economic reforms. As mentioned earlier, Soviet and French models influenced Kemalist ideology. "From the Soviets, it adopted in its early decades an authoritarian single party rule and a state economy. From the French, a strict secularism and the concept of a centralized nation state wherein citizenship was based on the rights of the individual rather than on ethnic or religious identity."<sup>23)</sup>

For Kemalism, "westernization meant not merely aping the west by adopting superficial reforms, but adopting its economic structure, capitalism"<sup>24)</sup> and the political structure of the nation state. Mustafa Kemal and his military and bureaucratic elites believed that one of the main reasons behind the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was its weak economy. At the Izmir Congress in 1923, the first year that a development strategy was discussed, the main view was that European Liberalism should be chosen as a development model instead of state intervention. The state needed to promote the social and economic reforms necessary to adapt the liberal model to Turkey.

But early economic crises showed that the Kemalist State was not prepared to follow the liberal development model in its early years, because the positivist reforms which aimed to create a capitalist economy in Turkey were not compatible with the Turkish economic system. The mode of production was different from European feudalism, and the capitulations system in the Ottoman Empire could not generate a Turkish bourgeoisie able to bring about capitalism. The capitulations system, and the free trade treaties between France and the Ottoman Empire, which were then extended to other European powers, was the first contacts between the Anatolian economy and European capitalism. With German capital, the first railroad was built from Istanbul to Baghdad, and Ottoman agricultural products began to be exported through Europe. Most importantly, western industrial products also entered the country without any restrictions.

Economic relations with western capitalism changed the socio-economic structure of the Empire. "Historically trade and commerce had been in the hands of non-Turkish ethnic groups, which had played the role of intermediary in the European capitalist penetration into the economy of the

Ottoman Empire under the age-old system of Capitulations."<sup>25)</sup> Almost 80 percent of commercial and financial activities were controlled by the Greek and Armenian ethnic groups. On the other hand, the Turkish majority lived in the village as peasants.

Consequently; under the capitulations, cheap European industrial goods import destroyed traditional industrial activity in Anatolia. "After the destruction of traditional manufacturing, modern industry could only be transplanted by wholesale importation of plant and technology from abroad." On the other hand, during and after the First World War, most of the non-Muslim ethnic groups, including Armenian, Greeks and other foreigner investors, lost their economic power and were forced to leave the country. Therefore during its final decades, the Ottoman Empire had neither the capital, nor a capitalist class nor the industrial structure necessary to accept capitalism as an economic system.

The new state wanted Turks to replace the non-Muslims economic powers in order for its nationalistic economic reconstruction program to succeed. In the new Turkish republic, founded after the anti-imperialist war of independence, therefore, Kemalist ideology was built on the principle of self-reliance. In early years of the republic, almost all foreign investments and companies were nationalized and further foreign investments were limited under the Kemalist development strategy. This self-reliance strategy also aimed to create a Turkish bourgeoisie.

Big landlords and some small entrepreneurs who had strong connections with the bureaucrats become the bourgeois class in Turkey through strong financial support from the government. To help the new Turkish enterprises to access the necessary investment capital, Kemalist bureaucrats established several bank and credit institutions. The State gave many benefits to the bourgeoisie such as monopoly of import licenses, cheap loans from state banks, and low taxation. Removing the benefit of the capitulations from the foreign minorities slowed the tempo of Turkish economic development. And without strong bourgeois and worker classes, the liberal economic model was not able to create a strong economy.

The unsuccessful first five year development plan and Great Depression witnessed the collapse of the liberal economic model. The loss of confidence in the classical capitalist model and the lack of private capital made it more likely that state-controlled industrialization would become dominant. But most importantly given the success of the Soviet and Italian development models, Kemalist bureaucrats decided to participate and plan the economy both as entrepreneurs and rulers. "Etatism did not constitute a far flung attempt at ideological chance, but represented a pragmatic response, both to the problems created by the world depression and to the more general issue of economic development, which consisted in lifting the Turkish people toward Western civilized standards."<sup>27)</sup>

In its ideology, étatism shared similarities with the Kemalist social paradigm. Étatist ideology stressed two themes, "nationalism, and a view of the state above and outside the social classes of civil society."<sup>28)</sup>

In its early years, the first aim of the Kemalist state was to survive rather than create a modern secular nation state. "Kemalism helped liberal tendencies disappear, and imposed on Turkey a rather closed bureaucratic state until, after the Second World War, when Turkey turned to liberal and democratic politics. This important development tended, however, to lead to a party dominated polity (to the discomfiture of the bureaucracy) rather than to a true democracy."<sup>29)</sup>

## The modern multiple party system.

The democratization process in Europe after the end of the Second World War put enormous pressure on the authoritarian government of Turkey to liberalize its political policies by allowing other parties to participate in political affairs of Turkey. The RPP (Republic People Party) could not withstand the political and economic pressure any longer: it recognized the founding of other political parties and created a multiple party system. First, the Democrat Party was founded by some dissidents from the RPP who had strong support amongst the big landlords and religious officials.

In the first democratic election, the Democrat Party won a majority in the Parliament. The party won overwhelming support from the bourgeoisie, large landlords and religious groups. Though ideologically an upper-class party, the Democrat Party gained strong support from poor peasants as well. This phenomenon was the consequence of the RPP's policy of isolating itself from the peasantry. The Kemalist elite found its support in the cities and in the process they alienated the peasantry. The peasantry was marginalized from mainstream politics and was unable to play any significant role in political and economic policies until the Democrat Party government was formed. The new party provided a political platform to the peasantry to raise their voices and express their conservative political views. On the other hand, although the RPP banned all the religious groups, socio-economic opposition to Kemalist paradigm gave a great opportunity to Islamic groups, "tarikats", to gain massive support from the public which had been hit by the economic crisis, by stressing the importance of morals and virtue, and by attacking communism and capitalism. The Muslims therefore were still able to mobilize large numbers of people in the villages to vote against the RPP government.

To maintain their political hold on the conservative villages, the large landlords and new bourgeoisie, the new Democrat Party government lifted the ban on religious groups and on the activities of various ethnic groups which had been enforced by the Kemalist ruling elites during the early years of the republic in their attempts to create a modern secular Nation. On the other hand, the Democrat Party government started clamping down on leftist workers, students, and civil society groups demanding greater democracy. The anti-democratic and anti-Kemalist policies of the DP government increased the tension between the DP and the Kemalist elite which had strong support from students and workers.

The anti-democratic policies of the DP government encouraged growing demands for political freedom, greater economic development and social justice. These came not only from lower-class urban groups and the intelligentsia, but also from the peasants who saw hoped for real economic and political liberation. "The growing strength of the fascist movement and the inability of the left to unify and lead the opposition forces — workers, poor, peasants, and some segments of the urban petty bourgeoisie — had been accompanied by an intensification of political violence." "Due to ideological differences between the Democrat Party and Kemalist ruling elites, Turkey found itself engulfed in group conflicts and power politics. The rise of civilian elite groups and their clash with the statist-bureaucratic elites, including the military, was a crucial landmark in the history of Turkey, not only in precipitating the revolution of 1960, but also in bringing about a new political structure." 31)

# 1960 Military Coup and the new constitution of 1961,

The Prime Minister Adnan Menderes of the Democratic Party was overthrown and hanged with his ministers of finance and foreign affairs in the Military coup of 1960. The army's top generals governed the country until the national election. "The new constitution of 1961 incorporated measures of liberal democracy and political pluralism in reaction to the policies of the DP, which had turned increasingly authoritarian." The new constitution and its new revolutionary perspective reshaped the socio-economic structure. Students and organized workers became more active in politics. First, the Socialist Party, the "Turkish Worker Party", the ultra nationalist "Nationalist Action Party" and Islamist Parties were established during this era. Second, the Republic People Party moved from its ideological orientation from centrist to center left and tried to follow social democratic ideas. Organized workers and leftist students became more influential in the decision making progress in the RPP. Prof Karpat explains this development in this way:

"The Political unrest in Turkey is caused on the one hand by the breakdown of narrow traditional forms of organization and values and on the other hand by a pressing need to reorganize the society and its economy into modern, broader social and political units suitable to the requirements of a national state. This entails a process of social and political adaptation and integration, as well as a change of political philosophy. The government is compelled to come closer to and normalize its relation with the society and individual, whereas local communities

must accept broader political allegiances". 34)

The revolution of 1960, and the forceful assumption of power by the military, divested the concept of authority of its moralistic, traditionalist cloak and plunged Turkey into the age of group conflicts and power politics.<sup>35)</sup>

"Between 1960 and 1981 there were three "successful" military takeovers in Turkey, and three other attempts failed.<sup>36</sup>" "The events leading to each of them were characterized by sociopolitical unrest and economic crises that intensified with each successive post-coup period.<sup>37</sup>"

Turkish democracy tried to survive after the military coups of the 1960s and 1970s. Although they aimed to bring about political and economic stability, those two military coups brought political uncertainty and created chaos and bloodshed in the country. At the end of the 1970s, "Turkish society was shattered by ideological polarization and strife-ridden communal violence.<sup>38)</sup>" the country was gripped by an ethnic, religious and politically motivated civil war.

Leftist workers and student movements became involved in bloody conflict with Fascist paramilitary groups. In Eastern Turkey, the central government had already lost control to Kurdish guerrillas. In central Turkey, radical Islamist groups augmented their influence and started arm resistance against the secular state and against the Alevies. Because of the Sunni discrimination against the Alevies and Alevi thought, most of the Alevies supported to radical left movements during the 1970s. Therefore the fascist and religious extreme right considered Alevies as their biggest enemy. In addition, a secret service counter-guerrilla organization was secretly founded by the Turkish army and CIA under the name of the "Special Action Bureau" to create terror and chaos in order to create a larger role for the military in handling the social upheavals. It was also hoped that it would create an environment for the acceptance of military rule amongst the masses.

The weak coalition government failed to create any policy to find a solution to the economic crises or to stop the civil war. In this political and economical chaos, the military took over the government. The military came to power to put an end to class conflicts by repressing the "already activated" popular sectors. Thus, after seizing power, the military established a highly repressive and technocratic regime through alliances with the technocracy and the capitalist class. This authoritarian military regime "combined a market oriented economic system with a kind of potential paternalistic authoritarianism that persuades rather than coerces. The resulting regime was economically liberal but politically quasi authoritarian." After the military coup, Turkey signed an agreement with the IMF accepted its conditions for help and accepted neo-liberal economic policy as an economic model. Soon after the coup, Turkey started receiving economic aid from the western bloc.

"They replaced the 1961 Constitution with an authoritarian document that gave the state extensive powers to achieve social and political order.<sup>40</sup>" The 1980s military regime blamed the left and leftist unions for politicizing the country. The freedom granted by the 1960s constitution to political parties was curtailed and the press censored. Over 100,000 people were arrested, and martial law imposed all over the country. The military junta put heavy pressure on organized labor by closing left wing unions and confederations and establishing a tight control over the friendlier right wing government unions. The military junta's neo-liberal ideology also found in Kemalist ideology, which denied the existence of class struggle and professed the common interest of all classes, the ideological base to eliminate organized labor.

The military coup succeeded because "after the chaos and civil war peoples rarely question the legitimacy of the military junta, nor do they understand the real reason behind the regime change. Besides through political instability, pessimism and economic failure, people are generally made to accept and obey military roles"<sup>41)</sup>

Western countries supported the military junta because the 12 September, 1980 military coup was created and supported by the U.S. government to integrate Turkey within the world market. They believed that authoritarian military regimes were better able to follow neo liberal economic policies and open up Turkey's economic wealth to the western powers.

Today when we look back to understand the main political and economic factors, the aim of the September 12 military coup was to transform the Turkish economy into a free market economy and to open the economy for international corporations.

# The New State Paradigm after the 12 September Coup: The Turkish Islamic Synthesis.

"The military government obviously preferred to employ religious sentiment and traditional allegiances, rather than the principles of participatory democracy, to achieve political stability and national unity.<sup>42</sup>" "Military government was particularly adept at using Islam to rationalize this new program of restructuring the Turkish political system on more authoritarian principles."<sup>43</sup>

"The Turkish Islamic synthesis with its emphasis on authoritarian politics and social control through the use of cultural and religious motives was the perfect ideology for Turkish decision makers expecting a protracted period of social and economic dislocation." The aspiration was not to create an Islamic state derived from religious law, but to identify individuals who were immune to appeals from the left and also do not threaten the secular basis of republic. "The Islamic unima, a community of believers who are united by the same faith, seems to have set the model for a new

sense of community which can consolidate social unity and solidarity and thereby eliminate the conflicts of opposing ideologies.<sup>45)</sup>" Islam was incorporated into official state ideology to arrest politicization among the people who would be affected by the transformation of the social and economic systems. "They hoped to create a more homogeneous and less political Islamic community. Islam offered a way to reduce or even eliminate the cultural differences that led to the polarization of Turkish society.<sup>46)</sup>" But on the other hand Turkish Islamic synthesis "ignored the multicultural character of Turkish society, where Kurds, Alevis, and other ethno-cultural communities exist. Instead, it imposed its own singular meaning on symbols and historical events to promote a state centered Turkish-Islamic consciousness.<sup>47)</sup>"

Another political reason for adapting Islam to the state's ideology was the Cold War era ideological conflict between the capitalist and socialist blocs. The strategy known as "green belt" behind the military support of the Islamist movements in Turkey was designed by U.S. policy makers to halt the southward Soviet expansion and to combat radical Islamic power in Iran and other Muslim countries. "The basics of such an approach were laid out in a 1983 Heritage Foundation report which saw merit in preserving a protective Islamic belt such as had for several centuries functioned as the front line between the Russian and British Empires spheres of influence in Asia and had been a permanent element of US policy after WW2."48)

Because of this ideological pragmatism, the state opened new religious schools and gave massive economical and political support to *tarikats*, or religious sectarian groups. "It was under the military-dominated National Security Council between 1980-83 that the Islamists achieved their greatest influence within these state apparatuses specializing in the administration and ideology."<sup>49)</sup>

The Islamist Refah, "Welfare Party", was founded in 1983 and since then increased its support among the Turkish and also Kurdish people. "Economic liberalization and greater international integration have fueled the Islamic movement because of the structural and most important of all, cultural dislocations they have created." Today Refah is the biggest party in Turkey,

Refah rejects the Kurdish and Turkish nationalism and emphasizes Ottoman thought which supports the unity between Turkish and Kurdish and other ethnic minority on the basis of Islam. "With its use of Islamic idioms and symbols the WP provides a forum within which diverse ethnic and regional identities can flourish and coexist.<sup>51</sup>)"

At the end of this ideological transformation, the ruling elites created Political Islam as a new threat to the Turkish Republic. Prof. Haldun Gunalp argued that "Islamism originates from the failure of the nationalist promises of economic and social progress. It purports to reject nationalism and asserts the superiority of Islamic over Western values. Historically, the primary project of

nationalism was to replicate Western socioeconomic models of development, while at the same time rejecting Western hegemony."52)

#### Kurdish Nationalism.

The military pressure on the region, "Improved educational opportunities, the gradual integration of the region into the Turkish economy and resulting labor migration from east to west led to the rapid emergence, beginning in the late 1960's and early 1970s, of a broadly based Kurdish national movement." <sup>53)</sup>

Kurdish immigrant in the western Turkey created their own communities and maintained their traditional life style. Therefore integration of the new immigrant to the system was no longer being easy as before. Most of the young well educated immigrants became politically active and started to discus the underdevelopment of the Eastern Anatolia and the Kurdish issue. The first organized themselves within the Turkish radical left mostly in Istanbul and Ankara. The Kurdistan Workers Party "PKK" was founded by Kurdish and Turkish extremist left wing students in universities in Ankara, the Turkish capital, where an active leftist student movement operated in the late 1970s. Ideologically, the PKK emphasized Kurdish nationalism using a Marxist Leninist revolutionary model.

Kurdish nationalists saw a casual connection between the underdevelopment of the eastern provinces and the fact that they are largely inhabited by Kurds. They regarded this underdevelopment as a result, at least in part, of Turkish government policies which purposely ignored the development needs of the eastern provinces out of fear that economic and educational progress might rekindle the Kurds nationalist demands.<sup>54)</sup>

Lack of real economic development in the Kurdish region and 1980s military junta's brutal tactics created an environment more sympathy for the PKK within the Kurdish people. The military Junta maintained a martial law regime in the Kurdish populated cities in the eastern part of the county. The military junta of 1980s and its new constitution aimed to assimilate the Kurdish population by prohibiting the use of the Kurdish language. The Kurdish press was closed entirely, and usage of the Kurdish language in the media was banned. All books, movies, and music albums were destroyed, and the names of the Kurdish villages were changed.

The founder of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, left for Syria then Lebanon to initiate a guerilla war against the Turkish State and the feudal Kurdish lords of Eastern Anatolia. The PKK targeted not only the Turkish military and establishments such as schools, factories, railroads etc., but also Kurdish civilians who had strong political and military relations with the Turkish state as well as

other Kurdish opponents of the PKK movement. "The village guards were composed of Kurdish tribal groups that were opposed to the PKK and were employed, paid, and sustained by Ankara." <sup>55)</sup>

In the southeast part of the country, economic incentives to migrate were supplanted by the Turkish army's "scorched earth" campaign to uproot a 12 year old armed insurgency. By July 1995, this campaign had leveled an estimated 2600 villages and hamlets and at least two million had to flee their homes. <sup>56)</sup>

The PKK's military capacities weakened during the major Turkish military offense inside Turkey and Northern Iraq, and also its political influence in the major Kurdish cities declined. Furthermore, "in several of the districts where the PKK had previously been active, it had alienated the majority of the local population because of its uncompromising attitudes and its violence,"<sup>57)</sup>

On the other hand, the Turkish oligarchy saw that the Kurdish war could not continue without provoking a militarization of the economy as a whole. They believed "Turkey today stands at a crossroads between the path of a greater and more intense cycle of coercion and the path of integrating Kurdish radicalism into the political system through appropriate administrative and political structures." Therefore after the first Gulf war, Turkish president Turgut Ozal adopted a more liberal view of the Kurdish issue. For the first time in the history of the republic, the state accepted the existence of the Kurds as an ethnic group in the country and laws prohibiting the use of the Kurdish language were repealed. This democratization movement allowed more ethnic cultural activities. Other ethnic groups specially the Alevies began publishing and organizing throughout the country. "But following Ozal's death in April 1993, it [became] clearer than ever that when it comes to the Kurdish question, it is not the civilian elected government which determines policy but the army dominated National Security Council." 59)

"Since 1984, around 28,000 people have been killed and up to three million have been forced to leave their homes in the 'dirty war' between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish militants of the PKK resulting in chronic economic dislocation and enormous cost to the public purse. (60)"

#### Conclusion,

Public support for a central government was an important factor in the political stability without which the government would have been powerless to deal with the problems of modernization. The 'project of modernity' that has transformed every aspect of Turkish society since the founding of the new republic in 1923 has been increasingly questioned and scrutinized in recent decades by a growing part of its people.

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Unlike Western states where modernization was mainly carried out by the elite bourgeois class, the political modernization of Turkey was carried out principally by the military and bureaucratic leadership due to a virtual absence of revolutionary social classes. As the army emerged as the main actor in dealing with state affairs, the ideological point of view of military elites shaped the nature of the modernization process. Not only western military techniques but also western ideologies and economic systems had a profound impact on the beliefs of these military and bureaucratic elites.

In Turkey, Western ideological influence on ruling elites centered on nationalism and secularism. Due to the multi-ethnic, multi-religious characteristics of the Ottoman Empire, these elites believed that Turkish nationalism could eliminate ethnic conflict or separatist movements, which were seen to be the main reason for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore the ruling elites focused on the unity of language, ethnicity and culture, without any social classes to create a modern, secular nation whose ideals were confined to the territorial limits of the state. But these abrupt changes in state ideology were not accepted by the majority in Turkish society. The underlying factor of the resistance of Turkish society against the new state ideology lay in the ideological characteristics of western nationalism and secularism which were different from and in conflict with the Islam and the multiethnic structure of the Turkish state. By denying the existence of ethnic minorities within Turkey's borders, assimilation policies and lack of religious freedom caused social unrest and conflicts between the state and the public. This had a profound impact on political and social stability and the processes of democratization and secularization of the country.

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