

# Turkey

The Quest for Identity



Feroz Ahmad

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Feroz Ahmad



O N E W O R L D  
O X F O R D

**For my sister Ameena, and to the memory of my brother  
Farid, 1935–2000**

TURKEY: THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

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## Preface

The Ottomans were a rare imperial people who had no homeland to retreat to as their empire waned in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other imperial peoples had returned to various homelands: the British to their island base when they were forced to decolonize; the French to France, the Spanish to Spain, and so on. By the twentieth century, the Ottomans had no homeland for they had originated as tribal peoples who, for a variety of reasons, had been forced to migrate from the steppes of Central and Inner Asia and went in different directions. Some of these tribal confederations, including the ones who came to be known as Ottoman (*Osmanlı*) adopting the name of their leader, Osman (d.1324), migrated into the Islamic world and adopted Islam.

These peoples came to be described as ‘Turks’ by the people they intermingled with. But they themselves were called by the name of the head of their tribal confederation: thus the Seljuks, the Danişmend, the Menteşe and the Osmanlı or Ottomans. The Ottomans reserved the name ‘Turk’ for the nomadic tribesmen and peasants who continued to live under their rule but were as yet untamed or ‘uncivilized’. The merchants from the Italian city states of Venice and Genoa who came in contact with the Ottomans nevertheless called them Turks or Turque, as did the English and the French respectively. The Greek Orthodox described the rule of the Ottomans as ‘Tuorkokratia’, the rule of the Turks. For Europeans and Christians, the term ‘Turk’ was synonymous with Muslim; thus when Christians converted to Islam, they were often

said to have ‘turned Turk’. Turkey was also the English-language synonym for the Ottoman Empire; thus when Lord Byron wrote to his mother from Ottoman Albania in November 1809, he noted that ‘I have been some time in Turkey: this place [Prevesa] is on the coast, but I have traversed the interior of the province of Albania on a visit to the Pasha.’ It was common for Europeans to speak of the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire as ‘Turkey-in-Europe’ and of Asia Minor and the Arab provinces as ‘Turkey-in-Asia’, when they described the geography of the empire.

The idea of nationalism made inroads into the Ottoman Empire after the French Revolution, first among the non-Muslim communities of the empire, and then among a minority of Muslim intellectuals who became conscious of their ‘Turkishness’, their language and their roots. But nationalism remained a concern of the minority, for the majority was still determined to maintain a multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire, right until the final defeat in 1918 during the First World War.

Only after total defeat and the realization that the victors were going to partition the empire and promote self-determination did the Ottomans realize that they too had to determine their identity on the basis of nationalism and ‘nationhood’.

When the nationalists created their republic in 1923, they were careful to call it the Republic of Turkey, a territorial and therefore a patriotic description, and not the Turkish Republic, which would have defined the republic ethnically. Nevertheless ‘Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ is often rendered incorrectly as the ‘Turkish Republic’ and not the ‘Republic of Turkey’, and the assembly in Ankara as the Turkish Grand National Assembly and not the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The nationalists were aware of the difference in meaning and chose their words with care. There was even a discussion about describing the people of the new Turkey as ‘Türkiyeli’, as the land of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Circassians, etc., reserving the term ‘Turk’ for the ethnically Turkish. Turk was retained but with the same kind of meaning as ‘British’ or ‘American’. As with other national movements, having succeeded in creating the territorial state of Turkey and gaining it universal acceptance at Lausanne in 1923, the nationalists began the task of creating the nation of Turkey and the Turk.

By the late 1930s, the nationalists had partially succeeded in creating a new identity for most of the population of Anatolia, with only the Kurdish population in the east and the Alevis of central Anatolia remaining disaffected, the former on ethnic-linguistic grounds and the latter on religious grounds. These problems of identity remained dormant until the early 1960s when they began to emerge in the more liberal political environment created by the new constitution of 1961. They remained unresolved, though progress was made during the nineties when the state began considering the liberalization of the regime and the reforms that were required by the European Union in order to meet its criteria for membership. The new Justice and Development Party (AKP) claims to be more determined than ever to introduce and implement these reforms after its efforts to gain admission were foiled at the EU summit in Copenhagen on 12–13 December 2002.

# Acknowledgements

This book has grown out of a long-standing involvement with the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. Since it is a work of synthesis, I stand on the shoulders of the scholars who have inspired me over the years, as well as students who forced me to reconsider the subject with questions I had not thought to ask. I should like to thank the two readers who read the work for Oneworld while it was in draft form and made helpful comments; my editors, Rebecca Clare and Judy Kearns, at Oneworld for their professionalism and patience; and my colleagues, especially Leila Fawaz, at the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies at Tufts University, for their encouragement and support. However, I alone remain responsible for any errors of fact or omissions.

## Notes on transcription

I have used the official modern Turkish when transcribing Turkish words and names in Roman script. Some indications on pronunciation are given to assist the reader not acquainted with Turkish.

- c    *j* as in *jam*
- ç    *ch* as in *church*
- ğ    soft *g* lengthens the preceding vowel and is not sounded, thus  
Erdoğan is pronounced Erdoan
- ı    (dotless *i*) something like *u* as in *radium*
- ö    French *eu* as in *deux*
- ş    *sh* as in *shame*
- ü    French *u* as in *lumière*

# Abbreviations

<i>AFU</i>	Armed Forces Union
<i>AK Parti and AKP</i>	The Justice and Development Party founded in August 2001
<i>ANAP</i>	Turkish acronym for the Motherland Party founded in 1983
<i>COGS</i>	Chief of the General Staff
<i>CUP</i>	Committee of Union and Progress
<i>DLP</i>	The Democratic Left Party founded by Bülent Ecevit's wife when he was banned from politics
<i>DP</i>	Democrat Party and Demokratik Party after 1969
<i>DISK</i>	Turkish acronym for the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions of Turkey
<i>EEC, EU</i>	The European Economic Community, later the European Union
<i>FP</i>	The Felicity (Saadet) Party founded in 2001 as the party of political Islam
<i>FRP</i>	Free Republican Party
<i>GNAT</i>	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
<i>GNP</i>	Gross national product
<i>HADEP</i>	People's Democracy Party formed by moderate Kurds in May 1994
<i>IMF</i>	International Monetary Fund
<i>JP</i>	Justice Party founded in 1961

<i>MÜSİAD</i>	Turkish for the ‘Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’, though the ‘M’ was said to stand for ‘Muslim’ not ‘Independent’
<i>NATO</i>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<i>NSC</i>	National Security Council – established in 1961, it gave senior generals a political role; also the body that governed after 12 September 1980
<i>NUC</i>	National Unity Committee, the junta that governed after the 1960 coup
<i>NOP</i>	National Order Party – founded in 1969, it was the first party representing political Islam
<i>NSP</i>	National Salvation Party, founded in 1972 after NOP was closed down
<i>NAP</i>	Nationalist Action Party
<i>NDP</i>	Nationalist Democracy Party founded in 1983
<i>NGOs</i>	Non-governmental organizations
<i>NTP</i>	New Turkey Party founded in 1961; another party using the same name was founded in 2002
<i>OYAK</i>	Turkish acronym for the Army Mutual Assistance Association created in 1961
<i>PKK</i>	Kurdish initials that stand for the ‘Workers’ Party of Kurdistan’
<i>PRP</i>	Progressive Republican Party founded in 1924
<i>RPP</i>	Republican People’s Party
<i>SHP</i>	The Social Democratic People’s Party after it merged with the Populist Party
<i>SODEP</i>	Turkish acronym for the Social Democratic Party founded in 1983
<i>SPO</i>	State Planning Organization established in 1960
<i>TPP</i>	True Path Party founded to replace the banned Great Turkey Party in 1983
<i>Türk-İs</i>	Turkish acronym for the Confederation of the Workers’ Union of Turkey
<i>TÜSİAD</i>	Turkish acronym for the Association of Turkish

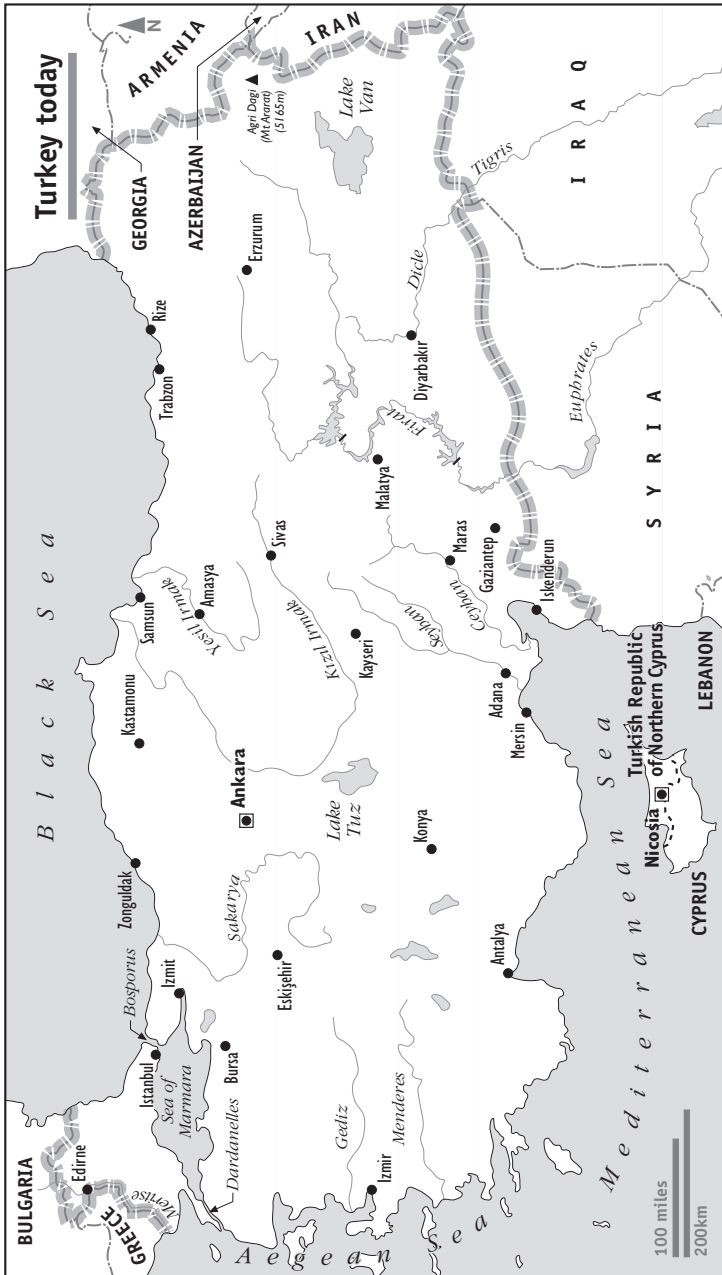
	Industrialists and Businessmen
<i>TPLA</i>	Turkish People's Liberation Army
<i>VP</i>	Virtue (Fazilet) Party founded in December 1997 just before the dissolution of the Welfare Party; it was the fourth Islamist party
<i>WP</i>	The Welfare Party, the party of political Islam which was formed after the NSP was dissolved in September 1980
<i>WPT</i>	Workers' Party of Turkey







Map by MAPgrafix



Map by MAPgrafix

# 1

## The Ottomans: from Statehood to Empire, 1300–1789

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE HOUSE OF OTTOMAN

The Turkic tribes, under the leadership of the Seljuks, established their foothold in Anatolia in 1071, five years after the Norman invasion of England. Alparslan defeated the Byzantine emperor Diogenes at the battle of Manzikert and laid the foundations of the Seljuk Empire, the Seljuks of Rum, with their capital at Konya. Rum was the term used by early Muslims to describe the Byzantines as 'Romans' and their empire was called the 'land of Rum'. Later the term was applied to Asia Minor or Anatolia and, until the present, to the Greeks of Turkey. The Seljuk Empire was a federation of Turkish tribes, each led by its own bey, or leader, who recognized the sovereignty of the Seljuk dynasty. But when the Seljuks were defeated by the Mongols in 1243 and became their tribute-paying vassals, the beys began to break away from the Seljuks and declared independence for their principalities or *beyliks*.

The Ottomans had their origins in a clan that was loyal to the Seljuks, who rewarded their leader, Ertuğrul, with lands near Ankara which were extended further west to the region of Söğüt near modern Eskişehir. Ertuğrul is said to have died in 1288 at the age of 90 and was succeeded by his son Osman, whose name was adopted by his followers who called themselves *Osmanlı*, anglicized to Ottoman. As most vassals seized the opportunity to

declare their independence as the Seljuks declined, Osman remained loyal until the death of Sultan Kaikobad II in 1298. Osman then declared his independence, marking the beginnings of the Ottoman state. Osman's principality abutted the Byzantine empire and he was able to wage religious war, or *gaza*, against the Christians, enabling him and his successors to become religious warriors (*gazis*) par excellence and attracting followers from all over Anatolia. This was a great advantage that the Ottomans had over most of the other principalities. Osman Gazi died in 1326 and was succeeded by his son Orhan Gazi (r.1326–59), who captured the strategic city of Bursa in the same year, making it the first capital of the Ottoman state. At this stage the leaders enjoyed the title of *gazi* which made them little more than first amongst equals. They had yet to become sultans.

By 1326, there were a number of successor states to the Seljuks in Anatolia, although Karaman claimed recognition as the true successor to the Seljuks. The other beys – of such principalities as Aydın, Saruhan, Menteşe, Kermiyan, Hamid, Tekke, Karesi and Kastamonu – refused to grant such recognition. For the time being, the Ottomans were too small and weak and therefore preferred not to join the struggle for Seljuk succession. Orhan had the good fortune of being located adjacent to a rapidly declining Byzantine Empire and of capturing some of its territory while other Muslim emirs fought against each other. He extended his state along the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara and in 1345 captured Karesi from its Muslim ruler, thereby opening a way to cross the Dardanelles and begin expansion into Europe.

In 1341 Orhan intervened in the affairs of Byzantium, answering Cantacuzenus's appeal for help against his rival. Orhan saved the throne for Cantacuzenus and was rewarded with the hand of his daughter, Theodora, in marriage. Thereafter, it became almost a tradition for Ottoman sultans to take Christian wives, at least until the reign of Murad III (r.1574–1595). Orhan had already captured the strategic fortress of Gallipoli on the Dardanelles straits and secured his hold on the northern shore of the Marmara, capturing Tekirdağ. The Ottomans were poised to cross the straits and raid into the Balkans. When Orhan died in 1359, he had laid not only the territorial foundations of the state, but he had also begun to lay its institutional foundations by

creating the institution of the *Yeniçeri*, or ‘new troops’, better known in the West as the janissaries.

The world of Islam was familiar with slave armies, but not the innovation of collecting (*devşirme*) youths from Christian communities and training them to become an elite of soldiers and administrators. Hitherto, the Ottomans had had no regular or standing army and had relied on tribal levies loyal to their own leaders. As the Ottomans were a federation of clans, each with its own leader, the sultan was still little more than the first among equals, dependent on his personal qualities and his success as a conqueror. Orhan tried to overcome this shortcoming by recruiting a regular army of his own from among Turkoman tribesmen. But his experiment failed because the Turkomans were essentially horsemen and did not take to the discipline of fighting in the infantry.

#### GROWTH OF THE MILITARY

Around 1330 Orhan began to take Christian youths aged between twelve and twenty from their families, converting them to Islam, and then training them as his ‘new troops’. They were apprenticed to Turkish farms where they learned the language and the religion before being given a rigorous education in the palace school where they joined the state’s ruling elite. Haji Bektaş (1242–1337), the founder of the Bektaşî order of dervishes, blessed the first janissary corps and became the patron saint of the janissaries until their dissolution in 1826.

This military innovation took generations to mature and, in time, the recruits of the *devşirme*, both as soldiers and administrators, strengthened the power of the sultan at the expense of the chieftains of the clans. These men recognized only one loyalty, to the ruling sultan, who was their master and they his *kul* or servitors, though the term *kul* is often rendered ‘slave’. The sultan had the power of life and death over them. In theory, they were cut off from their origins and therefore from loyalty to their original community. In practice, such ties were not always forgotten and there are cases of men of the *devşirme* who rose up to become provincial governors and grand viziers, and who rewarded the communities from whence they came with mosques, libraries and

bridges. The privilege of being a janissary could not be inherited by an heir, who would be a free-born Muslim.

The legality of the *devşirme* was raised under the Sharia or Islamic law. The Sharia granted non-Muslims who had submitted to Islamic rule and paid the poll tax, or *jizya*, the status of *dhimmi*, or protected people. They were allowed to practice their faith and live according to the rules of their communities. The sultan was forbidden to persecute them in any way, and taking away their male children was illegal. However, some parents understood that their children were destined for a comfortable and bright future and gave them up willingly. Sinan, the great Ottoman architect who was himself a *devşirme* recruit, is said to have used his influence to have his brother taken into the system. But the sultan, bound by the Sharia, could not violate it unless the *ülema*, the doctors of Islamic jurisprudence, found a loophole and legalized the practice. To do so, the ulema invented the fiction that if the sultan returned the poll tax to the community, the community would no longer be protected and the sultan could then legally take ‘prisoners of war’, and that is what the sultans did. The practice may sound harsh and even barbarous to our modern sensibilities, but the idea of being recruited into the *devşirme* was so attractive to some that an occasional Muslim family would even ask their Christian neighbours to pass off their Muslim children as Christians so that they could be recruited!

The *devşirme* operated in Anatolia, but the Balkans and Albania, Bosnia, and Bulgaria were the preferred provinces. The recruits were also taught a craft: for example, Sinan (1490–1588) learned about construction as a janissary, and served in the army building roads and bridges before becoming architect to the sultans. Janissaries were taught according to a very strict discipline: to obey their officers, to be totally loyal to each other, and to abstain from all practices that might undermine their ability as soldiers. That is why they were such a formidable force at a time when they were fighting against feudal levies and were therefore superior to armies of Western Europe.

The *devşirme* introduced the principle of ‘meritocracy’ into the Ottoman system. *Devşirme* recruits were taken purely for their abilities and usually came from modest, rural backgrounds, unlike feudal Europe where birth determined one’s status in life. The *devşirme* proved to be a method of integrating the conquered

Christian communities into the imperial system, especially during the early centuries of expansion when Ottoman rule was usually lighter than the one it replaced.

### EARLY OTTOMAN CONQUESTS AND EXPANSION

According to contemporary accounts, the Ottomans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had a well-organized and disciplined force consisting of about 12,000 janissaries, who constituted the infantry, about 8000 *sipahis* or well-trained cavalry, 40,000 troops, feudal in character, supplied and led by rural notables and tribal clans, as well as many thousands of irregulars. European soldiers captured in battle and mercenaries tended to form the artillery. From the time of Orhan's reign, Christian vassals also supplied troops to fight both in Anatolia and Europe. As late as 1683, during the second siege of Vienna, a Wallachian corps was given the task of bridging the Danube. A Muslim Ottoman army, supposedly waging 'holy war' was willing to use Christian troops!

The Ottoman conquests continued under Murad I (r.1359–89). He fought on two fronts: in Anatolia, where he took advantage of the divisions among the Muslim principalities, and in the Balkans against the Christians – Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Bosnians, and Albanians – who were equally divided. The Ottomans entered the Balkans at the invitation of the Christian rulers who were fighting against each other and sought Ottoman help. In 1361, Murad captured Ankara from the Turkomans and Adrianople (Edirne) from the Byzantines, making it second capital of the Ottoman state in 1367. The Ottoman victory at the battle on the River Maritza in Bulgaria in 1371, where Murad defeated a Serbian coalition, opened the road to the conquest of the Balkans just as the battle of Manzikert in 1071 had prepared the way for expansion into Anatolia. The Byzantine emperor and the Christian princes in the Balkans agreed to accept Ottoman suzerainty and to serve in the Ottoman armies as the sultan's vassals.

Murad also acquired territory by forming matrimonial alliances as, for example, when his son married into the Germiyan family and the Ottomans were given Kütahya and its six provinces as dowry. He also purchased lands from the principality of Hamid, but, in principle, conquest remained the main method of



expansion. However, the two-front campaign was difficult to maintain and occasionally a Muslim–Christian alliance (as between Karaman and Bosnia) was capable of inflicting defeat on the Ottomans. Sensing weakness, Ottoman vassals in the Balkans rebelled and forced Murad to confront them in battle. The Balkans, and not Anatolia, had become the Ottoman’s heartland and Murad took the challenge very seriously. On 15 June 1389, Murad, with an army of 60,000, met a force of Serbs, Bosnians, Wallachians, Moldavians, and Albanians, estimated at 100,000, and defeated them at the battle of Kosovo. His army was a mixed force of Muslims and Christians and included Bulgarian and Serbian princes, as well as levies for Turkoman principalities. The Serbian King Lazarus was killed in battle and Murad was assassinated by a Serb who came to pay homage as he reviewed his victorious army. The defeat of the Serbs acquired mythical proportions in Serbian poetry and folklore; in the nineteenth century, the battle became a source of nationalist inspiration and was put to political use, as it is today. The battle of Kosovo secured Ottoman power in the Balkans, and Kosovo acquired an important place in the Ottoman economy for it held vast deposits of minerals and was a major supplier of lead and zinc, necessary for the artillery. That is why the Ottomans and Hapsburgs fought over it for many years.

As the power of the Ottomans grew, the Byzantines tried to maintain cordial relations with Murad. Emperor John Palaeologos gave one of his daughters in marriage to Murad, and two other daughters to his sons, Bayezid and Yakub Çelebi. These beys were sent as governors to Germiyan and Karesi, with their own janisseries, where they gained experience of warfare and administration. The youngest son, Savcı Bey, who ruled over Bursa during Murad’s absence, plotted with Andronicus, the Byzantine emperor’s son, to overthrow their fathers and seize power. The plot was discovered and Savcı Bey was executed while Andronicus was blinded, following the Byzantine tradition.

Bayezid I (r.1389–1403) was proclaimed sultan at Kosovo; his first task was to execute his brother Yakub Çelebi, in order to guarantee his own succession, thereby establishing the tradition of fratricide within Ottoman politics. This practice violated the Sharia and it was legitimized only during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror. He pronounced that if God had bequeathed the

sultanate to one of his sons, that son could put his brothers to death for the sake of the order of the realm. The *ülema* legitimized the practice by issuing a *fetva* – legal opinion – arguing that fratricide was justified by *raison d'état* as the practice produced stability and therefore strengthened the state. Savcı Bey was executed because he had conspired against the sultan; Yakub Çelebi and other fratricides over the years were carried out as preventive measures!

Ottoman expansion continued under Bayezid's brilliant command and he consolidated his rule in Anatolia, subduing the *beyliks* of Aydın, Mentеше, Saruhan, Germiyan and Karaman. He laid siege to Constantinople in 1391 on the death of Emperor Palaeologos and defeated a European crusade, launched to save Constantinople, at Nicopolis in 1396. Having captured Salonika, he resumed the siege of Constantinople until he was bribed into raising it.

During the fourteenth century the Ottomans had begun to weaken tribal power by instituting the *devşirme* system, thereby recruiting Christian youths from outside the tribes and converting and training them so that they were totally loyal to the house of Osman. Therefore, by the fifteenth century, there was no unified sentiment in Anatolia, no sense of political unity or what would later be described as 'national' cohesion that inspired the various tribes. In fact, they were jealous of each other's growing power, and especially alarmed by the growing power of the Ottoman dynasty. Anatolia was divided into rival and conflicting tribal confederations, struggling to survive against the expansion of a neighbour.

The defeated and dispossessed beys of Anatolia appealed to the Mongol leader Timur – known in the West as Tamerlane – to stop Bayezid waging war against Muslim rulers and to reinstate them. Timur, the most powerful Mongol ruler since Genghis Khan and one of the greatest conquerors of world history, had subdued Central Asia and the Golden Horde in southern Russia, invaded India in 1398 and overran Iran, Iraq and Syria. He then advanced into Anatolia and defeated the Ottomans at the battle of Ankara in 1402. Bayezid was captured and died in captivity eight months later.

Timur's intervention in the affairs of Anatolia was brief but had the most momentous consequences. He had destroyed Ottoman

power, given a temporary lease of life to the Anatolian beys and prolonged the life of Byzantium for a further fifty years. Timur died in 1405, leaving the Anatolian *beyliks* to fend for themselves while the Ottomans regrouped. Ottoman succession was disputed by Bayezid's sons and Mehmed I (r.1413–21) was finally recognized as the new sultan in 1413. By the time of his death in 1421, he had recovered most of the lands lost to Timur, and even organized a small navy to protect his domain from Venetian raids.

Murad II (r.1421–51), who had served as governor of Amasya, succeeded Mehmed. But before he could consolidate his power, he had to deal with two pretenders to the throne, supported by the Byzantines and the beys of Germiyan and Karaman. By 1426, both of them had become Murad's suzerains and paid tribute to him. Thereafter, Murad advanced into Macedonia and captured the strategic port city of Salonika from Venice in 1428. Murad was forced to fight a double-fronted war, against the Europeans, who organized an army led by the Hungarian Janos Hunyadi (c.1387–1456), as well as Karaman, which rose up in rebellion. Murad defeated Karaman in July 1444 but was forced to sign a ten-year truce with Hungary. He then abdicated in favour of his son, Mehmed, and retired to Manisa. The Hungarians, sensing Ottoman weakness, broke the truce and advanced into Ottoman territory. The janissaries brought Murad out of retirement to lead his army and the Christian force was routed at Varna in 1444. The war with Hungary continued until Hunyadi, at the head of a large army, was defeated at Kosovo in 1448. Murad died at Edirne and Mehmed II, known as the Conqueror (r.1451–81), finally came to the throne.

#### MEHMED THE CONQUEROR AND HIS INFLUENCE

Mehmed's fame rests on the conquest of Constantinople on 29 May 1453. Important though that was, his reign is more significant in Ottoman history for his decision finally to break the power of the Anatolian beys in his entourage and to establish the hegemony of the men of the *devşirme* who, unlike the beys, were his servitors and totally loyal to him, and over whom he had the power of life and death. As a result, the Ottoman Empire became more autocratic and bureaucratic, with the sultan relying on his

grand vizier to conduct day-to-day business and even lead the army. The notables whose power was based on their tribal affiliation lost much of their political influence, their lands and property, and became dependent on the state. Perhaps it was this that ended any possibility of an independent landed aristocracy as a counter-force to the Palace emerging in the Ottoman Empire as it did in Europe. The sultan became an absolute autocrat, supported by loyal servants who in time became kingmakers. However, Islamic ideology required that he remain accountable to the Sharia and therefore the *ülema* of freeborn Muslims remained an autonomous political force in the empire.

Constantinople, which the Ottomans continued to call Konstantiyye until 1915, as well as Istanbul and *Dersaadet* (the abode of felicity), gave them an imperial mission as they believed that they had acquired the mantle of Rome. Though the city fell after a difficult siege, many Greek Orthodox subjects welcomed the Ottomans as they allowed them to practise their faith, unlike the Catholics who had wanted to restore papal hegemony by reuniting the two Churches. Mehmed granted the Orthodox Church a charter that gave the patriarch total jurisdiction over his community in return for the payment of a poll tax. The Armenian Church was also brought to the new capital and granted religious and cultural autonomy. Within a short time, a relationship was established between the state and the religious communities that developed by the eighteenth century into the *millet* system, or virtually autonomous religious communities. In pre-secular Ottoman society, religious allegiance was not a private matter but a matter of communal concern. People were organized according to the Church into which they had been born, regardless of the language they spoke or the ethnic group they belonged to. The religious and social life of each community was organized according to its traditions and individuals were bound by its laws. The Muslim *millet* included all Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and converts) regardless of their ethnicity or language; the same was true for the Greek Orthodox *millet* that included not only Greeks but Slavic peoples of the Balkans and, later on, the Arab world. The same was true for the Jewish and Armenian communities. Only in the nineteenth century, with the advent of nationalism, did the *millets* begin to acquire an ethnic colouring and Serbs,

Bulgarians, Catholics, and Protestants acquired their own communal organizations. However, even in 1919, Greek Catholics felt more akin to Italian Catholics than to the Greek Orthodox army that invaded Anatolia! The *millet* system suggests that the Ottomans made no attempt at assimilation, only a pragmatic integration that allowed the empire to function smoothly.

Istanbul was refurbished after the conquest of 1453 as befitting the capital of a world empire. Mehmed imported craftsmen from all over the empire and settled them in the city in order to rebuild it. Its population increased substantially, especially after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, when they were invited to settle in the empire and many chose the capital. Between 1500 and 1600, Istanbul became one of the most important cities of Europe; around 1600 it was still one of the most populous cities until it was overtaken before the end of the seventeenth century, first by Paris and then London.

The imperatives of empire also led Mehmed to extend his territories in all directions. He conquered southern Serbia and extended Ottoman influence in Wallachia. Commerce had been important to the Ottomans ever since their rise to power in the fourteenth century, but with the acquisition of Istanbul, sea power and international trade became crucial for Ottoman security and economy. Venice had become a rival and the Ottomans were forced to pay attention to their fleet and the defence of the city. Mehmed therefore captured the island of Mytilene (Midilli) and fortified the straits. He pressured Venice in the Mediterranean until she was forced to sign a treaty in 1478. He then conquered the Crimea making the Crimean Tatars his vassals and the Black Sea an Ottoman lake. Ottoman expansion continued until Mehmed's death in 1481, with attacks on Rhodes and even southern Italy, where the Ottomans seized Otranto.

Bayezid II (r.1481–1512) was forced to contest the throne with his brother Cem Sultan (1459–1495). First, he had to bribe the janissaries by granting an 'accession present' in order to win their loyalty; thereafter it became a tradition with which every sultan complied at the beginning of his reign. Cem was defeated and sought asylum with the Knights of Rhodes, who were paid in gold to keep him hostage. Cem went on to Naples where he died as a captive of the Pope, who was also able to blackmail Bayezid and

force him to pay to keep Cem in captivity. Scholars have speculated as to what Bayezid might have achieved had he not been distracted by Cem's challenge to the Ottoman throne and the manipulation of the Christian powers. Given the anarchy ruling in Italy at the time and the ease with which the French conquered Italy in 1494, the Ottomans might have subjugated Italy, altering the course of world history. In Rome, it was feared that that city might share the fate of Constantinople.

## EXPANDING OTTOMAN POSSESSIONS

By the fifteenth century, the Ottomans had reinvented themselves from being a tribute-levying empire to one dependent on world trade. Recent research in the Genoese and Venetian archives shows that the Ottomans took trade in the region seriously. From the early fourteenth century their conquests were based largely on the capture of strategic points, such as Gallipoli and the Dardanelles, which provided revenues from trade in the region. After inflicting a defeat on Venice in July 1496, they not only exempted the Venetians from paying an annual tribute, but agreed that Venice pay a four per cent tax on its exports to the Ottoman empire; trade had become as important as tribute.

Apart from waging war in Europe, the Ottomans were faced with the threat of such rivals as the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria, and the Safavids in Iran. The struggle with the Safavids assumed an ideological character, as a contest between the Sunni or orthodox Islam of the Ottomans and the heterodox, Shia Islam of the Safavids. This long-drawn-out conflict sapped the energies of both empires and was responsible for the relative decline of both in comparison with the rise of European power.

Having deposed his father Bayezid, Selim I (1512–20) was forced to turn his attention to the east and meet the rising power of Shah İsmail. In 1514, Selim defeated the Safavids at Chaldiran and acquired Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Two years later, Selim advanced against the Mamluks and conquered Syria in 1516 and Egypt the following year. Egypt's agriculture and commerce provided Istanbul with considerable wealth as well as revenues from trade with India and Asia. The Ottomans also became the guardians of the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina and were elevated to the status of the

most powerful Muslim state in the world. Jerusalem, or Kudus, became the third holy city of Islam; the Ottomans built great bazaars to enliven commercial life and Selim's successor, Süleyman, built the city's distinct white walls. Jerusalem did not become a major regional capital such as Damascus or Aleppo, but it was one of the three Holy Places of Islam and enjoyed great religious significance. The empire had doubled in size and its Islamic element was strengthened by the addition of the Arab provinces. Moreover, Egypt brought the Ottomans into direct contact with the Portuguese in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In the sixteenth century, the balance in the world had shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Christopher Columbus's discovery of America in 1492 and Vasco da Gama's voyage around southern Africa to reach India in 1498 diminished but did not end the importance of the Islamic world. Trade with Asia did not dry up as a result, but the Ottoman treasury received less revenue. The empire also became too large and unwieldy to be ruled by the sultan alone and he was forced to rely more and more on his bureaucracy. The men who rose through the *devşirme* became more influential, as did the women in the Palace.

## SÜLEYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT

Süleyman I (r.1520–66) is perhaps the most famous of the Ottoman sultans. He is known as *Kanuni* (the lawgiver) to the Turks, and 'Süleyman the Magnificent' in the West. He continued to expand and consolidate his empire in the tradition of his predecessors, capturing Belgrade in 1521 and besieging Vienna in 1529. The Ottomans actively participated in the European conflict between the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France; the Ottoman role was partially responsible for Charles's failure to crush Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation. Wars in Europe continued until Süleyman's death in 1566, when he died leading the campaign into Hungary. He also fought against the Safavids, capturing Baghdad in 1534.

Commerce had become an important part of the Ottoman economy and Ottoman merchants – Muslim and non-Muslim – traded in Europe, especially Italy, and Asia. As a result of this, in 1535, Süleyman granted certain privileges, known as 'capitula-

tions', to French merchants. They were permitted to live according to their own laws and customs while they resided in the empire, so long as Ottoman law was not violated. Over time, these capitulations were extended to other European states, leading to an expansion of commerce between Europe and the Ottomans.

The expansion of the Ottoman navy may also be explained as a measure to control the Mediterranean in order to secure commerce in the region. Thus Süleyman used Barbarosa Hayrettin to seize control of the North African coast from Charles V, establishing Ottoman rule over Algiers, Tunis and Libya. A serious attempt was also made to destroy Portuguese power in the Arabian Sea, but the Ottoman fleet was destroyed at the battle of Dui in 1538. Ottoman ships were constructed for the calmer waters of the Mediterranean and were no match for Portuguese galleons. Perhaps that is why the Ottomans made no attempt to sail in the Atlantic, though they mapped it and knew much about it. Like the Chinese in East Asia, the Ottomans were content with their empire in the eastern Mediterranean.

By Süleyman's reign, the Ottoman Empire had developed into a stable form with a military-bureaucratic ruling class, tempered by the free-born *ülema*, that ruled over a multi-religious population of peasants, merchants, and artisans, organized into virtually autonomous religious communities. Executive and legislative power resided in the sultan, who was aided by ministers who assumed more of the sultan's prerogatives as the empire expanded and became more bureaucratic. After Süleyman's reign, the grand vizier began to assume many of the sultan's duties and the sultan became more palace-bound. The patriarchs, as leaders of the non-Muslim communities who tended to the religious and communal needs of their flocks, enjoyed the protection of the sultan. No attempt was made to assimilate the various communities; they were integrated to the extent that day-to-day interactions were normalized and provided a social context for cultural exchange. The system worked well until the introduction of nationalism in the nineteenth century, enabling each community to go its separate way, something that they could not have achieved had they been assimilated.

Ottoman administration was advanced for the time in comparison with contemporary Europe, and Christian peasants found Ottoman



rule to be lighter than that of their feudal co-religionists. Martin Luther (1483–1546), who had no sympathy for the ‘Turks’ whom he considered barbarous, agreed that the peasants yielded to the Ottomans because their taxes were lighter. Ottoman taxation continued to be light while the sultan conquered prosperous lands, but became heavier when the conquests ended.

With the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottomans acquired some Byzantine administrative practices. The sultan became increasingly distant, leaving day-to-day affairs to his imperial *divan* which was presided over by his grand vizier and was composed of other ministers. His principal ministers were the military judges (*kadiasker*) of Rumelia and Anatolia, the judge of Istanbul, the minister of finance, the keeper of the seal and the chief of the janissaries. Later, the offices of *Şeyhülislam*, the supreme religious authority, the *reis-ül kuttub*, the minister in charge of foreign relations, and *kapudan* pasha, admiral of the fleet, were added to the *divan*. A military officer, a pasha with two horsetails designating rank, was appointed governor of a province, which was subdivided into *sanjaks* governed by a pasha with one horsetail. Below him there were districts, or *kazas*, governed by a *kadı* and landlords who represented the local people.

Land belonged to the state and the empire’s economy depended on the state’s control of both the land and agricultural production, the principal sources of revenue. Land was divided into a variety of fiefs (*timars*) whose revenues were allotted to the administrators – the beys and viziers – as their salaries. These fiefs were not hereditary and could be confiscated on the holder’s death. As they could not be passed on to the landholder’s beneficiaries, it was not possible to create a landowning class as in Europe. In theory, peasants could not be evicted from the land they cultivated so long as they paid the tithe to the landlord. That measure gave peasants security of tenure and may explain the general absence of peasant rebellions in Ottoman history.

The reign of Süleyman the Magnificent is traditionally described as the ‘high noon’ of the Ottoman Empire. He was described as the last of the great first ten rulers who had established and laid the foundation of a world empire. These rulers were not only great conquerors but wise and talented administrators, who ruled over their territories with ruthless sagacity. After Süleyman, it was said,

the sultans were often incompetent, mediocre and corrupt men who were more given to the pleasure of the harem than the battlefield; a sultan such as Murad IV (1623–40) was the exception rather than the rule. Incompetent rulers lacked the initiative and drive of such great sultans as Mehmed the Conqueror, and therefore tended to paralyse the administration and weaken the empire. But despite this shortcoming, the empire was able to rely on the exceptional talents of such grand viziers as Sokullu Mehmed Pasha and the Köprülü dynasty of grand viziers which controlled the empire for almost half a century, as well as the occasionally competent sultan, such as Murad IV.

As an explanation for Ottoman decline relative to the rise of Western Europe, this is only partially true and modern scholarship has sought other explanations. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was operating in a totally different environment, both internally and overseas. The empire had been transformed from a state whose primary goal was territorial expansion, which therefore created the need for an active sultan-general to lead the armies, to a bureaucratic state that had to deal with such economic factors as commerce and relations with an expanding Europe. The Ottomans had created a world empire that was far too complex to be ruled by an individual, however gifted. Power had to be delegated and the sultans were forced to create a *divan*, an early cabinet, with a grand vizier and other ministers. During Süleyman's reign, the situation remained ambiguous and he executed his grand vizier, İbrahim Pasha, because he had become jealous of the growth in the latter's power. But his successor, Selim II, came to depend on his grand vizier and his bureaucracy, which then acquired its own residence known as Babiali or the Sublime Porte (similar to Number Ten Downing Street, the residence of the British prime minister).

For the same reason, the imperial harem also emerged as a focus of political power in the sixteenth century. The grand vizier was often related to the sultan by marriage and therefore directly connected to the harem and its powerful women, such as the *valide sultan*, the sultan's mother or the sultan's favourite concubine. Sometimes the sultan was a minor and therefore a regency headed by the sultan's mother had to be established until he came of age.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the empire had reached the limits of expansion, especially of lands that could be profitably exploited to bring economic benefit. That was the difference between Ottoman imperialism and the imperialisms of such European powers as Spain, England, and Holland: their motives for expansion were largely economic and they plundered their colonies for all they were worth. The Ottomans presented a classic case of what has been described as 'imperial over-extension'. They had to maintain large armies in central Europe, North Africa, and Cyprus, as well as powerful naval forces in the Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Red Sea. In addition to the Holy Roman emperor and his allies, the Ottomans began to face the threat of the growing power of Russia in the Crimea. In Anatolia, the Safavids posed a threat with their religious propaganda among the nomadic Turkoman tribes. All this was a great burden on the treasury, forcing the Ottomans to find new ways to meet their fiscal obligations.

Overseas, a great transformation was marked by a shift from the Mediterranean sphere to the world of the Atlantic. With the age of discovery, the former trade routes upon which the Ottomans had depended for centuries lost their prominence and the empire's revenues from commerce declined. But this was a gradual process and did not affect the empire immediately; however, due to the political and social structure of the empire, there was no obvious solution. The Ottoman economic system was incapable of withstanding the challenge of Western mercantalism and industrialization.

#### AN AGE OF REVOLUTION

In the Western world, the transition from feudalism to commercial capitalism was marked by revolution – the rising middle classes, the bourgeoisie, had to fight for political power. That was accomplished in England between 1640 and 1688, culminating in the 'glorious revolution'; in France, the revolution took place between 1789 and 1815. Where there was no bourgeoisie strong enough to challenge the power of the feudal class – as in Spain or Russia – there was no revolution and the old classes remained in power. That was the case with the Ottomans. While they maintained a government strong enough to preserve order and allow merchants

and manufacturers to make their fortunes, they did not permit these merchants to emerge as a political force capable of promoting their own interests. This was made more difficult by the fact that the merchants were divided by religious affiliation – Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Armenian, Jew and Muslim – and could not act together as a class to protect their economic interests. The Ottomans, while aware of the importance of commerce for the economy, were never solely concerned with the interests of the commercial classes, nor did they take a conscious interest in the rapid growth of the economy. However, they were committed to defending the interests of the consumer, and one of the most important officials was the *muhtesib*, the inspector of the market place, who supervised prices and the quality of goods and weights and measures to see that consumers were not cheated. That in itself stifled the growth of capitalism and a market economy.

There were however a number of wealthy merchants who, in theory, might have played the role of carrying out a bourgeoisie transformation had they been given the opportunity. For example, a Greek merchant, known as Sheytanoglu, from a prominent Byzantine family, made a fortune from the fur trade and the imperial salt monopoly and, as a result, was able to fit sixty galleys for the Ottoman navy. But Murad II became suspicious of his increasing wealth and power and executed him in 1578. There were other prominent rich bankers and merchants, but the Ottoman ruling class never permitted them to alter the character of the state or economy. Even in Europe such change required a revolution, and the Ottoman state was too strong to allow any such radical political and social transformation. Thus there were rebellions and insurrections, but there was no single violent transformation of the political order and its supporting social system that would replace the existing ruling class with another, giving the empire a new look and direction.

It was not as though the Ottomans did not understand what was going on in the world around them; they were aware of the developments taking place in Europe. There was always a constant stream of visitors from Europe and some of these visitors stayed on and served the empire, especially as military experts. There were commercial contacts with the Italian city-states such as Genoa and Venice from the earliest days of the Ottomans, and

Muslim merchants resided in Italian cities. Mehmed the Conqueror had sent students to Italy to study the arts, and corresponded with the Pope. As a result, the Ottomans were well aware of developments in the world around them but were unable to absorb these developments into their own complex, multi-religious society. Nor did they realize how the changes in Europe were beginning to affect their own society, but that was the nature of empire and an imperial ruling class. They were conservative and bound to the status quo and would not permit the rise of a mercantile class that might transform the state and overwhelm the old ruling elites. The Ottomans had three principles that guided the state's economic policy: to provision the urban economy, especially that of Istanbul, and to keep the army, the bureaucracy, and the Palace well supplied; to provide the necessary revenues from taxation, urban and rural; and to preserve the status quo by maintaining strict controls in the towns and the countryside. The Spanish empire pursued a similar policy in the sixteenth century and later; despite her empire and her great wealth, Spain too failed to make the transformation to a bourgeois society, remaining a society dominated by the commercial classes, and therefore lagging behind such European states as Holland and England. It was not a question of religion (Islam or Catholicism), as some have suggested, but was rooted in the very nature of pre-Enlightenment imperialism.

But Ottoman decline was not precipitous. The empire was powerful enough to defend itself throughout the seventeenth century and was even able to launch a campaign that took Ottoman armies to the walls of Vienna in 1683 for the second time. In 1570–71 the Ottomans captured Tunis and Cyprus and the European power took the threat seriously enough to join forces and inflict a crushing defeat on the Ottoman navy at Lepanto in 1571. Such was the empire's wealth in the latter sixteenth century that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, the grand vizier, informed Sultan Selim II that the fleet destroyed at Lepanto could easily be replaced with new and better galleys. However, as a result of the defeat, Selim was forced to make peace with Venice and the emperor.

By the reign of Selim II (1566–74) power had passed into the hands of other men, such as Sokullu Mehmed Pasha (1506–79),

though they were not all as outstanding a statesman as he was. Born in the town of Sokolovic in Bosnia, he was recruited and trained in the *devşirme* system. He rose through the ranks until he was appointed grand vizier in 1564, having already married Süleyman's daughter and Selim II's sister. It was he, not the sultan, who administered the empire until he died in 1579.

Apart from the regular wars (with Iran, 1578–90, and Austria, 1593), the Ottomans had to cope with a situation that is described as the 'crisis of the seventeenth century'. This was marked by a number of factors that worked together and created a difficult situation that the Ottoman state found itself confronted with. Earlier scholarship argued that it was primarily the influx of American gold and silver that came into the Mediterranean world via its commercial connections with the West that created inflation and the pressure on the Ottoman economy. The treasury was forced to find more money to pay the salaries of its armies and administration. Recent research suggests that a cash economy had already penetrated large parts of the Balkans and Anatolia along the coast and the process was accelerated in the sixteenth century with the influx of New World silver, resulting in increased commercialization. Thus taxes were now collected in cash rather than kind, altering the method of landholding in parts of the empire. Inflationary pressures were aggravated by the growth in population, urbanization, and monetization of the economy that increased the demand for money and pressure on the empire's limited resources. The state was forced to finance larger armies to fight exhausting wars against the Hapsburgs and the Safavids, and one quick solution was to debase and devalue the currency, putting more brass than silver in the coins. The result was social turmoil and in 1589 the janissaries in Istanbul revolted in protest against their lower pay and declining standard of living. These revolts continued into 1592 before they were quelled. In the 1590s, central Anatolia began to witness social disorder with peasant unrest known as the *Celali* rebellions, named after the religious leader who began the first revolt. Serious dissatisfaction continued until the 1650s, undermining the authority of the state.

## THE JANISSARY–ÜLEMA ALLIANCE

Despite all these problems and military setbacks, the Ottomans held their own throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the most serious consequences of this prolonged crisis was the emergence of an alliance between the *ülema* and the janissaries that prevented the possibility of any structural reform in the state and society. The military provided the power, literally from the barrels of their guns, while the *ülema* provided ideological legitimacy. For example, the Ottomans were unable to follow the example of the Greek community which established a printing press in 1627, because the *ülema* objected that the printing press was a violation of the Sharia. When İbrahim Müteferrika, a Hungarian convert, set up the first Ottoman printing press a hundred years later, it survived only until 1742, when it was again shut down because of strong opposition from the reactionaries. The press was finally able to reopen in 1784! Even reformers who often diagnosed the problems of the empire correctly generally proposed a solution that asked the sultan to restore the practices of Süleyman the Magnificent, during whose reign the empire was thought to be at its peak.

When the situation seemed critical, such as during the reign of Murad IV (1623–40), a strong ruler was able to restore order but could not carry out fundamental reform. He ended fratricide in 1623 because his brother İbrahim was the last surviving Ottoman apart from Murad, and killing him would put the dynasty at risk. İbrahim was therefore isolated in the Palace and allowed to lead a passive and degenerate life away from political power. By 1632, Murad had established control over the state and continued a policy of conquest, capturing Baghdad from the Safavids in 1638.

The stability proved temporary for, in 1648, when Mehmed IV, a minor, came to the throne, the capital was in a state of anarchy, dominated by the janissaries, while rebel pashas controlled much of central Anatolia and the Venetians blockaded the Dardanelles. But in 1656, Mehmed Köprülü (d.1661) was appointed grand vizier and given absolute power. He is an example of Ottoman meritocracy, an illiterate rising from the sultan's kitchen to the rank of provincial governor and grand vizier, thanks to his own talent and patronage in the Palace. He remained in power for only

five years until his death in 1661. During his brief tenure, he restored control over the janissaries and the rebels in Anatolia, lifted the Venetian blockade at the Dardanelles and restored Ottoman control over Transylvania and Wallachia. Mehmed Köprülü's aggressive policies were continued by his son, Fazıl Ahmed Köprülü (1635–76) and Kara Mustafa Pasha (1676–83). But the political stability of these years did not survive long and the long exhausting wars with the Hapsburgs, marked by the second siege of Vienna in 1683, hastened Ottoman decline.

### GROWING EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

The Treaty of Carlowitz, signed in January 1699, was a turning point in Ottoman–Hapsburg relations. From being the aggressors, the Ottomans were forced to go on the defensive, and they began to take the European example seriously. Sultan Ahmed III (1703–30) led the reform drive during what is known as the ‘Tulip Period’. But his attempts to introduce European methods into the army were thwarted by the *ülema*–janissary alliance. In 1729, faced with the threat of Austrian and Russian armies, the Ottomans invited Western experts to introduce modern methods of warfare. Count Alexander de Bonneval, a French officer, came to Istanbul to modernize the engineer and bombardier corps. Possibly to facilitate his work, he converted to Islam so that a Muslim, not a Christian, might be responsible for the reforms. Known as Ahmed Bey, he entered Ottoman service in 1731 and established a school of military engineering in 1734. He was given the rank of pasha and the title ‘Bombadier’ (*Humbaracı*) the following year. But his reforms did not take root and when another European reformer, Baron de Tott, arrived in Istanbul in 1768, he found hardly any evidence of *Humbaracı*'s efforts, as though he had failed totally to reform the army.

Baron de Tott arrived to carry out military reform while the empire was at war with Russia. The Russian fleet dominated the Aegean Sea by 1770, defeated the Ottoman army on the Danube and invaded the Crimea. The Ottomans suffered such crushing defeats that they were forced to sign a humiliating treaty with Catherine the Great in 1774. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca made the Crimea and northern coast of the Black Sea independent of Ottoman rule.



Catherine was also given the right to protect the Orthodox Church in Istanbul, thereby giving Russia the excuse to intervene in Ottoman affairs. The treaty marked the beginning of what has come to be known as the 'Eastern Question', the attempts by the Great Powers to exploit the multi-religious character of the Ottoman Empire by acting on behalf of the Christian communities. In return, Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774–89) was recognized by Russia – and soon after by other European powers – as the Caliph of all Muslims. According to Article 3 of the Treaty, the Sultan retained his spiritual authority over Muslims in the Crimea, by now ceded to Russia. The Sultan's claim to the caliphate was confirmed under subsequent treaties with the Powers.

The claim to the caliphate was an important innovation and had considerable influence on the future policy of the empire, strengthening the conservatives and enabling them to manipulate Islam in order to forestall reform. After the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, a number of independent sultans had assumed the title, and even Murad I had used it as early as 1326. However, the Ottomans began to attach importance to both the title and its prerogatives after 1774, in order to counter Tsarina Catherine's claim to be the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. The sultans in turn claimed spiritual authority over Muslim communities under Christian rule and found that this was a useful tool to use in their relations with Europe.

Piecemeal reform during the eighteenth century, obstructed by the reactionaries, had failed to improve the situation of the empire against the growing power of the European states. The treaty with Catherine did not bring peace or satisfy Russia's appetite for expansion. In 1783, she annexed the Khanate of Crimea, and three years later the Ottomans were again at war with Russia. When Selim III came to the throne of the troubled empire in 1789, his reign began the empire's longest century of continuous reform, culminating in 1908 with revolution.

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## 2

# From Reform to Revolution, 1789–1908

### REFORM OF THE MILITARY

When Selim III (r.1789–1807) came to the throne in April, revolution in France was just getting underway. His empire was in dire straits: he was at war with Russia, the Hapsburgs had taken Belgrade, Napoleon began the French occupation of Egypt in 1798, the Wahabbis, the founders of religious fundamentalism, were gaining strength in the Hijaz (today's Saudi Arabia), attacking the Ottomans for their lax religious practices, while in the Balkans, Tepedenli Ali Pasha of Janina – in present-day Greece – was in rebellion. He was a local notable (*ayan*) who, like many others throughout the empire, challenged the power of Istanbul and sought autonomy, if not independence, depriving the sultan of revenues. But a recurrent problem for the state was how to curb the power of the janissaries. During the crisis of the seventeenth century, the *devşirme* had fallen into disarray. The janissaries, adversely affected by inflation and the debasement of currency, enrolled their sons and relatives into the corps so that they too could obtain a salary. Moreover, they joined various guilds of artisans and began to ply a craft in order to augment their pay. As a result, the old discipline and esprit de corps that had made them the envy and the scourge of Europe disappeared, and the janissaries became a menace to the sultans. In alliance with the *ülema*, whose

ranks had also swelled as a result of the economic crisis, the janissaries became opponents of any social or military reform that would threaten their position in society. Selim realized that military reform was critical if he were to wage successful warfare at the same time as curbing the growing power of his provincial notables. In 1801, peasants in Serbia revolted because the Ottoman officials and janissaries had seized their land. Istanbul attempted to arm and grant property rights to the peasants but to no avail. In 1815 the principality was granted autonomy. In 1804, the Russians annexed Armenia and northern Azerbaijan and advanced to the very borders of Anatolia. The following year, Mehmed Ali Pasha established his authority in Egypt and soon founded a dynasty that survived until its overthrow by a military coup d'état in July 1952. Mehmed Ali had been sent by Selim to drive out the French army that had destroyed the Mamluks and entered the heartlands of Islam for the first time since the eleventh century.

Selim introduced military reform in these inauspicious times. Inspired by the example of the French Revolution, whose impact was felt in Istanbul, Selim called his new army the 'new order' (*nizam-ı cedid*). He invited experts from France, built new barracks and training schools and moved forward cautiously. But he had to raise taxes in order to finance his reforms and this measure met with opposition. When, in 1805, he wanted to create his new army in the Balkans, the notables rose up in rebellion. Unable to crush the rebels, Selim found that the janissaries had overturned their soup cauldrons in rebellion as well. The reformers were isolated and once again the janissary-*ülema* alliance had triumphed. Selim was deposed in 1807 and his 'new order' army was disbanded.

Selim's reformers, mainly bureaucrats, men of the Sublime Porte who survived slaughter by the janissaries, took refuge with Alemdar Mustafa Pasha (1750–1808), a notable of Ruscuk in the Balkans. Mustafa Pasha decided to support reform and restore Selim, who had been replaced by Mustafa IV (r.1807–8). He marched on Istanbul, but Selim was murdered in the palace and Alemdar Mustafa brought Mahmud II (1808–38) to the Ottoman throne and became his grand vizier. His goal was to integrate provincial notables into the imperial system by creating a charter that would be honoured by the sultan, giving them rights and obli-

gations. The result of his consultations with the empire's notables and the reformers was the signing of the 'Deed of Agreement' (*Send-i İttifak*), sometimes described as the Ottoman Magna Carta. The notables swore to be loyal to the sultan so long as he did not violate the law. They agreed to supply troops and to the establishment of a modern army, and also to pay taxes levied after consultation with them. Finally, they demanded an end to arbitrary punishment inflicted by the sultan. It seemed as though the provincial notables and the bureaucrats were gaining the recognition they had failed to win when their power was checked by the *devşirme* some centuries before. But that proved to be illusory, for the janissaries revolted again and killed Alemdar Mustafa. Mahmud was saved because he had executed Mustafa IV and had thus become the last surviving Ottoman. The janissaries were forced to accept Mahmud but he, in turn, agreed to disband the new army. For the moment, military reform was halted until the historical circumstances favoured it a few years later.

Historic conjunctions appear at rare moments in a country's history when the usual forces that provide social balance and maintain the status quo break down. War and defeat are often the cause of such breakdowns – which is what happened in Egypt when this Ottoman province was invaded by Napoleon in 1798. Napoleon had defeated the Mamluks and had destroyed their social power, which had left the *ülema*, another source of conservatism, defenceless and impotent. Thus when Mehmed Ali assumed political authority in 1805, he inherited a virtual political *tabula rasa* upon which he could write his own programme. What little threat the Mamluks posed to his regime he destroyed when he massacred their leaders in the citadel of Cairo in 1811.

Mahmud's moment in history arrived in the 1820s, during the Greek war of independence. He defeated Tependeli Ali's rebellion in 1820 with some difficulty, but in so doing he weakened his position in the region, and the Greeks of the Danube provinces and Morea seized the opportunity to rebel and fight for their independence. The janissaries failed to defeat the rebels, resulting in the capture of Athens by Greek insurgents. In 1824, Mahmud appealed to Mehmed Ali of Egypt, his suzerain, to send his modern army against the rebels and Ibrahim Pasha, Mehmed Ali's son, quickly quelled the rebellion. But the Great Powers – England,

France, and Russia – intervened on behalf of the Greeks and destroyed the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet in October 1827. Russia declared war on the Sultan and the war was concluded with the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. As a result, Mahmud was forced to give autonomy to Greece, Serbia, and Rumania, and the Kingdom of Greece was established in 1830 with the consent of the Powers.

The Greek war revealed to Ottoman Muslims the impotence of the janissaries – who could not even overcome rebel insurgents let alone an organized army – without the assistance of a modern army organized by the empire's governor in Egypt. For Mahmud, this was a historical conjunction similar to the defeat of the Mamluks in Egypt. The janissaries had lost face, as well as the support of the artisans of Istanbul. When they rebelled in 1826, the janissaries no longer had any popular support in the capital and even the *ülema* held back; both artisans and *ülema* welcomed the elimination of the janissaries and the creation of a modern army. The massacre was described as an 'auspicious event' and Mahmud created his new army which, in order to appease conservative elements, he called the 'Victorious Army of Muhammad' under a '*ser'asker*' (war minister) and not under the ağa of the janissaries. Janissary standards, usually decorated with pictures of various animals, were replaced by a single flag decorated with the star and crescent, a symbol adopted later by the republic. Mahmud also introduced modern uniforms, a frock-coat to be worn by his bureaucrats, and the fez hat to mark his new order – the rise of a new class and the demise of the old. The establishment of the empire's first newspaper in 1831, emulating Mehmed Ali's example, was also an important step in the modernization of society. The paper, though only read by the elite, influenced the creation of 'public opinion' and the development of the language.

Without the support of the janissaries, the *ülema* no longer had the influence to prevent reform, and reforms came fast and furious. Students were sent to Europe to learn modern methods. New schools were set up, including a school of medicine (1831) and the War College in 1834; the entire governmental structure was bureaucratized. The new army was trained in an entirely new tradition, breaking all ties to the past; the link between the army and religion – the Bektāşi order of dervishes – was broken when the order was abolished. Ottoman officers, with their modern education and

outlook, became the vanguard of secular progress. The financial independence of the *ülema* ended with the creation of the inspectorate of foundations, or *vakfs*, and the Şeyhülislam virtually became a civil servant, acquiring his own office. The Sublime Porte, the heart of Ottoman government, was modernized with bureaux that were later transformed into ministries – civil affairs, the interior, and foreign affairs – led by a grand vizier. Mahmud also set up a translation bureau to train Muslim interpreters or dragomans, a task that had been performed by the Greek aristocracy, the Phanariot Greeks, before the Greek war of independence. Ottoman Greeks and Armenians continued to play a prominent role in the conduct of foreign affairs as ambassadors and even as a foreign minister, but Muslims began to learn European languages and that was an important innovation which had radical consequences, as these languages, especially French, brought them in contact with new ideas such as liberty and constitutionalism. Embassies in the major European capitals, established by Selim III, were restored, permanently enhancing the impact of the West on the bureaucratic class.

#### THE SUBLIME PORTE AND MEHMED ALI

The class that gained from these and later reforms was the men of the Sublime Porte, who began to curb the autocratic powers of the Sultan by forcing him to adhere to ‘constitutional’ forms. Like the men of the *devşirme*, who had come to the fore in the second half of the sixteenth century, the men of the Sublime Porte were establishing their claim to power in the nineteenth. As there was no rising middle class in Ottoman society demanding change, the bureaucrats used the threat of European intervention to force the sultan to succumb to their schemes. The Great Powers of Europe – England, France, Austria, Russia, Prussia and Germany, and Italy after 1870 – were crucial players in the development of the ‘Eastern Question’. They brought about the creation of an independent Greek state, and the Porte required their support to control the ambitions of Mehmed Ali of Egypt, the first successful modernizer of the non-Western world.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Mehmed Ali had created a state with a modern army and an industrial economy. He had regional ambitions that clashed with those of Mahmud and



Great Britain, for the British could not permit a strong modern state to control such a strategic country as Egypt and threaten Britain's route to India and the east. The Egyptians went to war against the Ottomans in 1831, advanced into Anatolia, defeated the Ottoman army led by the grand vizier, and threatened the capital. Mahmud was forced to appeal to Russia, and the tsar responded by sending naval squadrons and troops to defend Istanbul. Russian military help against a fellow Muslim required a *fetva*, a religious injunction from the Şeyhulislam, to make it acceptable to the people! Mahmud then signed the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi with Russia on 8 July 1833, marking the zenith of Russia's influence in Istanbul. But Britain and France refused to accept Russian hegemony at Istanbul and after the Ottoman–Egyptian war of 1839–41, they intervened and forced Mehmed Ali to restore Syria to the Porte, while he was recognized as the hereditary ruler of Egypt.

Apart from the empire's diplomatic dependence on Europe during these years, its economic dependence on Europe, especially Britain, also increased. The Porte had begun to surrender its economic monopoly in the eighteenth century, when it was forced to allow its provincial notables to sell directly to European merchants. In 1829, the Treaty of Adrianople forced it to permit the notables of Wallachia and Moldavia, the emerging agrarian middle class, to sell their agricultural produce to foreign merchants at higher market prices rather than the lower prices set by the state. The Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention of 1838 established Ottoman economic policy until the abolition of capitulation in September 1914. It gave important commercial privileges to Britain, which at that time was embarking on the second phase of its industrial revolution; Britain required markets for her goods and she therefore engaged the Ottomans in the economic and political network of an emerging industrial civilization. The convention removed all state monopolies and allowed British merchants to purchase goods throughout the Ottoman Empire, including Egypt, which remained nominally part of the empire until 1914 when it became a British protectorate. As a result, Egypt's state-driven economy was destroyed. Duties were limited to 5 per cent on imports, 12 per cent on exports, and 3 per cent on transit. Initially, the convention was signed by Britain, but other European powers were soon given the same privileges. The Porte

was able to have import duties raised to 8 per cent in the 1861–2 negotiations and to 11 per cent in 1907. The attempt to raise these duties by a further 4 per cent failed dismally. In short, the duties established by the regime of the capitulations did not provide the protection the domestic market needed to industrialize, and the attempt to industrialize after 1847 ended in abject failure and was never made again.

Duties could not be raised unilaterally by the Porte and required the consent of all the signatories. That was the stipulation that Britain imposed on the capitulation after she signed a treaty with the Ottomans in 1809; the capitulations were no longer seen by Europe as privileges granted unilaterally by the sultan, but rights negotiated by the Powers, rights that could be altered only by multilateral agreement. The capitulations and other treaties became a heavy burden on the Porte, a burden that the Ottomans were only able to shed after Europe was at war in 1914.

#### THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS WESTERNIZATION

Apart from a desire to destroy Mehmed Ali's experiment in modernization, Ottoman statesmen believed that the Ottoman Empire would benefit greatly by being integrated into the world market that the British were in the process of creating. In 1824 Mahmud had taken away the privileges that protected Ottoman merchants, forcing them to compete with foreign merchants without state protection. That measure began to undermine Ottoman commerce and manufactures, a process that was completed by the 1838 convention. The new agrarian middle class benefited from the liberalization of trade, for they were able to sell their produce at prices higher than those paid by the state. Merchants who sold foreign imports and acted as middlemen on behalf of European companies also prospered. But the crafts withered, unable to withstand the competition of cheaper, machine-made goods from Europe. Such ports as İzmir, Istanbul, Salonica, and Beirut prospered as more and more goods were imported and exported, and that created a vibrant economic climate that led to the immigration of Greeks from a stagnant Greece to a dynamic Ottoman Empire.

The benefits of free trade went disproportionately to the Christian communities of the empire because they were able to

become the protégés of foreign merchants residing in Ottoman lands. As interpreted by the Powers, the capitulations permitted them to sell protection to their co-religionists and to make them protégés, thereby giving them the same protection they had enjoyed under the capitulations. The French consuls were able to make protégés, of Ottoman Catholics, the British of Protestants, and the Russians of Orthodox Christians. Only Jewish Ottomans were excluded because there was no Jewish nation. With the creation of a united Italy, Italian consuls took it upon themselves to sell Italian protection to a few Ottoman Jews. Consequently, the Jewish community tended to identify with the problems of the Muslim Ottomans, including their quest for a new patriotic identity. Not only did such a status allow Ottoman Christian merchants to benefit from lower taxes, it also meant that Ottoman authorities were unable to apply Ottoman laws since they could be brought only before consular courts.

#### EMERGENCE OF A NEW MIDDLE CLASS

Since a commercial/industrial Muslim middle class did not emerge as a result of the liberalization and the integration of the empire into the world economy, the Porte turned to the landlords to create a class that would be totally loyal to the new state that the bureaucrats were fashioning. The land code of 1858 was a step towards legalizing the private ownership of land. Earlier, in 1847, the Porte had passed a law whose aim was to encourage cultivators to farm unused state lands. Instead of being used by landless peasants, this law was manipulated by local landlords to augment their holdings, making them more prosperous and politically powerful. In regions where tribal life was prevalent, land was registered in the name of the tribal leaders, who became the landowners and their clansmen the peasants. One of the aims of this land code was to settle the tribes. Most of these landlords farmed their lands using peasants as sharecroppers, hardly encouraging innovation on the land. However, some became capitalist farmers and grew such cash crops as tobacco and cotton, and prospered especially during and after the American civil war, when demand for their cotton grew on the European market. These are the men who emerged as the new middle class in the twentieth century, after the constitutional revolution of 1908.

The initiative for reform passed entirely to the bureaucrats on the death of Mahmud II on 30 June 1839. His successor, Abdülmecid I (1839–61), was only sixteen when he came to the throne and was guided by Mustafa Reşid Pasha, one of the great reforming statesmen of the era. Abdülmecid became sultan at a critical juncture during the crisis with Mehmed Ali, and Reşid Pasha persuaded him that if he carried out reforms that modernized the empire he would win the support of Europe, especially that of Great Britain. Abdülmecid agreed and launched an era of reform (1839–76) known collectively as the *Tanzimat*.

### TANZIMAT (RESTRUCTURING)

The first proclamation (the Charter of the Rose Chamber) was announced on 3 November 1838. This promised the beginning of a new age with equality for all – Muslim and non-Muslim – the end of bribery and corruption and no punishment without trial, that is to say, it established the rule of law. The lives, honour and property of all Ottoman subjects were guaranteed, putting an end to the status of *kul* under which the sultan's servants could be executed at the ruler's whim and their property confiscated. The last such political execution had taken place in 1837, when Mahmud II had Pertev Pasha killed because of palace intrigue, and the lesson was not lost on Reşid Pasha. The charter gave state officials the security of life and property and they came into their own. Tax-farming was also abolished, but within a few years the law was sabotaged by tax-farmers who had much to lose and the practice continued until the end of the empire.

The Charter of 1839 was a crucial step in the process of secularization, which continued until the dissolution of the empire and beyond. While it undermined the principle of the traditional *millet* system, based on privileges for religious communities, the communities were unwilling to abandon their privileges at the same time as welcoming the equality. The Great Powers were asked to observe its implementation; in fact, they were invited to implicitly supervise Ottoman affairs if the Porte did not live up to its promise. They were being made the guarantors of reform. The *Tanzimat* statesmen calculated that if the sultan strayed from the path of reform, the European ambassadors would bring him back

to the path since there was no internal social force that could do so. They relied on the support of the foreign embassies to keep up the pressure for Westernization. Stratford de Redcliffe (1786–1880), Britain’s ambassador at the Porte, played a particularly important role in the Westernization movement of the bureaucracy; in fact, some scholars claim that the charter was largely his work, as he was considered to be a most influential figure among the Ottoman Westernizing reformers. He had spent much of his professional life in Istanbul before he became Britain’s ambassador in 1847 and remained in Istanbul until 1858 where he was known as the ‘Grand Ambassador’, the doyen of the diplomatic corps. He disliked Russia and her influence, as directed through the Orthodox Church, and he promoted Protestantism as an alternative. He succeeded in having the Protestant Church and community recognized as a separate *millet* in 1850, even as he promoted Westernization and reform.

Just as the Charter of 1839 followed the Mehmed Ali crisis, the second Royal Charter was proclaimed on 18 February 1856, while the Congress was meeting in Paris (February–March 1856) to settle the Eastern Question after the Crimean War. The Crimean War broke out when the Sublime Porte refused to accept a proposal by Russia that she be allowed to protect Orthodox Christians in the empire. Supported by Britain and France, the Ottomans declared war on Russia on 23 September 1853. The British and French joined the war in March 1854 and the fighting took place on the Crimean peninsula. The Tsar agreed to make peace on 1 February 1856, when he was faced with defeat and the threat of Austria joining the anti-Russian coalition.

The Crimean War had other local results. Trade in Western commodities increased dramatically as European armies camped in the environs of the capital. The first telegraphic lines were laid between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, revolutionizing communications, especially for commercial purposes. Modern war and the example of Florence Nightingale’s work in the Crimea led to the founding of the Ottoman counterpart of the Red Cross Society, in June 1868. Called simply the ‘Society for helping sick and wounded Ottoman Soldiers’, it was renamed ‘the Ottoman Red Crescent Society’ in June 1877 and continues as such to the present.

By the Treaty of Paris, Russia surrendered the mouth of the Danube and a part of Bessarabia to the future Rumania; the province of Kars in the Caucasus was given to the Porte, and Russia agreed to renounce her claim to protect the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. The Black Sea was neutralized until the treaty was revised in 1871. The Ottoman Empire was included in the European Concert system and the Powers guaranteed its independence and territorial integrity. But the Ottomans were not considered a European state and so were not granted equality. The Ottoman proposal to abrogate the capitulations was ignored, as the Powers claimed that Ottoman society and its laws were too alien for Europeans to live under. Nevertheless, in order to further the process of Westernization and secularization, the royal charter of 1856 reaffirmed the terms of the 1839 charter and defined in more precise terms equality between Muslim and Christian subjects. But the European powers saw the question of equality totally differently. The Porte saw equality as equality before the law for all Ottoman subjects, with communal privileges restricted to religious affairs, and the religious community (*millet*) reduced to a congregation (*cemaat*). For Russians, equality meant the extension of the religious communities' right to autonomy if not independence. For the British, equality meant the equality of the *millets* as corporate communities and not equality between Christians and Muslims as Ottoman subjects as the Porte proposed. The Porte also carried out educational measures that would promote understanding between the communities and lead to the success of Ottomanism, an ideology that focused loyalty around the person of the sultan and the dynasty. The opening of the Lycée of Galatasaray in 1868 was intended to bring together the intelligentsia of all communities in a secular environment to promote unity. After initial resistance from virtually all the communities, the institution flourished and was followed by other foreign religious institutions, such as Robert College, founded by American missionaries. These institutions stimulated the growth, not of Ottomanism but of national sentiment, among the cosmopolitan student body of the empire.

The Charter of 1856 strengthened the position of the Christian population, especially that of the rising middle class, while that of its Muslim counterpart became weaker. The Christian communities

were secularized and the hold of their clergy weakened. The communities began to acquire the characteristics of individual 'nations' and began to undergo a 'renaissance' during which they recovered their history, language, and literature. In 1863, the Armenian community had its own constitution and a 'national' assembly, which heightened national aspirations. In February 1870, the Porte permitted the creation of the Bulgarian Church, independent of the authority of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Bulgarian Exarch was appointed head of the Bulgarian *millet* and the Exarchate began the task of creating the Bulgarian state and the Bulgarian individual. Services were thereafter conducted in Bulgarian, the language of Sofia, and local dialects were discouraged, especially when the language was introduced in schools.

The Muslims received none of these benefits from the *Tanzimat* reforms. There was no 'national' Church with which they could identify, as Islam remained a universal religion. Economically they found it more difficult to compete against the protected Christian merchants. Therefore they began to abandon commerce and industry and seek employment in the state bureaucracy and army. Initially, after the reforms of Mahmud II, the bureaucracy grew and absorbed this population, providing it with a modern education and secure employment. But by the 1860s, the Ottoman bureaucracy had reached saturation point; not only was it more difficult to find work in the bureaucracy, but promotion came to depend on patronage. Those who were affected by this new trend – the new intelligentsia – blamed the *Tanzimat* statesmen for the deterioration of the empire and for their own plight because of the concessions they had made to Europe and to Ottoman Christians.

## THE YOUNG OTTOMANS MOVEMENT

A new movement known as the 'Young Ottomans' rose out of this popular discontent. This was the first modern opposition movement critical of the regime. The Young Ottomans rebuked the high bureaucrats, the pashas, for making the Europeans, the Levantines (people of European origin who settled in the empire), and some Christians, a privileged group while neglecting the Muslim population. They criticized the Porte for making economic concessions to Europe and undermining the empire's

economy. All the reforms of the *Tanzimat* had not led to the creation of a modern economy; they had merely led to the subordination of the Ottoman economy to that of Europe. Some regions of the empire had been totally integrated into the economy of a European country and their links with Istanbul were weakened. Syria's economy was integrated into that of France and Iraq's into that of Britain, so that when the Ottoman Empire was partitioned after the First World War, these regions were mandated to these countries.

But the Young Ottomans were also the products of the *Tanzimat* era. They emerged out of the influence of the press and education of those years, which permitted the growth of an intelligentsia. Such intellectuals as İbrahim Şinasi (1824–71) expressed novel ideas in the journals that were read only by the literate few, but heard by the many when their ideas were read in the coffee houses of the cities and towns. The Porte responded by trying to curb the press and introducing laws which punished ideas critical of the regime. This led the intelligentsia to found secret societies devoted to the fall of the regime.

The recognition of Ismail Pasha as the hereditary Khedive (ruler) of Egypt in 1867 had unintended consequences for the Young Ottomans. The introduction of primogeniture alienated his brother Mustafa Fazıl, who was next in line to Ismail, and made him a dissident and one of the leaders of the Young Ottomans movement. While in exile in Europe in 1867, he wrote an open letter to Sultan Abdülaziz (r.1861–76) recommending constitutional monarchy as a solution to the empire's problems and calling for a government that guaranteed all liberal freedoms. The Young Ottomans wanted to end the autocracy of the sultan and his bureaucrats, convinced that the laws of the state could not be reformed under absolutism. The Porte responded by taking harsh measures against its critics, and such journalists as Namık Kemal (1840–88) and Ali Suavi (1838–78) were forced to leave Istanbul. Having failed to take over the government in Istanbul, the opposition regrouped in France, where they formed the Young Ottomans Society and continued their opposition to the Porte in a more sympathetic environment.

In their journals the Young Ottomans repeatedly called for a constitution and representative government, the first to establish a



contract between the sultan and his subjects, and the second to discuss and legislate on the affairs of the empire. They emphasized the deterioration in the economic life of the people and the financial situation of the state, and lamented the Porte's dependence on the Great Powers and their increasing interference in Ottoman affairs. These factors were undermining the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, all of which did not bode well for the future. For them, the solution was to establish a government in which the people participated and in which the sultan was subject to law.

But the Young Ottomans did not propose revolutionary change. Their objective was not to overthrow the system, but merely to reform it so that it was more inclusive and capable of standing up to European expansion. They belonged to the intelligentsia and lacked a social base that was radically different from the elite. Education and culture alienated them from the peasantry and the urban classes of artisans and merchants of the bazaar. Far from wishing to incite revolution, they were convinced that the only way to bring about real change was to bring to the throne a ruler sympathetic to their ideas.

Namık Kemal expressed the ideas of Ottoman liberalism coherently and consequently became the most influential thinker among the Young Ottomans, with ideas that were significant during his lifetime and long after his death. His poetry, plays and essays were widely read by the intelligentsia, even though they were banned by the regime. Apart from developing the notion of liberty, he introduced the doctrine of natural rights, perhaps for the first time in Islamic thought, as well as the idea of *vatan* (*patrie* or fatherland) and territorial patriotism, and the sovereignty of the people. Patriotism/Ottomanism was the most potent of his ideas: all Ottomans, regardless of their religion or language, owed loyalty not to the Ottoman dynasty but to their Ottoman fatherland. His ideas came mainly from post-revolutionary France, but were expressed in terms that would be comprehended by his Islamic milieu because he was able to reconcile them with the Sharia. Rousseau's social contract was explained as the Islamic oath of allegiance (*biat*) that established a contract between the ruler and the ruled. The Sharia was malleable and capable of adapting to progress no matter where it came from. Unlike earlier critics of

Ottoman decline, Namik Kemal argued that it was impossible to go back to an imagined glorious past, but legitimate to adopt such practices as constitutionalism that had been already tried successfully in the West.

While in exile in Europe, Namik Kemal came to fully understand the importance of contemporary Western advances in technology. But he realized that the Ottomans could only make material progress after they had abandoned the traditions of fatalism and adopted the ideas of freedom and progress. The Ottomans had failed to make rapid progress, not because Islam was the barrier, but because the empire had become part of the world market and its economy and political life was dominated by Europe. That was the shortcoming that had to be rectified.

#### BANKRUPTCY AND UPEHAVAL: UNRAVELLING OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

While the Young Ottomans criticized the results of the *Tanzimat* reforms, the empire was heading for a financial crisis that forced the Porte to declare bankruptcy in October 1875. The empire had remained financially solvent until the government had to borrow money from Europe in 1854 during the Crimean War. The money raised from European loans was not used productively to create an infrastructure for a modern economy by building roads and railways so as to create a 'national' market. Instead the Court spent huge sums in ostentatious consumption, building modern palaces, buying arms from Europe and building a large navy. Huge sums of borrowed money were spent on royal weddings. When a royal princess died in 1880, she left behind the considerable debt of 16,000 gold liras, money borrowed from the Galata bankers.

The empire's economic, financial, and political situation was adversely affected by the outbreak of peasant rebellion in Herzegovina in 1875. What began as a peasant uprising against abuses by landlords, soon acquired religious and national overtones, of Christian Slavs against their Muslim overlords. The leadership of the movement began calling for union with their Slavic brothers in Serbia, and this won them the support of the pan-Slav movement in Russia which hoped to expand its influence in the Balkans. That is precisely what the Austrians feared, as

Slavic nationalism would block Vienna's expansion to the Aegean Sea and the port of Salonika. The situation became even more complicated in May 1876, when the Bulgarians revolted against the Ottomans and Serbia and Montenegro declared war. The strategic interests of the Great Powers clashed and they were therefore unable to resolve the conflict diplomatically. The Russians supported the rebels; the Austro-Hungarians opposed them, fearing the impact of the pan-Slavic movement in their own empire. Britain was fearful that Russia's growing influence in the region would adversely affect her own position. German unification in 1870/71 added a new player to the diplomatic game, making it even more complex.

The Ottomans suppressed the rebellion with great ferocity, soundly defeating the Serbs and Montenegrins. In Britain, William Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, exploited the Ottoman suppression of the Bulgarian rebellion against Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, his pro-Ottoman Tory rival. He denounced the Ottomans as barbarians who had committed atrocities against Christian Bulgarians, and appealed for British support for the rebels. In that climate, the Russians declared war in April 1877, captured Plevna after a long siege that delayed their advance, and arrived at the outskirts of Istanbul during the spring of 1878. There, at the village of San Stefano (today's Yeşilköy), Russia dictated peace terms to the Porte: an enlarged Bulgaria, extending to the Aegean Sea, was to become autonomous, cutting off Ottoman access to the provinces of Albania and Macedonia; Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro were to be granted independence, while Russia annexed the provinces of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum in the Caucasus; as compensation, Vienna was to be allowed to administer Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Britain was unwilling to accept these Russian gains and sent warships to Istanbul. Bismarck, the German chancellor, fearing a Great Power confrontation, acted as 'honest broker'. He convened the Congress of Berlin (June–July 1878) and revised the Treaty of San Stefano, settling the Eastern Question by achieving a balance in the region between Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Britain. Autonomous Bulgaria was reduced in size and the province of Eastern Rumelia, nominally Ottoman but with a Christian governor, was established south of Bulgaria; it united with

Bulgaria in 1881. The independence of Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania was confirmed, as was Russia's annexations in the Caucasus and Vienna's administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina. With the Cyprus Convention of 4 June, the Ottomans ceded the strategic island of Cyprus to Britain in return for the promise of British protection against further Russian encroachments in Anatolia. Other lands ceded by the Porte at San Stefano were restored to the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Berlin also included Article LXI, by which the Porte undertook to carry out, under the supervision of the Powers, 'the ameliorations and the reforms ... in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and the Kurds'. That was a crucial provision that had dire consequences for the future of the Ottoman–Armenian relationship. As a result of the congress, the Ottomans lost about 40 per cent of their empire and about 20 per cent of their population (about two million Muslims). Many fled to Istanbul and Anatolia as refugees from the Balkans, and the population of Istanbul is thought to have doubled as a result of the crisis and war.

#### FROM AUTOCRACY TO CONSTITUTIONALISM

Rebellion and war confronted the Porte with a severe conundrum. It was able to crush the rebellion and wage war successfully against its enemies in the Balkans, but was in a dilemma as to how it should deal with the Great Powers. The reformers decided that the empire required a constitutional monarchy so as to win the sympathy and support of Europe. Such a regime would not be possible under Sultan Abdülaziz and he was therefore forced to abdicate on 30 May 1876, committing suicide four days later.

Midhat Pasha (1822–84) the great reforming statesman, believed that under the new sultan they could establish a constitutional regime with an elected assembly that would curb the corruption of the Palace and bring financial order to the empire. But Murad V turned out to be mentally impaired and was therefore dethroned and replaced by Abdülhamid II (r.1876–1909). He came to the throne on 31 August, having promised Midhat that he would rule as a constitutional monarch. He ordered the preparation of a constitution, calculating that a

constitutional regime would prevent European intervention and that the Powers would allow the empire to manage its own affairs. But the Great Powers had already decided to hold an international conference in Istanbul to discuss the crisis in the Balkans and the measures necessary to resolve it.

The conference met on 23 December 1876 and the Porte proclaimed the inauguration of the constitutional regime on the same day, suggesting that the conference had become redundant. But the ambassadors refused to accept this logic and proposed a plan of reform for the Balkans that granted autonomy for Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina. When the Porte rejected this proposal, the ambassadors issued the warning that they would leave the capital and that, in such circumstances, Russia might declare war. The Porte reconsidered the plan and rejected it once more, whereupon the ambassadors left Istanbul, leaving the situation up in the air. But the constitutional experiment continued even though its principal architect, Grand Vizier Midhat Pasha, was dismissed by the sultan and exiled. Elections were held on 20 March 1877. They were indirect, two-tiered elections in which the notables of each religious community elected its own representatives to the assembly; in the upper house or the Chamber of Notables, members were appointed by the sultan.

The rapid transition from autocracy to constitutionalism was quite an accomplishment for the reformers. In less than a decade they had apparently managed to accomplish what had taken centuries in Europe, and what the Russian reformers were able to achieve a generation later, and then only after a revolution. Moreover, the Assembly, representing the various *millets*, acted with surprising patriotism in the face of an ongoing crisis and war. While there was criticism of the government, it was couched in constructive and rational terms, which betrayed loyalty to the idea of Ottomanism and the state. But war turned out to be inauspicious for the continuation of constitutional government. Russia declared war on 24 April 1877. When the Russian army advanced towards the capital the following year, the sultan was given a pretext to suspend parliament. In February 1878, parliament was suspended and did not reconvene for the next thirty years, until the restoration of the constitution in July 1908. But Abdülhamid maintained the fiction that he was acting according to the consti-

tution throughout his reign. Laws that he enacted, he said, would be debated by the Assembly when it met again, and he did his constitutional duty and appointed members to the Chamber of Notables until 1880. The war against Russia, Europe's partisan attitude towards the Ottomans and the crisis in the Balkans shattered the illusions of the reformers with regard to Europe's attitude towards the Muslim world. The reformers were faced with the contradiction of adopting Western ideas and institutions while struggling against Western imperialism.

European hegemony around the world during the second half of the nineteenth century alienated people from the West and Westernization and encouraged them to turn to their indigenous traditions and nativism. This was as true for India and Asia as for the Islamic world. Such Ottoman thinkers as Namik Kemal were in the forefront of this movement, and Abdülhamid encouraged this trend, for it added to his popularity throughout the Muslim world and weakened the arguments of the opposition. Islam was under pressure from Western imperialism in Iran and India, North Africa and South-East Asia. Muslims around the world saw the Ottoman Empire as the last remaining Islamic power capable of standing up to the West, and Sultan Abdülhamid as the universal caliph of the Islamic world leading the resistance. The sultan exploited the office of caliph to bolster his position against the West, and used political Islam as an ideology in the struggle against imperialism. He is described as a pan-Islamist, but his purpose was to use Islam for a defensive, not aggressive, purpose; he called for Islamic unity and solidarity and in that he was partly successful. Abdülhamid's policy was facilitated by the historical conjunction that was marked by the rise of imperial Germany. He won the support of the German kaiser, who had no Muslim colonies and who could therefore befriend a Muslim ruler and use this friendship against Germany's imperial rivals – Britain, France, and Russia. Kaiser Wilhelm II paid a state visit to the Ottoman Empire in October 1898, the only European ruler to do so. After Istanbul he went to Jerusalem, riding into the city on a black charger, and placed a wreath on the tomb of Saladin, the great Muslim hero who had defeated the crusaders. The kaiser then proclaimed himself a friend of the Muslim peoples, cementing a relation that led to the German–Ottoman alliance during the First World War.

## EMERGING TRADITIONALISM

Compared to Ottomanism and Islam, the ideology of Turkism remained marginal and restricted to a small minority of intellectuals who were familiar with the works of or personally knew such European Turcologists as the Frenchman Leon Cahun (1841–1900) or the Hungarian Arminius Vambery (1832–1913); the latter was a friend of Abdülhamid and is alleged to have acted as his spy among the dissidents! Muslim intellectuals who came to Istanbul from Russia were more conscious of being ‘Turks’. They brought with them the idea of nationalism for they had confronted the ideology of Slavism on a daily basis in the Russian Empire. Such activists as İsmail Gasparinski (1851–1914), Yusuf Akçura (1876–1935) and Ahmet Ağayev (1869–1939) popularized the ideology of Turkism. But they could not make it the dominant ideology and replace Ottomanism/Islamism while Turks ruled over a multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire.

Even after the settlement of the Congress of Berlin, the Great Powers continued to pressure the Ottoman Empire as they consolidated their hold on the region. In May 1881 France established a protectorate over Tunisia to forestall Italian ambitions, totally disregarding the promise of Ottoman territorial integrity made at Berlin. Egypt’s financial troubles, the declaration of bankruptcy, and the anti-regime rebellion in the army led to British intervention in September 1882, followed by an occupation that lasted until 1954. In the Balkans and Greece, the struggle to satisfy national aspirations continued. The Greek attempt to wrest the island of Crete in 1897 led to a war that the Ottomans won on the battlefield but lost at the peace table. Thanks to Great Power intervention, the sultan was forced to give up Thessaly and establish an autonomous regime in Crete, the prelude to the island’s annexation in 1912.

Macedonia, the region between Albania and Thrace, was contested by Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Muslims. Macedonia’s principal city, Salonika, was predominantly Jewish, inhabited by Jews who had been expelled from Spain after 1492 and who were pro-Ottoman. All the communities organized guerrilla bands to fight for their own national cause, creating a situation of political confusion that invited foreign intervention. The Powers called for reform and the Porte agreed to take measures that would appease

the Christian population. But Russia and Austria, who had conflicting interests in the region, found the Porte's reform measures unsatisfactory and made proposals of their own. In 1903, they succeeded in establishing quasi-foreign control over Macedonia, but violence continued until the constitutional revolution of July 1908, which established temporary harmony between the communities.

The Armenian community in Asia Minor was affected by the growth of nationalism in the region throughout the nineteenth century. Missionary activity stimulated a cultural renaissance, leading to a revival of the classical language and literature, as well as the secularization of communal life. The Armenian intelligentsia began to agitate for representative government within the community, as well as protection from tribal and feudal elements which dominated the region. Russia patronized the reform movement and Article LXI of the Berlin Treaty promised joint action if the Ottoman government failed to satisfy Armenian demands. The Armenians organized themselves to struggle for national rights and found support from neighbouring Russia. But the Armenian movement was divided, with some willing to struggle alongside the Young Ottomans, later the Young Turks, so as to bring about a liberal regime that would satisfy Armenian aspirations. These were members of the class of notables, mainly merchants, bankers and professionals, who benefited from being part of a large empire rather than members of a small national state. Those who wanted to create a nation state in Asia Minor were farmers and provincial merchants, and they emulated the Balkan example of provoking European intervention on behalf of their cause. The attempt to provoke intervention failed when they seized the Imperial Ottoman Bank, an Anglo-French institution, in Istanbul in August 1896, but the Great Powers were too divided to act in concert and intervene. As a result, the Armenian movement was crushed for the moment.

Apart from dealing with Great Power involvement in the affairs of his empire, Abdülhamid carried out reforms in many areas in order to put his house in order. Finance was a principal concern, and the possibility of European financial control, as in Tunisia and Egypt, leading to occupation, seemed real. So in November 1881, the sultan agreed to the creation of the Ottoman Public Debt (OPD), an



institution independent of the finance ministry, to service the empire's loans. The delegates to the OPD were provided by England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottoman Public Debt soon had a staff larger than the Ottoman finance ministry. It collected some of the most important taxes and paid the foreign bondholders from its receipts. The sultan introduced new taxes to make up for the shortfall, but he failed to tax the incomes of thousands of foreigners, as well as the thousands of protégés, who were able to take advantage of the capitulation treaties.

As a result of the creation of the OPD administration, foreign investors had greater confidence in the sultan's financial regime and the future of the empire. Consequently, foreign capital was invested in the empire to create an economic infrastructure of railways, roads, mines, and steamships, integrating the empire more closely into the expanding world market. Limited progress was made with the telephone system because Abdülhamid feared that it would be used for subversive purposes, but railway, road, and port construction increased dramatically during his reign, though never sufficiently to meet the needs of empire.

Abdülhamid understood the importance of agriculture and therefore promoted its development by founding specialist societies. The founding of the Agricultural Bank in 1888 was of great significance, for its aim was to regulate credit to farmers and cut out the moneylenders. Unfortunately, only the large landowners benefited by obtaining loans to enlarge and improve their holdings, while the small subsistence farmer could not obtain money and therefore stuck to old methods of cultivation. There was an expansion of large farms and farmers growing cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, figs, and olives that could be marketed for export. These prospered and became the rural bourgeoisie, influential in political life after 1908.

Commerce benefited from the export of agricultural goods and minerals. Unprotected industry, on the other hand, could not compete against the imports from Europe. Consequently, industry was local and small scale and artisans concentrated on such goods as leather, glass, cloth, paper, and hand-woven carpets. As a result, Ottoman industry remained underdeveloped, and only during the republic were measures taken to industrialize.

Politically, Abdülhamid's educational reforms proved to be the most significant, for they helped to undermine his regime. By introducing these reforms, the sultan dug his own political grave! Thus during his reign, education among the Muslim population expanded dramatically, though not as rapidly as among the non-Muslim communities. Attention was focused on middle and high schools and primary education was neglected so that overall illiteracy remained high. But secular education, especially for military and bureaucratic careers, became the ladder of upward mobility for the urban lower middle class. The Hamidian schools allowed people of the lower middle class to rise up the social ladder by joining the army. Many members of the Young Turks movement came from this social class and education enabled them to enter the bureaucracy. However, many in the same social group preferred the religious schools, the *medrese*, and opted for careers as lower *ülema*, as preachers in mosques. The secularly educated officers tended to be anti-Hamidian, and the sultan was always wary of the so-called *mektepli*, that is to say, the academy-trained, secularized officers. He therefore promoted officers who lacked such education but had risen from the ranks, their principal quality being their loyalty to the Ottoman throne. This duality in education continued until the end of empire and the two societies – the secular and the religious – lived side by side.

Education was the catalyst that produced the new and potentially revolutionary movement. Prior to the Hamidian reforms, members of the opposition belonged to the counter-elite. Such people – Ahmed Rıza (1859–1930) and Prince Sabaheddin (1877–1948), and many Young Turks in exile – did not want to change the political and social system, but merely to make it more inclusive and modern. Ahmed Rıza was extremely wary of Western involvement in Ottoman affairs, while Prince Sabaheddin was willing to use Western intervention to overthrow the sultan and establish a new regime. Abdülhamid was able to buy off many exiles by offering them sinecures in his regime; for them that was inclusion!

But members of the lower middle class, born in the 1870s and 1880s, who benefited from the new secular schools, considered the restoration of the constitution as just the beginning. They wanted to transform not just the political but the social, economic, and cultural life of the empire and turn their movement

into a revolution. Not surprisingly, the older leaders – Ahmed Rıza and Prince Sabaheddin – who were socially conservative, played only a minor role after 1908, Sabaheddin as the leader of the Liberal opposition. The political initiative passed to a different social class in 1908, opening a new page in Ottoman history.

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# 3

## The Constitutional Revolution, Reform, and War, 1908–1918

### RESTORATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Figuratively speaking, the Ottoman Empire entered the twentieth century on 23 July 1908, the day Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876–1909) restored the constitution he had shelved thirty years earlier. His decision generated great optimism and euphoria throughout the empire, as the new era held the promise of ‘liberty, equality and justice’ for all its citizens. Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the various ethnic communities – Greeks, Bulgars, Macedonians, Armenians, Arabs, Kurds, Jews and Turks – embraced each other in the streets in anticipation of the constitutional age. Overnight, the press was free to publish without fear of censorship; people congregated in coffee houses, knowing that there were no Palace spies in their midst. In towns and cities, crowds marched with banners and musical bands to the governors’ offices and made speeches in praise of the new order. An amnesty was declared for political prisoners, and exiles began to return to Istanbul from Europe, Egypt, and other parts of the far-flung empire.

In the provinces, the event was celebrated with equal gusto. The heads of various committees who had opposed the sultan’s autocracy promised to cooperate and swore oaths of loyalty to the empire. The sultan’s advisers, though not the sultan himself, were

held responsible for the autocracy; by restoring the constitution without a struggle, Abdülhamid had succeeded in hijacking the movement. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the principal architect of the constitutional movement, halted the insurrection and threatened to renew the struggle should Abdülhamid go back on his word. As the old regime collapsed, there was a breakdown of law and order. The Committee attempted to assume control; for the time being it was the only body that had the prestige and authority to support the government.

But the CUP had always been a secret organization with its roots in Macedonia. There was no hierarchy in which responsibility proceeded up and down the pyramid instead of outwards. There was no recognized leadership, and the CUP has therefore been described as a 'party of leaders' who made decisions by consensus in the central committee elected by the general congress. It had no well-defined ideology; its goal was to 'save the empire', and to reform it so that its multi-religious, multi-ethnic society could survive in the world of the twentieth century. Because Ottoman society was predominantly Muslim, Unionist liberals could not secularize the constitution by removing the Clause XI that declared that Islam was the religion of the state. Islamists among the Unionists argued that the constitution was in accord with the Sharia, the holy law of Islam, because the Sharia sanctioned consultation or *meşveret*. Thus the Unionists maintained the fiction that the Sharia prevailed under the constitution, though conservatives claimed that it did not. For the moment, the Unionists had succeeded in carrying out a coup d'état within the ruling elite rather than a revolution among the social classes. But within a year, they began to introduce reforms that shook society. By calling for elections to elect the assembly, they changed the social composition of parliament and the cabinet, giving representation to local elites – Muslim and non-Muslim, Turk and non-Turk. These elites, in turn, altered the character of the legislation.

The period of celebration came to an end in late August. There followed a spate of strikes by workers who believed that the constitution would also ameliorate their situation. However, they were wrong, for the constitutionalists believed that the economic order required social peace with disciplined and subservient workers. The constitutional regime also alarmed foreign powers, who

feared that a resurgent Ottoman empire would naturally try and curb their imperialist ambitions. The British were concerned about the impact of successful constitutionalism on Egypt and India, and therefore adopted a cautious, and sometimes hostile, attitude towards the constitutionalists. Other powers acted more vigorously. In October, Bulgaria declared its independence and Vienna annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the island of Crete announced its decision to unite with Greece. These events were serious blows which struck at the new regime and undermined its prestige.

In Istanbul, the Liberals who dominated the bureaucracy of the Sublime Porte – the seat of government – pressured the CUP to vacate the political stage now that power had been wrested from the Palace. But the Unionists refused to leave, convinced that they would be able to exert even more influence after the December elections that they intended to win. The Unionists, coming from the lower middle class of Muslim society, realized that they lacked the social status to rule directly by taking over the cabinet. They therefore counted on controlling the government by dominating parliament.

The results of the 1908 elections disappointed Liberal hopes and confirmed Unionist expectations. They seemed to win an overwhelming majority, though Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha was sure that the CUP would not command a majority when parliament convened. For the moment, the sultan acted as a constitutional ruler, while the cabinet set about reforming unconstitutional laws and reorganizing the state so as to create a modern, centralized structure. The aim was to establish a system that would be accepted by the Great Powers, who would then abandon the extra-territorial privileges they enjoyed by virtue of the capitulations. The Palace had been subdued, but the Sublime Porte, that is to say, the bureaucrats supported by the Liberals, hoped to monopolize political power by marginalizing the CUP. Kamil Pasha believed he could do that by gaining control of Ottoman armed forces, a crucial force in the power structure. Consequently, in February 1909, he replaced the ministers of war and marine with his own men, convinced that he had the support of parliament. But members of his own cabinet resigned on the grounds that Kamil had made changes in the cabinet without consulting his colleagues. Parliament met on 13 February in order to question Kamil,

claiming that his actions had been unconstitutional. Kamil threatened to resign; instead parliament passed a vote of no confidence against him and his cabinet fell. Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, an official who had served the old regime but was sympathetic to the Unionist programme of reform, succeeded Kamil.

Kamil's fall was a major setback for the Liberals and for all anti-Unionist elements. They included the non-Muslim elites, particularly the Greek patriarchate, the Palace and the reactionaries, as well as the British embassy. The opposition mounted a bitter press campaign against the CUP and were heartened by the support they received from the embassy. In April, reactionaries came out in opposition to reform and called for a union based on Islam. Through their paper, the *Volkan* ('Volcano'), they appealed to the clerics in parliament, the rank and file in the army, and the urban lower classes.

#### COUNTER-REVOLUTION

As a result of the anti-Unionist propaganda, the troops of the Istanbul garrison, led by students from the religious schools, mutinied on 13 April 1909. They demanded the restoration of the Sharia (the holy law of Islam), the dismissal of the cabinet, and the seclusion of Muslim women, liberated by the new regime. Hilmi Pasha resigned while Unionist deputies went into hiding, fearing for their lives. Abdülhamid seized the initiative. He accepted all the demands of the rebels and on the following day appointed his protégé, Tevfik Pasha, as the new grand vizier.

It seemed as though the counter-revolution had triumphed and the CUP had been routed. That was the case in Istanbul where the CUP had no roots. But in Macedonia, the situation was different. The Third Army and its Unionist supporters denounced the mutiny as unconstitutional and bombarded the Palace with telegrams threatening retaliation unless the constitutional regime was restored. They demanded the arrest of certain prominent Liberals who they claimed had fanned the flames of counter-revolution. Meanwhile, officers loyal to the constitution organized a force known as the 'Action Army' (*Hareket Ordusu*) and set out from Salonika to restore order in the capital and punish the mutineers.

The Action Army was led by General Mahmud Şevket Pasha, a strict disciplinarian who stood above politics. He refused to be placated by the deputation sent to assure him that the constitutional order was intact and all would be well once order was restored. He invested the capital and occupied it on 24 April after some light action. Meanwhile, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies formed a 'National Assembly' and convened on 22 April at San Stefano, a Greek village on the Sea of Marmara outside the city. They guaranteed the constitutional regime and went on to depose Sultan Abdülhamid; the Assembly's decision was ratified by the *fetva*, a legal opinion, issued by the *Şeyhülislam*.

In the event of failure in Istanbul, the counter-revolutionaries had intended to provoke foreign intervention by staging the massacre of Armenians in Adana province, a province accessible by sea through the port of Mersin. Hagop Babikian, deputy for Edirne and a member of the commission sent to investigate the massacres, stated the Adana massacres took place because the counter-revolutionaries hated the Armenians for their loyalty to the new regime and the constitution. Therefore they had to destroy the Armenians if they wanted to destroy the constitutional order. But despite the massacres, there was no foreign intervention, though French warships sailed towards Mersin. The balance of power in Europe had changed dramatically after German and Italian unification; unilateral Great Power gunboat diplomacy was no longer possible without threatening the peace of Europe. For its part, the new regime was determined to foster good relations with the non-Muslims. Therefore, on 5 May, the cabinet approved a sum of TL 30,000 for the victims of the Adana massacres; on 12 May the chamber approved a proclamation expressing regret for the events in Adana and enjoining accord and fraternity on all elements of the population in all Anatolian provinces. Colonel Ahmed Cemal Bey (1872–1922) was sent as governor of Adana. Cemal was a leading Unionist officer and often described as one of the Young Turks 'triumvirate', the other two being Enver (1881–1922) and Talat (1874–1921). He took harsh measures against the counter-revolutionaries in order to restore order; for the first time in Ottoman history, a number of prominent Muslim notables were hanged for their role in the massacres.



The restoration of the constitutional regime proved to be a mixed blessing for the CUP. Though the liberal and conservative opponents of the CUP had been crushed as an organized body, they remained alive in spirit. Moreover, the counter-revolution had been suppressed under Mahmud Şevket Pasha's command and he therefore became the dominant force in the government. Unionists became his junior partners, especially after he ordered the army to become independent of all political influences. He was appointed Inspector-General of the First, Second, and Third Army Corps, an appointment that made him independent of the war minister and the cabinet and therefore the virtual dictator of the new regime.

#### THE ACCESSION OF MEHMED V

Mehmed Reşad, known as Sultan Mehmed V (1844–1918), succeeded Abdülhamid in 1909. Son of Abdülmecid (1839–61), he was considered to be the ideal constitutional monarch. He was sixty-five when he came to the throne and bereft of political experience and personal ambition. He was therefore willing to do the bidding of the government while the CUP maintained their influence in the Palace by having their members appointed to his entourage. Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha was again appointed grand vizier, but his cabinet did not include a single Unionist. Society was not ready to accept members of the lower middle classes in government! The Unionists attempted to have a law modified that would permit deputies – their deputies – to be appointed as under-secretaries to various ministries. In that way, they hoped to influence the working of the cabinet. But parliament refused to modify Article 67 of the constitution and the Unionists were forced, against convention, to place their members directly into the cabinet. Mehmed Cavid (1875–1926), an economist and deputy for Salonika, became finance minister in June 1909 and played a significant role in the years that followed. In August, Mehmed Talat, perhaps the most prominent member of the CUP and grand vizier in 1917, was appointed interior minister, replacing Ferid Pasha who was intimately associated with the old regime.

The Unionists were now secure in the cabinet, but their position in parliament was weak. The committee was unable to exercise discipline among members elected on its platform but who voted against

its wishes. It is worth emphasizing that the CUP was not a political party and therefore lacked party discipline. It was a movement that included a variety of interests that competed against each other and often clashed. In March 1909, the CUP had agreed to allow the formation of a parliamentary group or 'party', hoping thereby to instil discipline. But the idea had not worked and deputies belonging to the 'party' had voted against amending Article 67. In February 1910, a splinter group broke away from the CUP and formed the People's Party, destroying the myth of a monolithic committee.

Under Mahmud Şevket's watchful eye, political activity was neutralized. The Liberals were discredited and temporarily eclipsed, while the Unionists were forced to work as the Pasha's junior partners, though he was won over to their programme of reforms and modernization. Meanwhile, the Liberals licked their wounds, reorganized and in November 1911 formed the Party of Freedom and Accord, a coalition of all the anti-Unionist groups in the empire.

After the abortive counter-revolution, the reformers were without opposition and therefore able to pass important laws whose purpose was threefold: first, to write into the constitution the political changes that had taken place since July 1908; second, to modernize and unify the empire and its administrative machinery; and third, to pass legislation that would be acceptable to the Great Powers so that they would agree to the abolition of the capitulations that gave foreigners in the empire a privileged position, placing them outside Ottoman law. The 1909 constitutional amendments took away power from the sultan and vested it in the legislature and the cabinet. But legislation that aimed at unifying and modernizing the empire caused disaffection among the non-Turkish, non-Muslim communities and led to serious revolts in Albania. Nor were the government's attempts to overcome the capitulations any more successful. The Powers temporized, refused to make any concessions and demanded economic concessions from the Porte. Because of these treaties, the empire remained a virtual semi-colony until the Porte abolished the capitulations unilaterally in September 1914, while Europe was at war. Meanwhile, the capitulations obstructed reform, violating Ottoman sovereignty and the very concept of a modern, independent state. Despite all the difficulties, the reforms, especially those of the financial regime under

the stewardship of Cavid Bey, made considerable progress. Revenues increased from 148 million liras in 1909 to 184 million in 1910. Even the Ottoman Public Debt administration, a precursor of today's International Monetary Fund, was full of praise for the regime's administrative achievement. In Anatolia, and even in the lawless east, conditions had improved dramatically. The British vice-consul noted that in the province of Van conditions had improved since the constitution and that the peasants no longer feared attacks by Kurdish tribesmen, and were no longer arrested on political grounds, nor did they have to billet government officials and gendarmes.

Despite the reforms and improved conditions, there was considerable political tension, caused partly by Şevket Pasha's capricious behaviour and partly by dissension within the CUP that led to factionalism. The dissension became so acute in 1910/11 that Talat Bey was forced to resign as minister of the interior on 10 February 1911, to be replaced by the more moderate Halil Bey. Such concessions did not lead to political stability and the Committee soon lost control of the assembly. The political situation was aggravated by Italy's declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire and her attack on Tripoli in Libya on 29 September 1911. Grand Vizier İbrahim Hakkı Pasha, who had been ambassador in Rome and had replaced Hilmi Pasha, was forced to resign, to be replaced by the octogenarian, Said Pasha. Mahmud Şevket and the CUP lost much prestige as a result of the war, especially when the Italians captured some of the Greek islands and blockaded the Dardanelles. The Unionists therefore decided, while they had the means to impose their will throughout the empire, to have the Assembly dissolved and to hold early elections in the spring of 1912. The 1912 elections are known as the 'big-stick elections' because the Unionists resorted to coercion and manipulation during the campaign. The CUP won an overwhelming victory but at the expense of alienating their supporters in Macedonia. But the Unionists were not permitted to enjoy power for long. In July 1912, a military group, known as the 'Group of Saviour Officers' and reminiscent of the one that had carried out the coup in 1908, gave an ultimatum to the government and forced Said Pasha's resignation.

## BALKAN WARS AND OTTOMAN DEFEATS

The Liberal cabinets that the Saviour Officers brought to power (Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, 21 July to 29 October 1912, and Kamil Pasha, 28 October 1912 to 23 January 1913) were both anti-Unionist and determined to destroy the CUP. Had the Liberals had more time, and received sufficient diplomatic support from the Powers, especially Britain, following Ottoman defeats in the Balkan War, they might have succeeded in destroying the CUP and surviving military defeat. The Balkan allies, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece, took advantage of Ottoman political dissension and the ongoing war with Italy and attacked the Ottomans in October 1912. Within weeks, Ottoman armies had been routed and the Balkans lost. Before the outbreak of hostilities on 9 October, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, had declared in the House of Commons that 'Whatever the outcome might be of the hostilities, in no case would the Powers permit any alteration in the status quo.' But such declarations were quickly forgotten following the Ottoman rout. The Bulgarian army was halted at Çatalca, on the very outskirts of Istanbul, in mid-November, and an armistice was concluded on 3 December. Negotiations opened in London in January 1913, but failed because the Porte refused to surrender the town of Edirne or the Aegean islands. Edirne had been the empire's capital before the conquest of Constantinople and was considered vital for the defence of the city and Ottoman morale.

Kamil Pasha was unwilling to take responsibility for ceding Edirne and the Aegean islands in the teeth of opposition in the army. The officers, who had not yet engaged in battle, wanted another round, convinced of victory in the final encounter. The press also opposed surrender while the CUP encouraged popular resistance. On 13 January, the Powers again urged the Porte to cede Edirne and leave the question of the islands to be settled by the Powers. The Porte was warned that renewed hostilities would expose the Empire to even graver perils, and that at the conclusion of peace the Ottomans would need the 'moral and material support' of the Great Powers; such support would be forthcoming to the extent that the Porte listened to the advice of Europe. However, Germany and Austria supported Ottoman resistance

because the Unionists argued that Edirne was essential for the defence of the capital and therefore could not be surrendered. Before the cabinet could reach a decision, the Unionists forced Kamil's resignation at gunpoint and seized power on 23 January 1913. Talat declared that 'this movement means that we are going to save the national honour or perish in the attempt. We do not want a continuation of the war, but we are determined to keep Edirne. That is a *sine qua non*'. Şevket Pasha formed the new, moderate cabinet and such prominent Unionists as Talat, Cavid, and Enver were conspicuous by their absence. Mahmud Şevket Pasha remained the dominant political figure.

The situation of the new cabinet was critical. Apart from an empty treasury, the Balkan states were threatening to break off negotiations and resume hostilities. Given the political uncertainty, the Unionists adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the opposition, buying off such prominent leaders as Ali Kemal and Rıza Nur, and sending them to sinecures in Europe. Hostilities were renewed when the armistice expired on 3 February. The Porte appealed for Great Power intervention but was told that Edirne had to be ceded before Europe would intervene. By the end of February, Edirne was ready to fall and the government took measures to foil a Liberal coup whose aim was to make Prince Sabaheddin grand vizier. But the coup d'état had also radicalized the CUP. Contemporaries noted how, since seizing power, the Unionists had begun to emulate the French Commune of 1870, and how Edirne had become the equivalent of Alsace-Lorraine for the Ottomans. Edirne fell on 26 March after a six-month siege, and the fall of the city freed the CUP of the odium of surrendering the Ottoman's second capital without a fight. Nevertheless, the CUP lost some of its prestige. Once again, negotiations were opened and the Porte was offered terms worse than those offered to the Kamil Pasha Cabinet.

After the coup of 23 January, Kamil had gone to Cairo, where he discussed with Lord Kitchener the situation in Istanbul. Kitchener was told that 'he [Kamil] did not expect the present Turkish Government to last very long, and that information had reached him as to the probability of another revolution in the very near future'. Kamil then expressed his willingness to come to power in Istanbul, providing 'he could count on the support of the Entente Powers, and more especially of England'. He asked that Grey

consider ‘the question whether some adequate foreign control might not be established in regard to administration in Turkey. Such a course was, in his opinion, the only means of preserving Turkey from extinction, and he would be very glad to undertake the task. He added that it would of course be necessary for England and the Powers of the Entente to impose foreign control, as he could not undertake to introduce it himself. Were they, however, to adopt such a policy he would gladly carry it out.’

The Unionists suspected a conspiracy and when Kamil arrived in Istanbul on 28 May he was placed under virtual house arrest. Ahmed Cemal Bey, military governor of the city, recalled in his memoirs that ‘The arrival of the Pasha in Constantinople was the surest sign that the insurrection was immediate’, and he assured Şevket Pasha that Kamil had ‘been brought to Constantinople in order to be made Grand Vizier over your corpse. The arrival of the Pasha is the secret sign that a revolution is imminent.’ Sure enough, on 11 June, the Liberals, convinced that the loss of Edirne had undermined Unionist prestige, assassinated the grand vizier, but failed to seize power. The plot was foiled and the opposition eliminated soon after, marking a new phase in Ottoman political life.

By the Treaty of London on 30 May, the Porte surrendered Edirne to Bulgaria, along with all territory west of the Erez-Midya line. For the moment, Enver Bey, the hero of the 23 January coup, lost prestige and his position in the CUP, and Ali Fethi (Okyar, 1880–1943) became the general secretary. After Şevket Pasha’s assassination, the Unionists were finally in power. The cabinet, formed by the Egyptian prince, Said Halim Pasha (1863–1921), who also held the portfolio of foreign affairs, was still moderate. Its aim was to conciliate the Arab provinces and the Armenian community by including an Arab grand vizier, as well as Süleyman al-Bustani, a Lebanese-Christian, and Öskan Efendi, an Armenian member of the Dashnak nationalist movement. That there was no Greek minister in the cabinet simply shows that the impact of the Balkan War had heightened Greek nationalism and the Greek community was no longer considered reliable and part of the Ottoman commonwealth. The cabinet also included such prominent Unionists as Talat (Interior) and Halil (President of the Council of State), İbrahim (Justice), Şükrü (Education). The government took harsh measures against the opposition and over

300 were sent into internal exile to Black Sea ports as a preventive measure. A number of plotters, including Damad Salih Pasha, a relative of the sultan, were hanged.

Differences between the Balkan allies soon led to war. On 28 June 1913, the Bulgarians attacked the Serbs and Greeks, and on 11 July Rumania declared war on Bulgaria; the next day the Ottomans took advantage of the situation and joined the war, acting independently of the Balkan states. Finding Thrace undefended, the Ottomans began to occupy territory they had only recently lost. An imperial *iradé*, decree, authorized the reoccupation of territory belonging to the Empire and the press urged the retaking of Edirne before the Greeks, flushed with victory, did so. But the cabinet was divided, fearful that the violation of the Treaty of London might lead to Great Power intervention. The Unionists called for action arguing that Edirne had been the reason for the coup d'état of 23 January and that the CUP would lose its moral right to rule unless it attempted to regain the city. On 22 July, the day before the fifth anniversary of the revolution, Enver led the army into Edirne and the Unionists fulfilled their promise, regaining some of their lost prestige. Despite foreign pressure and promises, the Porte refused to surrender Edirne again. Talat, whose constituency was Edirne, told the press that 'Ottoman patriotism is not for sale for the price of an increase on customs duties ... Edirne can be bought only at the price of the blood of our devoted and courageous army, ready to sacrifice itself to the last man in order to defend the town.' The Great Powers – Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy – failed to present a united front in Istanbul. Italy assumed a Turcophile attitude, while the German ambassador said he had no instructions from Berlin. Sofia was isolated and forced to negotiate directly with the Porte. Finally, on 29 September, a treaty was signed between the Ottomans and Bulgarians ceding eastern Thrace – including Edirne and Dimotoka – to Istanbul, and included terms for the exchange of populations, an ominous development that had grave implications for the future.

#### THE REPERCUSSIONS OF DEFEAT

The crushing defeats of the Balkan War ushered in a period of self-doubt and introspection among the Unionists. While they had been

unwilling to simply surrender to the Balkan alliance, they were more amenable to the dictates of the Great Powers. They became convinced of the need to have foreign expertise to reform Ottoman institutions. Thus in October, the Porte signed a contract with Germany, defining the functions of the military mission that would reform the Ottoman army. The naval agreement with Britain, according to Admiral Limpus who headed the British naval mission, would lead to the renaissance of the navy, but more important still, it would lay the foundations for the creation of heavy industry in the empire. Ahmed Cemal confided to Sir Henry Wilson that while the ‘Turks could not change their military teachers [the Germans], [but] in all else, in finance, administration, navy, they wished to be under British guidance’. But the British were unable to alienate Russia by taking the Ottomans under their wing, and were fearful of the consequences in the European balance of power.

In June 1913, the Russians had proposed to the ambassadors of the Great Powers that the grievances of Ottoman Armenians be met, and the so-called Armenian provinces in eastern Anatolia be placed under a Christian governor on the model of Lebanon. In July, the Porte sent a mission composed of Captain Deedes and three Muslims to study the demands of the Ottoman population. Meanwhile a Colonel Hawker, known for his honesty and fairness, was placed at the head of the gendarmeries of Erzurum, Trabzon, and Van. According to Count Ostrorog, who had served as adviser to the ministry of justice and knew the empire intimately, ‘The Turks, aware that the Armenian question had absolutely to be settled by means straight and effective, were desirous of executing the work of Armenian reform under British control. Diplomatic considerations alone prevented the scheme from being carried out’.

In February 1914, the Porte adopted Great Power proposals to divide the provinces of eastern Anatolia into six zones, with a foreign inspector-general chosen from small, neutral states in each zone. The inspectors-general would be charged with the reforms necessary to establish an efficient administration. But such reforms, under foreign supervision, observed the journalist Ahmed Emin [Yalman], meant ‘in the phraseology of the Eastern Question, a preliminary to amputation. The fiction of the maintenance of



Turkish sovereign rights was, in every case, offered merely as an anaesthetic.' In April 1914, when Kurdish tribes, encouraged by Russian agents, attacked the Armenians of Bitlis, the Porte sent troops and gave arms to the Armenian community so that they might defend themselves. An Armenian paper praised the Porte for the complete confidence it had shown in the Armenian community by distributing arms so that they might defend the city against the reactionaries. In fact, arming the Armenians of Bitlis showed the weakness of the Unionist state; it was a candid confession that the state was unable to defend its citizens in eastern Anatolia, the principal function and claim of any modern state. However, the rebellious Kurds were punished so as to prevent further outbreaks of violence. In May, eleven were found guilty and hanged, and their bodies were displayed in the city for all to see. In July, the Chamber voted 40,000 pounds for the salaries and expenses for the two inspectors-general and their staffs so that the reform programme could progress.

Ever since the diplomatic isolation the Ottomans had experienced during and after the Balkan War, the Unionists decided that they must form an alliance with one of the two European blocs: the Triple Entente composed of Britain, France, and Russia, or the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy. The Unionists preferred the Triple Entente and approached, in turn, England, France, and Russia, only to be rebuffed by each. Germany was equally reluctant to form an alliance with Istanbul after the dismal Ottoman performance in the Balkan War; the Ottomans were likely to be both a diplomatic and military liability. But after the outbreak of the Austro-Serbian war in July 1914, Berlin calculated that there was little to lose and much to gain from an Ottoman alliance. Only when Berlin seemed sure of entering the war did it turn to Istanbul. On 28 July, Berlin offered the Porte definitive terms for an alliance, guaranteeing Ottoman territorial integrity vis-à-vis Russia *if the Porte would place her army under German military command in case of war* and would further bind herself to take Germany's side if Russia entered the war as a belligerent. The kaiser saw the empire and the caliphate as the basis from which to foment *jihad*, or holy war, against England. He wrote to his ambassador: 'England must ... have the mask of Christian peaceableness torn publicly off her face ... Our consuls

in Turkey and India, agents, etc., must inflame the whole Mohammedan world to wild revolt against this hateful, lying, conscienceless people of hagglers; for if we are to be bled to death, at least England shall lose India.’

#### ALLIANCE WITH GERMANY

The secret alliance was concluded on 2 August 1914. The Porte assured the military mission ‘effective control in the conduct of the war’, placing the Ottoman army under its control. Fritz Fischer, the German historian, wrote that the alliance ‘was concluded with an eye to the unleashing of a pan-Islamic movement, which was to lead off with a “Holy War” ... Turkey thereby acquired an important dual role in Germany’s war strategy. Guardian of the Straits, with the duty of severing communications between Russia in the Black Sea and the western allies, and of exercising a constant threat against Russia’s southern flank, she was also meant to act as a springboard from which Germany should attack Britain at her two most vulnerable points, India and Egypt.’

The Unionists saw the alliance with Germany as an insurance treaty designed to protect the empire from the ambitions of European imperialism. Like most observers at the time, they expected a war of short duration to be concluded with a negotiated peace in which they expected to be protected by their German patron. Britain’s decision to confiscate two warships built for the Ottomans in British yards had a profound effect on the mood in the country and strengthened Germany’s position in the empire. The British fleet had begun to blockade the straits long before Istanbul entered the struggle. The cabinet responded by mobilizing and declaring martial law on 3 August. Talat explained that mobilization was a defensive measure and the Porte would remain neutral until the end of the war if England and France gave separate guarantees to protect Ottoman territorial integrity and independence and accepted the abolition of the capitulations. London and Paris were unwilling to do that; the promise of dividing and sharing Ottoman territory was one of the principal means of keeping the Entente together.

The mobilization had grave consequences for the economy, especially for agriculture. Men between the ages of 18 and 40 were

called up just when they were needed to harvest the crops, and women were forced to take over their labour. The country's finances, already in a poor state, were also adversely affected, making the government even more beholden to Berlin. On 10 August, the escape of the two German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, into the Sea of Marmara, strengthened Germany's hand even more, especially over the Ottoman navy that had hitherto been controlled by the British naval mission. The Ottoman cabinet proposed disarming the ships. But Baron von Wangenheim, German ambassador at the Porte, refused to consider such a measure; he threatened to join the Russians and partition the empire if the Ottomans failed to comply. The cabinet refused to be intimidated and settled for the fiction that the Germans had sold the ships to the Porte. The Unionists were not timid men and they exploited the crisis to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the Powers. In September, they abrogated the capitulations unilaterally, despite diplomatic protests. At the same time, they hung on to their neutrality, arguing that they could not go to war until Bulgaria and Rumania had been won over to the Triple Alliance. French success at the battle of the Marne in September 1914 strengthened the hand of the neutralist faction in the CUP. After the setback in France, the German general staff was forced to make fundamental changes to its war plans and required a holding operation against Russia. That involved the Ottomans opening a front on the Caucasus against Russia. Thereafter, pressure on the Porte increased day by day; Berlin exploited the Porte's need for money, as the government had begun to feel the cost of six weeks of mobilization. Germany acquired total control of the Ottoman navy when Admiral Wilhelm Souchon was given command and the British naval mission under Admiral Limpus was recalled. Richard Crawford, who had served as adviser since 1904 at the Ottoman ministry of customs and later finance, also resigned. German experts virtually took over the Ottoman state! The American ambassador wrote that '... Germany has absolute control of Turkish Navy; their military mission almost controls Turkish Army. They have von der Goltz in the palace and German Ambassador advising the cabinet'.

On 27 September 1914, Cavid confided to his diary: 'I am certain Germany will never give us any money until we enter the war'. Berlin was told of the country's dire financial situation and in

October the first instalment of the loan arrived, with promises of more to come when the Ottomans entered the war. On 29 October, Admiral Souchon, supported by Enver Pasha's war party, attacked Russian shipping and ports on the Black Sea and the Ottomans became belligerents. The timing of the incident was determined by German strategy. The Germans had just launched an attack in Poland and they wanted to tie down Russian forces in the Crimea and the Odessa region. After the Black Sea incident, the Russians were forced to launch an offensive in the Caucasus and diverted troops from European fronts. The Ottoman entry had a similar impact on British forces in the Middle East, especially in Egypt, to which the Ottomans had a historic claim. Once Russia, Britain, and France had declared war on the Porte, the Ottomans were able to proclaim a *jihad* on these powers, declaring that it was a sacred duty of all Muslims to fight the enemies of the sultan-caliph. The goal was to foment rebellion among the Muslim population in the colonies and to motivate Muslim soldiers at home.

Guided by Germany's strategic needs, the Ottomans launched a major offensive in December 1914. The British responded by bombarding the outer forts at the Dardanelles, causing great anxiety in Istanbul that led to talk of moving the government to Anatolia and Thrace, to Konya and Edirne. The Sarıkamış offensive proved to be a military disaster for the Ottoman army, which was totally unprepared for such a campaign in the middle of winter. The army, led by Enver Pasha with Bronsart von Schellendorff as his chief of staff, was decimated, and Enver returned to Istanbul in January 1915 a chastened man.

## THE OTTOMAN ROLE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The Ottoman war may be divided into two principal phases: from November 1914 to March 1917, the outbreak of revolution in Russia, a period that may be described as the 'Years of Crisis and Revival'; and from March 1917 to October 1918, a period of 'Resurgent Ambition and Defeat'. During most of the first phase, the situation of the empire was often precarious. The Dardanelles campaign of 1915, launched by the British and French in order to lessen the pressure on Russia and open a supply line to southern Russia via the Black Sea, threatened the very existence of the

empire. By January 1915, the situation had become sufficiently dangerous for the Unionists to consider making a separate peace. They approached the British but were rebuffed. The first major bombardment of the outer forts began on 19 February 1915. Such was the fear that the Entente would break through the straits and reach the capital, that the Unionists began to prepare to retreat into Anatolia and Thrace in order to continue the struggle. By March, the situation had become quite desperate, though it eased when the French battleship, *Bowet*, was sunk at the mouth of the straits on 18 March. Churchill's bombardment of the straits from the sea was essentially a political act designed to bring Greece and Bulgaria into the war on the Entente side. Churchill even hoped that the bombardment would provoke an uprising of the Greek and Armenian communities in the capital and a Muslim movement against the Unionists, who were described in British propaganda as atheists and freemasons, under the control of Ottoman Jews. The British were relying on the Liberal opponents of the CUP, led by Prince Sabadeddin, to overthrow the government in Istanbul should the opportunity arise. Thus apart from waging war on two fronts, the Unionists had to contend with the possibility of an internal coup d'état. The news from the other fronts was equally discouraging: in May 1915, Russian forces advanced into eastern Anatolia, captured Tutuk, Malazgirt, and Van, and began preparations for a major winter offensive. The British continued to advance in Iraq, capturing Kut on 3 June. The Ottomans, on the other hand, failed to make any impression on the Egyptian front. To make matters worse, Italy, which had remained neutral so far, seemed about to join the Entente.

The relocation and massacre of the Greek and Armenian communities in Anatolia began precisely at this point, the Ottomans convinced that the Greeks and Armenians had thrown in their lot with the enemy. As the Ottoman parliament had been adjourned in March 1915, the cabinet issued a temporary order on 27 May 1915 to relocate the Armenian, and later the Greek, population away from regions in the war zones to areas where they could not aid the enemy. In 1918, during the armistice period, Greek deputies in the Ottoman parliament held General Liman von Sanders and the German military responsible for imple-

menting the policy of relocation against the Greek community of western Anatolia. When the grand vizier asked him to explain the deportations of Ottoman Greeks from the *vilayet* of Aydın, von Sanders claimed that ‘if these deportations ceased, he could not guarantee the security of the Turkish army and stressed that military necessities in time of war outweighed political motives. He also stressed that the German General Staff approved entirely of his activities concerning the expulsion of the Greeks from the Aivalı [Ayvalık] district.’ The policy led to massacres and great suffering on the part of the non-Muslims. But Dr Harry Stuermer, the correspondent for the *Kölnische Zeitung* in the Ottoman Empire in 1915–16, wrote in his memoirs, *Two War Years in Constantinople* (London, 1917, 59–61), that ‘deportations began to abate in the summer of 1916 after the fall of the Armenian Patriarchate and more or less ceased in December 1916 with the gathering-in of all those who had formerly paid the military exemption tax.’ The situation deteriorated again in 1917 after the outbreak of revolution in Russia.

It is worth noting that the ideology that was promoted by the state was principally pan-Islamism and Ottomanism, and not, as is often claimed, Turkish nationalism. There was a growing awareness of nationalism in Unionist circles, manifested in the *Türk Yurdu* (The Turkish Homeland) group around people like Yusuf Akçura, a Turk from Russia. But this group, though extremely articulate, with a loud voice in the press and among the intelligentsia, did not influence the ideology or the policy of the government, especially in the field of foreign policy. The reason for this was only partly pragmatic and had to do more with the consciousness of both the ruling elite as well as the mass of the people who had to be mobilized. The majority of the population in the empire was Muslim and was therefore more likely to be swayed by an appeal to religious rather than national solidarity, for which there were as yet no symbols. The charisma of the Ottoman dynasty that united the sultanate and caliphate for generations facilitated the appeal to religion. Moreover, the appeal to Islamic solidarity was expected to be effective not only in the Arab provinces and North Africa but also in Iran, Afghanistan, and India – regions where the Germans and the Unionists hoped to foment rebellions against their enemies.

Throughout the second half of 1915, the military situation remained desperate. The success of the expedition at Gallipoli and the threat of an Anglo-French breakthrough continued to hang over the capital, aggravated by the fear of a Bulgarian attack. 'Had the Bulgarians attacked us from the rear while we were fighting ... at Gallipoli, our situation would have been disastrous', wrote Foreign Minister Halil Menteşe in his memoirs. The situation had become so desperate that in September, the Unionists agreed to surrender territory to Sofia in order to win her over to the Triple Alliance. This was seen as a turning-point in the war, an event that altered the balance of power in the Balkans. The Serbo-Bulgarian war that followed ended in Serbia's defeat, enabling Berlin to establish for the first time a direct road link with Istanbul. Moreover, the Dardanelles campaign seemed to be failing as well.

In January 1916, the Entente began to evacuate the Dardanelles peninsula. As soon as the news of the evacuation was announced, there were public celebrations in the capital, organized by the CUP. But the lasting significance of this event, described in the press as 'The Great Victory', was a tremendous boost to Ottoman/Muslim morale. In a single stroke, the trauma of the Balkan Wars was purged and with it the sense of inferiority. The Ottomans were convinced that they had won a decisive victory, having defeated the British fleet (and army) that had threatened their capital for a century. They were also sure that they had done more than their share within the alliance and expected the Germans to recognize and remember to reward their contribution.

However, the British evacuation of Gallipoli did not end the crisis; it now assumed a different form. In January 1916, the Russian army of the Caucasus launched a new offensive and captured Erzurum on 16 February, opening the road into Anatolia. Trabzon fell in April and Erzincan in July. Prior to the fall of Erzurum, General Falkenhayn had noted the precarious situation of the allies, particularly Turkey, observing that she 'would not be able to hold out much longer and already showed signs of wanting to make peace'. It was ironic that with the loss of these Anatolian towns, the chances of peace for the Unionists had become more remote. The Ottoman capture of the Iraqi town of Kut-ul-Amara from the British expeditionary force on 29 April 1916, and the surrender of General Townsend and his army, was the only bright

spot in the Ottoman war effort in 1916. But what rejoicing there may have been over this triumph soon gave way to despair and anger when the Unionists learned of the Arab revolt in the Hijaz in late June 1916. Given all the territory the Ottomans had lost in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, there was no question of making peace until this territory had been recovered. In September 1916, both Berlin and Istanbul promised not to sign a peace treaty so long as the territory of one was occupied by the enemy. The Unionists were now more dependent than ever on Germany. This was symbolized by the decision to send Ottoman troops to the European theatre, even though Anatolia was partially occupied by the Russians. The Porte recognized that if victory were to be won, it would only be won on the battlefield in Europe.

The general crisis continued to deepen into 1917. The continuation of the war became a heavy burden that might have been lifted by a mediated peace under the auspices of a neutral Washington. But Britain and France rejected President Wilson's peace proposals while Russian and British armies continued to advance into Anatolia and the Arab provinces, meeting resistance that grew weaker by the day. By 1917, the Ottomans had lost almost one-third of a million men and were quite disorganized. The Russian advance was also hampered by poor communications, by war weariness and the onset of revolutionary discontent. Had there been no revolution in March 1917, the Ottomans might well have collapsed before the Russian advance. The collapse of the tsarist autocracy gave a new lease of life to the Unionist regime, itself on the verge of collapse.

Talat, elevated to the rank of pasha, replaced Said Halim as grand vizier on 3 February 1917. But he could do little to resolve the internal contradictions of an exhausted state. Revolution in Russia revived hopes of an early peace, alarming the generals in Berlin, who still believed in victory. Enver Pasha assured them that the Ottomans would continue to fight. On 6 April, Washington's declaration of war on Germany and, under German pressure, the Porte's rupture of relations with the United States, was another demoralizing blow. Berlin pleaded with Istanbul to hold on until German submarines had brought Britain to her knees and forced her to negotiate an honourable peace. As a result of war weariness, the position of the war party, led by Enver, declined and political



power shifted back to other factions in the CUP. Enver Pasha was challenged within the CUP by such rivals as Fethi Bey [Okyar], a patron of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk]. There was now some talk of Turkish Anatolian patriotism (*Türk Anadolu milliyetçiliği*) rather than the ideology of Ottomanism. But Ottomanism/Islamism remained the dominant ideology.

As the situation in Russia deteriorated throughout 1917, the Ottomans recaptured territories that had been under Russian occupation since 1915. The Unionist press no longer spoke of peace at any price, hopeful of a negotiated peace that would restore lost territories to the empire, especially after the Porte sent troops to Galacia to support the Austrian army. After the Bolshevik revolution and what seemed like the impending defeat of the Entente, Unionist war aims became more ambitious. The government demanded the restoration of Egypt, the Arab provinces, and Cyprus, while the pan-Turkish press looked to the Caucasus and spoke of the union of Turkic/Muslim peoples of Russia, Persia, and even Afghanistan.

The Unionists viewed themselves as a potentially great regional power, the 'Japan of the Middle East'. They believed that the empire's geo-political position in the region required that she possess a powerful fleet, and they argued that the Porte ought to be given the lion's share of Russia's Black Sea fleet captured by the Germans. This self-image clashed with Germany's imperial ambitions and with the role she had assigned to the Ottomans in the new world order that she intended to establish after winning the war.

However, there was no change in the deplorable state of the country's economic situation. Food and fuel were virtually impossible to obtain and the people in the capital suffered great hardship but were not organized to resist. The treasury was empty and in October 1917, the government printed 50 million liras against the German deposit of the same amount in the Ottoman Public Debt. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in March 1918 between the Bolsheviks and the Germans, suggested that the Unionist gamble to enter the war had paid off. They had not only regained territory but seemed to have acquired a sphere of influence in the Caucasus that served 'as a rampart between us and the Russian provinces to the north'. The growth in Ottoman influence was an illusion that

the Unionists could not sustain, for they were now totally dependent on Germany.

The war weariness and demoralization that the Ottomans had suffered at the beginning of 1917 returned to haunt the Unionists after the failure of the German offensive of 1918. The problem of feeding the capital was more acute than ever. British aerial bombardments that began in July increased the demoralization and the yearning for peace. The civilian element in the CUP gained strength by the day. Political censorship was abolished on 11 June 1918, followed by military and postal censorship. The death of Sultan Mehmed Reşad on 3 July brought the anti-Unionist Vahdettin Mehmed VI (r.1918–22) to the throne. He immediately asserted his constitutional authority by declaring that he was the supreme commander and replacing Unionist appointees with his men as his personal aides-de-camp.

At the beginning of September, Berlin was forced to provide a loan so as to feed the people of Istanbul. So desperate was the situation in the empire that Talat Pasha went to Berlin to explain just how terrible it was at home. On his way back to Istanbul, Talat stopped off in Sofia to see Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria. But his audience was cancelled as Bulgaria was suing for peace. He realized that the war was over for the Ottomans, and the Unionists had to make way for a government not tarred with the brush of Unionism and the German alliance. Talat resigned on 8 October and was succeeded by Ahmed İzzet Pasha. After discussions in the assembly about the futility of carrying on the war, the government decided to sue for peace and signed the armistice of Mudros on 30 October.

It was this event that marked the end of the Great War for the Ottoman Empire. The war ended in defeat, but the ten years of constitutional rule, especially the war years, had transformed Ottoman society. For the Unionists, war had defined all that was social; it had defined society. By its very dynamic, war became the most all-encompassing phenomenon of a country's situation, the dominant process to which all other social, political, economic and cultural processes were subordinated, and which, directly or indirectly, affected all members of society. But this same absorbing quality of war should not lead us to ignore the different ways in which diverse groups and individuals were

affected: what represented ruin for most, proved to be a boon for a minority of Muslims. They enriched themselves and emerged as businessmen who constituted a new class, a nascent bourgeoisie.

The emergence of this 'new class' was perhaps the most significant development of the decade. Soon after restoring the constitution, some intellectuals had observed that the Ottomans would not survive in the world of the twentieth century unless they established capitalism and created their own bourgeoisie. The attempt to do so became one of the main tasks of the Unionists. The CUP led the campaign to establish a 'national economy' by founding small, private trading companies and banks throughout the empire, and in doing so created a small nucleus that had a vested interest in the new regime. After the capitulations were abolished in September 1914, capitalist landowners were able to sell their produce – wheat, cotton, tobacco, etc. – directly to the Germans and Austrians, and prosper. Such people became the backbone of the nationalist movement that was launched after the war to prevent the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres.

Apart from the emerging bourgeoisie, the war also produced a small working class in the factories that had been established under German auspices for the purpose of war production. Artisans had been sent as apprentices to Germany to work in factories and learn new skills and methods of modern production. Not only did they acquire these skills, they acquired a new political consciousness and some even joined the communist revolution that broke out in Germany in late 1918.

Women also played a significant role during the constitutional period, especially during the war. A number of women's journals appeared, encouraging Ottoman women to liberate themselves from some of the most obscurantist practices of their society. They were told to educate themselves and play an active role within the family and society. It was generally agreed among the modernists that Ottoman society would make slow progress unless women were brought in as active partners. Beginning with the Balkan war in 1912, urban women began to work as nurses, and later to replace Christian women in such institutions as the telephone exchange. Peasant women had always worked in the fields, but in wartime they were made to work even harder when their men were

conscripted and sent to the front. Women continued to play a critical role when the new Turkey was created.

In short, the constitutional period had transformed the mentality of the Ottoman peoples, especially those who now began to see themselves as Turks rather than Ottomans. Writing on the 46th anniversary of the revolution, the author, Vala Nureddin observed: ‘if the Turks had had no experience of the second constitutional period, the ideas of “country and nation” (*vatan ve millet*) would not have become widespread. The country and the people would have remained the “Sovereign’s domain” (*Padişahın malı*). People would have continued to think in terms of “His Royal Highness does what he knows to be best; it is not for us to question his wisdom”. Under such conditions a national struggle would have been impossible. It is quite possible that there would have been no Republic of Turkey today, and Turkey may have been a monarchy in the Middle East.’

#### SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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# 4

## The Kemalist Era, 1919–1938

### ATATÜRK'S BACKGROUND AND RISE TO POWER

The Ottoman Empire lay prostrate at the end of the war, its old ruling class willing to accept the dictates of the victors as long as they allowed the sultan-caliph to reign. But the Young Turks era, despite its many failings, had created a Muslim counter-elite and a nascent bourgeoisie that was willing to fight for the gains it had made, and to create a new patriotic state. Such elites set up the Defence of Rights Association throughout Thrace and Anatolia, demanding 'justice' for the Muslims from the victors. They were local bodies articulating local demands, for there was as yet no conception of a nation or even the territory the 'nation' would embrace. The Greek landing at İzmir in western Anatolia on 14 May 1919, proved to be the catalyst that launched broader resistance that soon became 'national'. Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), who assumed the name Atatürk or 'Father Turk' in 1934, came to play a crucial role in mobilizing the Muslims of Anatolia and organizing the resistance.

Mustafa Kemal was born in the cosmopolitan port city of Salonika (today Greece's second city) in 1881, into a family of modest means. Given the lack of opportunity for Muslim youths of the lower middle class, Kemal could either opt for a religious education and become a member of the clerical class, the *ülema*, or

could opt for a military education, perhaps the easiest way for a Muslim boy to acquire a modern education and upward mobility.

The Hamidian army was divided between the *mektepli* (schooled) and *alaylı* (commissioned) officers. The former were educated in the modern military schools and academies and were taught modern methods of warfare, often by foreign military advisers. They also acquired such secular values as patriotism and nationalism, liberty and fraternity, and the rule of law; in short, ideas that had emerged from the French revolutionary tradition. The *alaylı* were officers who were promoted from the ranks because of their loyalty to the sultan-caliph and the institutions he represented. They were tradition-bound and found ideas that flourished after the constitutional revolution to be repugnant to their upbringing. The *mektepli* officers were the 'enlightened' men who came to form the backbone of the army and who supported the reforms of the CUP. But many of them had died in the wars the empire had been forced to wage between 1908 and 1922, weakening the reformist element in the army and in the Unionist and Kemalist movements.

Kemal entered the military preparatory school in Salonika in 1893, from whence he went on to the military high school in Monastir in 1895, and the War College in Istanbul in 1899. He was commissioned second lieutenant in 1902 and sent to the Staff College. From there he passed out as staff captain in 1905 and was posted to the Fifth Army in Damascus. In Syria, Kemal became active in military politics and conspired against the regime. But the real opposition to the Hamidian regime was taking place in Macedonia under the auspices of the Committee of Union and Progress, so that when he was posted to the Third Army HQ in Salonika in October 1907, he was already on the fringes of the movement. That is where he found himself when the constitution was restored in July 1908 and the CUP suddenly found itself in a position of power.

Mustafa Kemal never became part of the inner circle of the CUP and was opposed to army officers engaging in politics. He came as a staff officer to Mahmud Şevket Pasha's Action Army that crushed the counter-revolution of April 1909. Thereafter, he concentrated on military matters, following foreign literature on the subject, and translated some training manuals into Ottoman

Turkish. In September 1910, he was sent to observe manoeuvres of the French army and the following year, he was promoted to the rank of major. When Italy invaded the Ottoman province of Tripoli (today's Libya) in September 1911, Kemal was sent to organize local Arab forces for guerrilla warfare. In the Balkan War of 1912–13, Mustafa Kemal became involved only after the Ottomans had been routed. The recapture of Edirne from the Bulgarians enhanced the prestige of Enver Bey, who had been groomed by the CUP to become one of its leading lights. Enver, who was married to an Ottoman princess, was appointed war minister in January 1914; he then rejuvenated the army, purging many of the Hamidian generals who were thought to be out of touch with modern warfare. Meanwhile in October 1913, Ali Fethi [Okyar], a prominent Unionist officer, Enver's rival in the CUP and Kemal's patron, was appointed ambassador to Sofia. He took Mustafa Kemal as his military attaché. These were important appointments because Bulgaria's position in any future war was of the utmost importance for Istanbul and the reports sent by the ambassador and his military attaché were of great importance to the Unionist government. In Sofia, Mustafa Kemal was also impressed by the modernization that was taking place, and that was to influence his own views when he became president of Turkey.

The Ottomans entered the war in November 1914, and Allied forces began their bombardment of the Gallipoli peninsula in January 1915. Mustafa Kemal, who was now a lieutenant-colonel, commanded the 19th Division in Gallipoli. This is where he made his reputation as a successful general and became known in the country as one of the saviours of Istanbul. He played a crucial role in checking the Allied advance at Arıburnu, and later as commander of the Anafartalar group. On 1 June 1915, he was promoted to colonel. When he left Gallipoli in December for the capital, he hoped that his contribution would be recognized and rewarded by the Unionist government. But that was not to be. The Unionists honoured only officers totally committed to the movement and Kemal was not one of them.

Nevertheless, he was promoted to brigadier-general in April 1916, and sent to the front in eastern Anatolia, which was occupied by the Russian army. In August, he recaptured the towns of Bitlis



and Muş from the Russians, though the recapture of Muş proved to be only temporary. But Kemal had established a reputation among his men as a charismatic officer, one who seemed to lead a charmed life and always won his battles. He continued to be given military commands – that of the Second and Seventh Armies in Syria – where he was successful even when he was forced to retreat. He resented Germany's exploitation of the Ottoman army for Berlin's ambitions, for that had been the case ever since the German military mission was placed in charge of the Ottoman army in 1913.

In October 1917, Mustafa Kemal resigned his command in Syria and returned to Istanbul. Known as a critic of Enver Pasha's pro-German policies, he was invited to accompany the anti-Unionist Vahdettin, the heir apparent, on his official visit to Germany. Kemal and Vahdettin became acquainted with each other and that proved useful later when Vahdettin came to the throne in July 1918 and chose Mustafa Kemal to supervise the demobilization of troops in Anatolia after the armistice. In August 1918, Kemal was appointed commander of the Seventh Army in Syria. He was not able to halt the British advance, but led an orderly retreat. By now, the war was irrevocably lost and the Ottomans were forced to sign an armistice with the Allies on 30 October, marking the end of the war. Kemal returned to Istanbul on 13 November.

The Allies – Britain and France – believed that they could impose whatever terms they wished on the defeated Ottomans and treat the empire like a colony. They had already signed secret agreements during the war, which partitioned the Ottoman Empire between them. Though these treaties no longer applied after the revolution in Russia, they were to be implemented under the new circumstances. For their part, the Ottomans were in an anomalous position, a defeated imperial people who had no 'homeland' to retreat to. The Spaniards had retreated to Spain, the British to Britain, etc. But where could the Ottomans go? They had come as Turkic tribes from Inner and Central Asia and had established a foothold in Asia Minor in 1071, just five years after the Norman invasion of Britain. They were regarded by Europe as conquerors who had come out of Asia and *occupied* lands in Europe, Asia Minor and the Arab world with no right to be there. They had been driven out of Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and from the Arab provinces during the First World

War. They held Asia Minor, or Anatolia, but that was land contested by other peoples – the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Kurds. The Ottomans believed that Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' applied to them, both as Muslims and Turks as well, and they therefore enjoyed the right of self-determination in territory where they were in a majority. But that was not the case. Judging by the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in August 1920 – terms that were to be imposed on the Ottomans – they were to be left only a part of Anatolia. When President Wilson was asked to fix the boundary between the sultan's Turkey and Armenia, he assigned some 40,000 square miles of Anatolia to Armenia, including the towns of Trabzon, Erzincan, Erzurum, Muş, and Van. The Armenian Republic claimed territory in south-eastern Anatolia that would link it to the Mediterranean; the territory allotted to Armenia would have amounted to one-third of Anatolia.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the flight of the most prominent Unionist leaders to Europe, the leadership was restored to the sultan and the palace. Initially, Mustafa Kemal hoped to pursue what may be described as a strategy based on Istanbul, salvaging the country's independence mainly by diplomatic means. The Sultan was expected to lead such a movement and Kemal Pasha expected to play a prominent role as minister of war in any Palace cabinet. Had such a strategy worked – and it was destined to fail, given the attitude of the Powers, especially that of Great Britain – it would have operated within the established framework of Ottoman institutions; it would have had a loyalist and politically conservative programme instead of a radical and secular one.

Despite his military and anti-Unionist credentials, Kemal was not given a cabinet post and soon became disillusioned with the Palace. The sultan seemed willing to do Britain's bidding simply to retain what little power was allowed him. Meanwhile, in Anatolia, local notables who had tasted political and economic power during the Young Turk era, began to organize local 'Defence of Rights Associations' to resist foreign and local non-Muslim aspirations. One of the first such bodies was founded in Trabzon on the Black Sea, to oppose the establishment of the Greek republic of the Pontus.

## THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The Palace, with British approval, appointed Mustafa Kemal as inspector of the Ninth Army in Anatolia, with the task of demobilizing Ottoman forces left intact after the armistice. He left Istanbul by boat and arrived at the Black Sea port of Samsun on 19 May 1919, four days after the Greek occupation of İzmir, a traumatic event in the history of modern Turkey. Instead of disarming Ottoman troops, Kemal met the military commanders and issued a joint declaration of resistance from the town of Amasya. The Palace decided to cashier him; instead Kemal resigned his commission. Thereafter, the Defence of Rights Associations coalesced around him. Congresses of such associations were held in Erzurum (27 July–7 August) and Sivas (4–11 September 1919), electing Kemal Pasha as their leader each time. In December, Kemal moved to Ankara in the centre of Anatolia and made it the headquarters of the national liberation movement.

A word ought to be said about the Ottoman-Turkish terms *millet*, *milli*, and *milliyetçi*, terms that are rendered into English as ‘nation’, ‘national’, and ‘nationalist’. But during the war of liberation and after, the terms were intended to be more patriotic than nationalist, inclusive rather than exclusive. The terms embraced all the Islamic elements of Anatolia – Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Arabs, and Lazes – all of whom had identities of their own, and Kemal noted in October 1919 that the ‘National Pact’ border in Anatolia had been demarcated accordingly. ‘Gentlemen’, he lectured his audience, ‘this border is not a line which has been drawn according to military considerations. It is a national (*milli*) border. It has been established as a national border. Within this border there is only one nation which is representative of Islam. Within this border, there are Turks, Circassians, and other Islamic elements. Thus this border is a national boundary of all those who live together totally blended and are for all intents and purpose made up of fraternal communities (*milletler*).’ The National Pact defined the boundaries of the new state. The boundaries were agreed according to the peace treaties of 1913 and drawn up after the Balkan Wars, which gave the Ottoman Empire territories in Thrace, and the armistice lines of October 1918. The last Ottoman

parliament, which unanimously adopted the National Pact on 17 February 1920, discussed the terms *Türk* and *millet* two days later and arrived at the consensus that the term *Türk* included all the different Muslim elements; some deputies even included Ottoman Jews within the term *Türk*! Kemal repeated these ideas on 1 May 1920: ‘What is intended here ... is not only Turks, not only Circassians, not only Kurds, not only Lazses, but the Islamic ethnic elements of all of these, a sincere community ... The nation, the preservation and defence of which we have undertaken, is not only composed of one ethnic element. It is composed of various Islamic elements.’

The Ottoman or Kemalist notion of citizenship had never been ethnic. The Ottoman identity was focused around the dynasty, regardless of ethnic origin or religion, and Muslims, Christians or Jews could be Ottomans so long as they were loyal to the dynasty and the culture that had developed over time. In the same way, Turkish citizenship depended on residence (not birth) within the borders of the emerging state defined by the National Pact. During the national struggle, religion played an important role, as the non-Muslims (Greeks and Armenians) were also fighting for their own states; only Ottoman Jews as a community joined the Nationalists. according to the principle of birth, Kemal’s enemies in the assembly even wanted to deprive him of his civil right to be elected to the assembly, claiming that he had not resided for five years within the new borders of Turkey, for he had been born in Salonika, a part of the new Greece.

The British responded to the Nationalist challenge by occupying Istanbul. The Istanbul parliament met for the last time on 18 March 1920, and adjourned *sine die* after protesting Britain’s action. The sultan dissolved the chamber on 11 April, adding to the legitimacy of the Nationalists in Ankara, who had long claimed that the sultan was the prisoner of the Allies. Nevertheless, the Nationalists had to wage civil war against the sultan’s supporters, especially after the Palace issued a *fetva*, a religious edict, denouncing the Nationalists as infidels and stating that it was the duty of believers to kill them. They responded by having the mufti of Ankara issue a counter *fetva*, declaring that the caliph was a captive of infidels and stating that believers were duty-bound to fight to save him.

The spring of 1920 marked the beginning of the most dangerous period for the Nationalists. They were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Palace and the foreign powers. Greek forces had occupied western Anatolia in 1919; they began to advance in June, occupying the town of Bursa and Edirne in July and August. The following year, the Sultan signed the Treaty of Sèvres on 10 August 1920, and signed away much of Anatolia to future Greek, Armenian, and Kurdish states, as well as territory to Syria, mandated to France by the League of Nations. Even Istanbul was placed under an international organization that was to administer the straits.

The Nationalists were convinced that the very survival of a Turkish-Muslim state was threatened. This threat persisted into 1921, when the Greek army launched a new offensive in June and advanced to the towns of Eskişehir and Kütahya and threatened Ankara's communications. By August, the military situation became so serious that the assembly allowed Kemal Pasha, as commander-in-chief, to exercise his authority in military matters. The victory at the battle of Sakarya on 13 September 1921, strengthened his hand against his opponents in the nationalist movement. Scholars have rightly concluded that had Kemal lost the battle, the leadership of the liberation movement would have passed to Kazım Karabekir, one of Mustafa Kemal's rivals and a general with excellent military credentials.

The battle of Sakarya was a turning-point in Kemal's career and the fortunes of the liberation struggle. He was promoted to the rank of marshal and given the title, Gazi – soldier in the holy war – a title he used until 1934, when he assumed the name Atatürk, or 'Father Turk'. His position vis-à-vis the Powers was also strengthened. He signed an agreement with Moscow and confirmed the Turkish-Russian frontier; the British released prisoners – Unionists and Nationalists – they were holding on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean. Eleven months later, in August 1922, Mustafa Kemal launched a general offensive against the Greek lines, forcing the Greek army to surrender on 2/3 September. Nationalist forces entered İzmir on the 9th and the Armistice of Mudanya was signed on the 11th. The war of national liberation had been won; now it was a question of reaching a consensus on the nature of the new state and the society the Nationalists would agree to.

Unwittingly, the British made the Nationalists' task easier by inviting delegations from both Istanbul and Ankara to discuss peace terms. Instead of dividing the Nationalists, the British forced them to unite and take decisive action. The Nationalists declared that the Ankara government was the new Turkey's only legitimate authority. In Istanbul, General Refet Bele, a conservative who favoured continuity under the sultan, tried to persuade the sultan to dismiss his government in Istanbul and to follow the Nationalists' lead. Had he done so, it is difficult to see how the Nationalists would have abolished the sultanate. But Vahdettin rejected Refet Bele's proposal and on 1 November, the Ankara assembly responded by abolishing the sultanate, arguing that the sultan's government had been a fiction since 16 November 1920, when the Allies had formally occupied the capital. Henceforth Istanbul was governed from Ankara, like any other province. Vahdettin fled the country on 17 November 1922, on a British battleship; the following day, the assembly elected Abdülmecit the country's new caliph.

The assembly had abolished the monarchy, but the caliphate continued to enjoy much popular support within the national movement and among the people. Kemal Pasha's position was far from secure. Some deputies wanted to disqualify him from being elected to the assembly by amending the electoral law so that only candidates who had resided in their constituencies for five years would be allowed to stand. This would disqualify Mustafa Kemal, who had been born outside the borders of the new Turkey and had never resided in any part of Turkey for a full five-year period. But the amendment was withdrawn in committee.

Kemal realized that he was isolated and had to broaden his base of support. Consequently, he formed his own political party, the People's Party, later renamed the Republican People's Party, which would represent all those who were opposed to the old order. The term *halk*, or people, included all those, regardless of their class, who were opposed to the old order; their principal task was to defeat the ancien régime and its supporters, and to establish the 'people's state'. The Kemalists had declared ideological war on his rivals and Mustafa Kemal then took his message to the country, making speeches and giving interviews to the press along the way.

Kemal's leadership was also threatened by his more conservative comrades-in-arms. They were officers he had known for many years, men such as Rauf Orbay, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kazım Karabekir, and Refet Bele, all of whom had fought bravely in the national struggle, but who wanted to utilize the moderation and legitimacy that came with the old constitutional order. The monarchy had been abolished, largely because of the sultan's tactical error. But these men saw no reason why the caliph should not lead the new Turkey as its president. They, like the Unionists before them, believed that Turkey could be ruled by a symbolic figure, formerly the sultan-caliph, now the president-caliph, who would be unassailable from below, yet easy to manipulate from above. The Kemalists, on the other hand, wanted a total social, economic, and political transformation. They no longer wanted to rule a state and society by traditionalist social conventions and symbols; they wanted to create a new, secular ideology that would allow Turkey to progress rapidly into the twentieth century. The Kemalists wanted to adopt the materialism of the West, its technology and its modern weapons, along with its ideas, so that society would be transformed in the broadest sense. This meant creating a secular society in which religion would be controlled by the state rather than separated from it. For them, modernity implied a broad totality and included political and cultural, as well as economic, dimensions. They wanted to accomplish both modernization and modernity, by radically reforming their traditional, patriarchal society.

If we examine the Kemalist record after 1923, we find that the regime moved aggressively away from traditionalism towards modernity. Government may not have been democratic, but it was no longer a neo-patriarchal sultanate. The Kemalists introduced 'laicism' (*laiklik*), that is to say, a state-controlled Islam and not 'secularism', i.e. separating religion from politics. They intended to use Islam to further their programme of reform and revolution by having it legitimized, when necessary, by the Directorate of Religion. Knowledge or science came to be defined as 'the best guide to life'. Urban women also benefited from modernity in a way they would not have done under a regime of modernization.

## BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC

The Lausanne Treaty of 24 July 1923, recognized the new Turkey and its borders and added to Kemal Pasha's prestige. Turkey acquired international recognition of its independence. At the time, there were only a handful of states in Asia and Africa that had the semblance of independence; the rest were colonies or dependencies of the imperialist powers. In Africa, there was Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Iran and Afghanistan in West and South Asia, Thailand and China in South-East and East Asia. Abyssinia became an Italian colony in 1935; Iran was invaded by Britain and Russia in 1941 and enjoyed only nominal independence thereafter; Afghanistan served as a buffer between British India and Soviet Central Asia, as did Thailand between British India and French Indo-China; China was invaded by Japan. Only Kemalist Turkey retained its full independence after 1923.

Kemal was re-elected president of the assembly in August 1923 and in October, the assembly approved the resolution to make Ankara the capital of the new state, while retaining Istanbul as the seat of the caliphate. That was a significant blow to the conservatives, for it isolated Istanbul, their stronghold, from politics and shifted the centre of gravity of political life to Anatolia. In this favourable political climate, and with what amounted to a legislative coup d'état against his rivals, on 29 October 1923, the assembly proclaimed Turkey a republic and elected Mustafa Kemal as its president. By establishing a republic, the Kemalists were proclaiming their commitment to modernity and equality, rather than the modernization and hierarchy of the old order. They were rejecting hierarchy and tradition, the foundations on which the old order had rested and which many nationalists, who went on to form the Progressive Republican Party in 1924, wished to maintain with the caliph as the president of the republic. Istanbul was also the bastion of the rising bourgeoisie, many of whose members would have preferred an American mandate instead of total independence – for they claimed that Washington would 'civilize' Turkey rapidly, as it had the Philippines! The Nationalists disagreed and in November, the assembly dispatched an Independence Tribunal to Istanbul, reoccupied by Nationalist forces in October, to crush any opposition.



The opposition in Istanbul urged the government to maintain the caliphate as an institution treasured by the entire Islamic world, a kind of Muslim pope, who would project Turkey's influence far and wide. Ankara responded by arresting the dissidents and abolishing the caliphate on 3 March 1924, and sending members of the Ottoman dynasty into exile. This event marked the beginning of the campaign to introduce modernity and secularism into the country, a campaign that continued virtually until Atatürk's death.

Mustafa Kemal's leadership remained insecure while he had doubts about the loyalty of the army. The army had won the war of liberation and enjoyed great prestige among the people. Kemal, now a marshal, had the support of many officers. But so did such generals as Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy, for they too had held successful commands during the First World War and the national struggle. Moreover they supported some traditional symbols of the Ottoman past, and were therefore supported by the traditional elements, especially by the old elite and the bourgeoisie in Istanbul. Kemal Pasha undermined their influence in the army by having the assembly pass a law forbidding officers on active service from being deputies. After the law came into force, the conservative opposition came out into the open and formed the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) in November 1924, as a rival to Mustafa Kemal's People's Party, which responded by adding 'republican' to its own name and becoming the Republican People's Party, the RPP.

Had the Kurdish tribes not rebelled in eastern Anatolia under Sheikh Said in February 1925, it is not clear how the Kemalists would have dealt with the challenge from the PRP. Would they have been able to dissolve the party and force its leaders out of politics? It is doubtful whether Mustafa Kemal would have taken such a risk, as the Progressive Republican leadership had strong support in the army. The Kurdish rebellion provided the pretext to dissolve the PRP and crush all opposition; it also allowed the regime to introduce radical reforms – the Hat Law, the closure of the Dervish orders, the introduction of a new civil and criminal code – reforms which brought modernity to Turkey, but were opposed by the conservatives. But the Kurdish rebellion also culminated in the establishment of an autocracy and marked the end of the first attempt at multi-party politics.

Mustafa Kemal, fearing a reaction from the army, was therefore lenient with the Progressive Party generals, neither executing nor imprisoning them. He was not so lenient with former Unionists. When a plot to assassinate him in Izmir was uncovered in June 1926, there were arrests and a trial that led to the hanging of four leading former Unionists. That marked the end of any open opposition to Mustafa Kemal's rule.

## REPUBLICANISM TAKES ROOT

The new regime was finally secure: the old regime had been defeated, along with the nationalist conservatives and former Unionists. By 1926, Kemal felt confident enough to have his statue unveiled in Istanbul, an iconoclastic gesture in a predominantly Islamic society where the representation of the human form was looked upon as sinful. The following year (15–20 October 1927), he addressed his party's congress and gave his 'great speech', which provided his interpretation of the war of liberation and against what great odds it was fought and won. As the regime became more confident, further measures were taken to secularize and modernize Turkey. The article in the constitution that described Islam as the religion of the state was removed in 1928. The Roman alphabet replaced the Arabo-Persian script, marking a major rupture with the Ottoman past. Those who had been educated in the old script became illiterate overnight and were forced to learn the Roman letters so as to keep their jobs. Literacy in urban society increased and a new generation schooled in the new script grew up with the new ideology.

By 1930, Kemal Pasha felt sufficiently confident to experiment with a multi-party system once again. The first attempt, in 1924, had not been of his making but had been launched by rivals to challenge his leadership. This time he asked his friend Fethi Bey [Okyar], to form the Free Republican Party and act as loyal opposition to the RPP. The party was formed in August. But Kemal had misjudged the mood of the country and had not bargained for the new party's popularity, and the unpopularity of his own party. There were clashes between Free Party supporters and the gendarmerie at party rallies, and charges of electoral fraud. Therefore in November, Fethi Bey, who was a close friend of

Mustafa Kemal and not a political rival, decided to dissolve his party rather than be forced to challenge Mustafa Kemal directly.

The 'Menemen incident' in western Anatolia in December 1930, proved to be even more traumatic than the popularity of the Free Party. In the provincial town of Menemen, a Dervish sheikh called for the restoration of the Sharia and the caliphate. To make matters worse, he won the support of the crowd, even when he beheaded a reserve officer who had been sent to investigate. The incident exposed the shallow rootless character of the reforms and suggested that the reforms would not take root in society on their own. They would take root only to the extent that they were explained to the people and enjoyed public approval and support. But the Kemalists, confident that their reforms were good for the country, had made no attempt to explain their programme to the masses in the provinces. The masses, who had as yet gained nothing from the reforms and were suffering the consequences of the worldwide depression of the 1930s, found solace in the traditions and symbols of the past to which they were still attached. The Free Party under Fethi Bey had offered a modern leader and modern ideas. But in Menemen, the crowd had opted for traditional, obscurantist religious ideas that the Kemalists believed were totally unsuited to republican Turkey. They were shaken by the incident, and after a soul-searching debate concluded that the revolution required an ideology that would guide the people towards modernity and win their allegiance so that they would be able to substitute patriotism for religion.

The ideology that came to be known as Kemalism/Atatürkism was the result of the debate. It was launched in May 1931, at the third party congress, and consisted of six 'fundamental and unchanging principles', namely Republicanism (*Cumhuriyetçilik*), Nationalism/Patriotism (*Milliyetçilik*), Populism (*Halkçılık*), Statism (*Devletçilik*), Laicism/Secularism (*Laiklik*) and Revolutionism/Reformism (*İnkılapçılık*). These 'principles' became the RPP's six arrows, the symbol of its emblem, and were incorporated into the constitution in 1937. But their interpretation remained fluid and pragmatic, changing according to the needs of the growing bourgeoisie.

There was no room for compromise on 'republicanism', for that could mean the restoration of the Ottoman house and the sultan-

caliph. But nationalism/patriotism remained inclusive – territorial rather than ethnic. Kemal's aphorism of 1933 ('Happy is he who calls himself a Turk') opposed the idea of birth, blood, or ethnicity, an idea that was popular among the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy. Anyone who lived within the borders of the new Turkey could call himself a 'Turk'. That is how patriots interpreted *milliyetçilik* (patriotism/nationalism). The pan-Turkists on the other hand, possibly influenced by the fascist regimes in Europe, tended to adopt the dogmatic, ethnic, and linguistic interpretation of nationalism. The struggle between the two interpretations has continued to the present day. Atatürk was a patriot rather than a nationalist. Secularism or *laiklik* – the state's control of religion rather than its separation from the state – was equally open to interpretation and some took a liberal position, while others were militantly secular and shunned Islamic practice. *The Times* (London) of 14 May 1938 noted that the Turkish ambassador had chaired a meeting at the Ritz Hotel to celebrate the Prophet's birthday, hardly a sign of Kemalist militancy or dogmatism.

Statism had emerged as a principle of Kemalist ideology when the bourgeoisie had failed to support the Nationalists' economic programme, by failing to invest in the country's infrastructure; businessmen had bought foreign consumer goods while the Turkish government was forced to keep the tariffs low until 1929, as required by the Lausanne Treaty. The Nationalists were in the process of carrying out what was in effect a 'bourgeois revolution' – separating 'church and state'; introducing universal suffrage, including votes for women; a cabinet responsible to the assembly; and a secular educational system. Mustafa Kemal married into a prominent business family of İzmir, invested his own money in the newly founded Business Bank of Turkey, and encouraged local enterprise by passing laws to that effect. But all these measures were inadequate for the business community, which preferred quick, short-term profits to the long-term development the country required urgently. Statism, or state control, advocated a mixed economy, in which the state undertook to build the infrastructure (railways, mines, dams, industry, etc.) which private capital was too poor to invest in or did not find sufficiently profitable in the short term. By developing the infrastructure, the state subsidized the private sector and contributed to its growth. The

Kemalist regime that ruled Turkey was divided between statist bureaucrats and liberal free entrepreneurs; the latter viewed the regime as transitional and expected reforms that would hasten the progress of liberal capitalism rather than state capitalism in the country. Celal Bayar (1884–1986), a prominent liberal and the leader of the future Democrat Party (DP), was appointed minister of national economy in 1932. He recognized the importance of statism and was happy to see it included in the RPP's programme. But at the same time he was expected to discipline and control the statist element within the party. In November 1937, Atatürk replaced İsmet İnönü (1884–1973), his long-standing prime minister and a confirmed statist, with Celal Bayar. Throughout the thirties, Atatürk mediated between these two factions, but he tended to favour the liberals. Only after his death in November 1938, did the statist, led by İsmet İnönü, become dominant, until they were forced to liberalize after the Second World War.

#### ATATÜRK'S INFLUENCE ON THE NEW REPUBLIC

Kemalist reforms transformed, even revolutionized, the country. Atatürk also left his distinctive mark on Turkey's foreign relations. But here too he was a pragmatist, as his close relationship with the Soviet Union shows. Given the hostility of the West to both movements, the Kemalists and the Bolsheviks were natural allies. The Kemalists had no sympathy for communism at home and therefore crushed it ruthlessly, despite Kemal's good relations with Moscow, marked by the 1925 Treaty of Friendship. But Mustafa Kemal maintained Turkey's total independence, even if that meant angering Stalin by giving asylum to Trotsky, Stalin's arch-enemy, in 1929. His main concern was not to allow the West to treat Turkey as a semi-colony, as the West had treated the Ottoman Empire, or let the Soviet Union patronize Ankara and act as 'big brother'. Consequently, until Atatürk's death, Moscow dealt with Ankara on equal terms and the relationship remained cordial.

After Lausanne and the loss of Mosul in 1926 to British-mandated Iraq, Turkey's perception of geo-politics changed. Ankara turned away from the Arab Middle East, not because Turkey was hostile to the Arabs or to Islam, as conventional wisdom would have us believe, but because the Arab world had

lost its independence to Britain and France and was incapable of acting independently. However, Turkey's relations with Iran – a Muslim and Middle Eastern state – remained cordial, as the shah's visit to Turkey in June 1934 demonstrated. Ankara even established friendly relations with distant Afghanistan, another Muslim country which tried to emulate the Kemalists. However, Turkey's primary concern was with the Balkans, because of what was described as the 'Mediterranean Question', namely, Mussolini's ambition to expand Italy's sphere of influence in the region. Atatürk took Mussolini's pretensions seriously. That is why he had signed the treaty with Greece in October 1930, during the Greek prime minister, Eleutherios Venizelos' visit, and entered into an entente with the Balkan states in 1934.

Turkey joined the League of Nations in July 1932 and lent its support to the principle of 'collective security' against aggression. Earlier, in 1929, the Franco-American Briand–Kellogg Pact that renounced war as an instrument of national policy was ratified by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. An agreement with Rome on neutrality signed in 1928 and the June 1930 accord with Greece confirmed the desire for 'peace abroad'. But Atatürk's support for collective security went beyond words. When the League applied sanctions against Italian aggression in Ethiopia, Ankara agreed not to trade with Rome even although Rome, was an important trading partner during the depressed 1930s.

The Kemalists were critical of the West's policy of appeasing the dictators, Hitler and Mussolini. Atatürk used the threat of aggression to win support for the remilitarization of the straits. The Montreux Convention, signed in July 1936, was important because Turkey was treated as an equal for the first time by the Western powers, and freed from another restraint imposed by the Treaty of Lausanne. The Convention coincided with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and once again Atatürk supported collective security. In September 1937, the Mediterranean states convened the Nyon Conference and denounced 'Italian piracy'. The Turkish delegation, acting on Atatürk's personal instructions and not those of the İönü government, permitted British and French ships to use Turkish naval bases to prevent Italian aggression in the Mediterranean; the İönü cabinet was opposed to this measure on the grounds that Rome would find it provocative.

Though cordial relations with Moscow remained the cornerstone of Turkey's foreign policy, Ankara understood the value of a friendly Britain, the foremost naval power in the world. In September 1936, the unofficial visit of King Edward VIII was treated as a state visit, and Atatürk was photographed frequently with the king. The king's visit to Turkey suggested that the country was regarded in London as an important factor in international politics and worthy of being treated as an equal. Atatürk's desire to come closer to foreign democracies had an impact on domestic politics as well. It led to the dismissal of Recep Peker, the autocratic and statist secretary-general of the RPP, who is said to have given the regime a 'fascist colouring'.

Atatürk continued to oppose the aggressive policies of the fascist dictators. The press was critical of the Munich agreement of September 1938, by which Britain and France agreed to abandon Czechoslovakia to Hitler. Remembering their own national struggle, journalists lamented that the Czechs could have maintained their dignity, if not their independence, had they fought against German aggression. Atatürk's policy of opposition to appeasement was so rare in the 1930s that the British author, George Orwell, wrote: 'In the years 1935-9, when almost any ally against Fascism seemed acceptable, left-wingers found themselves praising Mustafa Kemal'.

By October 1938, official bulletins based on his doctors' reports noted that Atatürk was very ill. He was too ill to participate in the celebrations of the fifteenth anniversary of the republic on 29 October. When the new session of the Grand National Assembly was opened on 1 November, the president's speech was read by the prime minister, Celal Bayar. Nine days later, on 10 November, the country learned that Atatürk had died.

In his fifteen years as president of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk had succeeded in creating a nation that had acquired a new identity and was virtually self-sufficient and independent. He had begun the process of converting a country from its semi-feudal, agrarian base into a modern industrial economy. All the nation's energies had been directed to progress at home, while the goal of Turkey's foreign policy was to maintain the status quo. When the republic was founded in 1923, Turkey had been incapable of producing something as simple as safety matches. But by

the mid-thirties, factories were producing textiles, sugar, paper, and cement, while a British company was in the process of setting up an iron and steel industry. Such foreign-owned enterprises as the railways were purchased by the state and nationalized, although the term adopted was not 'nationalization' but 'statification'. More railway lines were constructed and fused into a national system, whose aim was to create a national market. Turkey was now able to feed itself and export some of its produce to Europe. She was also self-sufficient in such raw materials as wool and cotton, for use by its nascent textile industry, as well as coal from the mines on the Black Sea.

In the mid-twenties, after the transfer of population between Greece and Turkey, people complained that Turks were incapable of doing the most modest technical tasks of plumbing or cobbling, because such work had been monopolized by the non-Muslims. But within a few years, the 'new Turk' had learned to take on all the professions required by a modern society, from railwayman to bank clerk, while women now worked in the textile mills and as secretaries, as well as in the professions.

Atatürk was not like the dictators of the thirties. He made speeches, but never in front of large crowds at organized rallies as Hitler and Mussolini had done. He wanted to mould his people rather than mobilize or energize them in order to manipulate them. He wanted to convince them to accept his reform programme, for he had no plan of irredentism or conquest. Unlike contemporary leaders, his charisma was not based on the promise of territorial expansion. His programme was principally domestic, and the only territorial gain the republic made was to obtain Iskenderun or Alexandretta in 1938 from Syria, which was then under the French mandate. But in 1926, he was forced to cede Mosul, with its oil, to British-controlled Iraq. He did not rule the society he came to lead by means of traditionalist social convictions and symbols as, for example, General Franco did in Spain after 1936. He preferred to create a new ideology and symbology which were in keeping with the needs of the twentieth century. Not being a conservative, he feared neither secular modernism nor liberal democracy, though he saw the latter as a brake on his own radicalism. Only Marxism, with its analysis of society based on classes and class conflict, provided an alternative to Kemalism and he refused to confront it.



Though he did not practise them fully in his own lifetime, Atatürk accepted the rationale of such liberal institutions as political parties, trade unions, a free press, and freedom of speech. The assumption of the regime was that these institutions would be introduced as soon as Turkish society had achieved the requisite stage of development. When Atatürk died in November 1938, the new generation that had grown up in the republic thought that everything they had known had died with him. It was difficult for many to imagine a Turkey without Atatürk, for he had become synonymous with the republic and the new Turkey. His successors were therefore faced with the difficult task of establishing their authority in order to rule a country that was still in the process of maturing.

#### SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (The Overlook Press, New York, 1999).

Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun, *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (Hurst, London, 1981).

# 5

## Towards Multi-Party Politics and Democracy, 1938–1960

### İNÖNÜ'S NEW PRESIDENCY

The transition of political power following Atatürk's death was smooth, and any sign of infighting for the leadership within the RPP was hidden from public gaze. Thus on 11 November, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey elected unanimously İsmet İnönü as the republic's new president. İnönü's election surprised many observers, because in 1937 there was a rift between Atatürk and İnönü, and Atatürk had replaced him as prime minister with Celal Bayar, suggesting that İnönü was being bypassed in the succession. Some have even suggested that in his secret will, kept in the presidential library in Ankara, Atatürk is said to have declared: 'Let Marshal Fevzi Çakmak be the president after me'. If so, Atatürk's wish was disregarded and İnönü, supported by General Fevzi Çakmak, the chief of staff since 1923, was elected Turkey's second president. İsmet İnönü had managed to maintain his hold over the party machine, despite his fall, and as a result he was able to secure his election. But his position with the people of Turkey was weak, for he lacked the stature of Atatürk. Therefore in December, the RPP's Extra-Ordinary Congress met and declared Atatürk as the Party's founder and 'eternal leader', while İsmet Pasha was declared its 'permanent national chief', or *Milli Şef*. These changes suggested that İnönü was emulating the leadership

principle prevalent in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy in order to bolster his position at home and abroad.

Given the tensions in Europe and the possibility of war, İnönü brought about political harmony at home by pursuing a policy of reconciliation with opponents of Atatürk and Kemalism. People who had lived in exile during Atatürk's rule returned to Turkey and became active in politics again. At the same time, he gave the government broad powers to regulate the economy by having the assembly pass the National Defence Law on 18 January 1939. The following week, Celal Bayar, a liberal, anti-statist politician, resigned as PM and was replaced by Dr Refik Saydam, who had been minister of the interior and general secretary of the RPP. Thereafter, the two offices of party secretary-general and minister of the interior were separated, suggesting that the RPP was giving up its control over the bureaucracy established in the mid-1930s. That was an illusion, for the party's hold over the state remained firm; only that of individual politicians was weakened. When general elections were held in March 1939, in a house of 424 deputies, there were 125 new faces; some men who had been close to Atatürk were not elected, while such rivals and opponents as Fethi Okyar, Kazım Karabekir, Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın, Refet Bele and Ali Fuad Cebesoy, entered the assembly. At the same time, Mustafa Kemal's landing at Samsun on 19 May 1919, was celebrated for the first time, suggesting that the post-Atatürk regime would continue to honour the republic's founder. The celebration became known as the 'Youth Festival' and has been celebrated each year thereafter.

İnönü continued to liberalize the regime, appointing Fethi Okyar as Minister of Justice in May. On 29 May, he permitted the formation of the 'Independent Group' in the assembly which was expected to act as the loyal opposition to the government. But this was a paper reform, for the group did not take its oppositional role seriously and allowed the government to ride roughshod, with the passage of certain completely undemocratic laws that were passed during the war.

President İnönü's principal task was to steer his country safely through the world crisis. He had still to prove himself in the wake of Atatürk's charismatic leadership. Though he had been Atatürk's right-hand man from the early twenties until 1937, he was thought

to be neither imaginative nor dynamic. Hitler is said to have remarked to his commanders that, after the death of Atatürk, Turkey would be ruled by morons and half-idiots. Given his bullying policy towards post-Atatürk Turkey, Stalin may have reached a similar conclusion. But they were wrong. İnönü was a cautious man, unwilling to gamble the future of the republic by opting for the wrong side; the memory of the First World War was still fresh in the minds of that generation and they did not want to repeat the error of the Unionists. So when the Second World War broke out in September 1939, İnönü chose to remain neutral, even though Turkey had signed declarations of friendship and mutual assistance with Britain in May and with France in June 1939. In return for Turkey's pledge, France agreed to cede Alexandretta, a part of Syria (known in Turkey as Hatay) to Ankara. The German–Soviet Pact of 23 August 1939 marked the end of any possibility of a tripartite (Anglo-French-Soviet) guarantee against the threat of fascist aggression. Turkey was now more determined than ever to maintain its neutrality.

## WAR IN EUROPE

Ankara watched the war in Europe closely, hoping that neither side would win an overwhelming victory and dominate Europe. An Allied victory would be to Moscow's advantage, while an Axis victory would guarantee Italian hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. For the moment, Turkey's foreign policy seemed directed by her foreign trade, which she juggled between the two blocs. On 18 June 1941, three days before Germany invaded Russia, Turkey signed a non-aggression pact with Germany. The invasion gave Ankara breathing space – Germany having already invaded and occupied Bulgaria and Greece, was incapable of invading Turkey while she fought Russia. Many in Turkey believed that Hitler would knock out Russia in a short war and force Britain and France to make peace. Consequently, in the summer of 1942, Ankara announced that it would join the war on the German side if Russia were defeated.

War, neutrality and mobilization undermined whatever gains the economy had made during the thirties. The government had been forced to implement the 'national defence law' in January 1940, to

counter the hoarding, profiteering and shortages that had resulted since the outbreak of war. Price controls were introduced and rents frozen to the April 1940 level, the working day was increased by three hours and the weekly holiday abolished in many workplaces. Indirect taxation increased sharply on such essentials as sugar, tea, and transportation. German successes in Russia encouraged the racist element in the Turkish elite to harass their own minorities, so much so that in November 1942, the assembly passed the notorious and controversial wealth tax law, known in Turkish as *Varlık Vergisi*. Its ostensible purpose was to raise around US \$360 million from businesses that had profited from the war; but taxes were assessed according to the taxpayer's religion and not his wealth. There were separate lists for Muslims, non-Muslims, foreigners and for the Dönme, a sect of Jews who had converted to Islam in the seventeenth century. As a result of this tax, many non-Muslims were forced to sell their assets (real estate, factories, etc.), which were then purchased by members of the new Muslim bourgeoisie at well below market prices, enriching that class, at the same time as alienating it from the government!

Fortunately, the pressure on the minorities eased soon after the German army surrendered at Stalingrad in February 1943, and the tide began to turn against Berlin. The following month, Avram Galanté, a Turkish Jew, was elected to the assembly, while the pro-German journalist, Yunus Nadi lost his seat. These were signals that İnönü was abandoning Turkey's benevolent neutrality towards Germany and leaning towards the Allies. In September 1943, victims of the wealth tax who had been sent to a work camp in eastern Anatolia were pardoned and the tax was annulled in March 1944. The racist pan-Turkist movement that had been supported by German money and propaganda and had become influential even in government circles, was finally banned and prosecuted. In May 1944, its leaders were put on trial and İnönü personally denounced pan-Turkism in his 19 May Youth Day speech. The trials only ended in March 1947, during the cold war, when Moscow, not Germany, was the enemy. The accused were acquitted and lauded as nationalists who had struggled against a subversive ideology, i.e. communism! Pan-Turkism was an instrument to be employed in the game of international politics.

As the world war wound down, the İnönü regime found itself in a difficult predicament. The majority of the people in Turkey were suffering severe hardship. All the basic needs were in short supply. Bread rationing had been introduced in January 1942 and a law passed that virtually permitted the forced collection of agricultural produce. All classes except the bureaucracy were alienated from the regime: businessmen by the arbitrary wealth tax, which had enriched a few Muslims but revealed how autocratic the state could be; the landlords and peasants by the agrarian legislation and the harsh and arbitrary rule of the gendarmerie; and the urban masses by the labour legislation, which overworked them, gave low wages and left them hungry.

#### THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

İsmet İnönü understood that the world had changed radically as a result of the victory of the Allies over fascism, and that he had to respond to the situation before there was an explosion at home. On 1 November 1945, he declared that the political system would be reformed so as to bring it in line with the emerging world order of capitalism and democracy. The Turkish political system lacked an opposition party and he would permit the formation of such a body. Though the defeat of the fascists had undermined the legitimacy of a single-party state in Turkey, internal factors also made it untenable. The political alliance between the military-bureaucratic elite, the landlords, and the rising bourgeoisie had brought about the success of the war of liberation and the early Kemalist regime. The very success of the regime, the growth of capitalism, both urban and rural, eroded that alliance, and bourgeoisie and landlords were no longer willing to tolerate the system. Besides, the economy required a vast injection of capital, and that could only be provided by America. Washington, in turn, encouraged the anti-statist forces and the establishment of a free market. In Turkey, the problem could only be resolved with a struggle within the RPP, between the liberal and the statist wings; rather than liberalize the system, the statist wanted to strengthen their hold on the state even further.

The land reform bill of January 1945 polarized opinion in the country. The statist wanted to redistribute land, break the

political and economic power of the landowners and transform Turkey into a republic of independent peasant proprietors, akin to the Balkan states. Though parliament passed the bill, the RPP was fragmented as a result, leading to the founding of the Democrat Party in January 1946. Its founders – Celal Bayar, businessman and banker; Refik Koraltan, a bureaucrat; Fuad Köprülü, a professor; and Adnan Menderes, a landowner – were all respected members of the RPP. They called for the implementation of a multi-party system, democracy, and the inviolability of private property. Three of the dissidents were expelled from the RPP and Bayar resigned. They responded by forming the Democrat Party, thus opening a new page in Turkey's political life.

### THE FORMATION OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY

Initially, the Democrats were seen as another loyal opposition, created by men who came out of the RPP. After all, its founding members were all Kemalists of long standing and offered virtually the same political and economic programme as the ruling party. Mahmud Celal Bayar had also paid his political dues. He was born in a village in Bursa province in 1884. In 1903, he joined the Bursa branch of the Deutsche Orient Bank and was an active member of the Committee of Union and Progress. After the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918, Bayar organized the national struggle in the İzmir region. In 1923, he was elected deputy for İzmir in the assembly and minister for reconstruction in the 1924 cabinet. He won the confidence of Mustafa Kemal and was hand-picked to lead the tiny private sector. He founded the Business Bank of Turkey (*Türkiye İş Bankası*) in 1924, which became one of the engines of economic change and is still one of the principal economic institutions in the country. During the economic crisis of 1932, Bayar was appointed Minister of National Economy, and in 1937 replaced İnönü as Atatürk's last prime minister. When İnönü became president, Bayar resigned and was given no further ministerial post. He next appeared on the political scene in 1945, as leader of the dissident faction in the ruling RPP.

Mustafa İsmet İnönü came from a social background similar to that of Bayar. He was also born in 1884 and, as with so many youths of his class, had a military schooling, where he acquired a

modern education that paved the way to social mobility in a society that offered few opportunities to Muslim youths. He graduated as a staff captain in 1905 and served in many parts of the empire. In the Greco-Turkish war, he won the Battle of İnönü (hence his surname) in 1921. İnönü became a loyal supporter of Kemal Pasha and was sent to the Lausanne conference as leader of the Turkish delegation to negotiate the peace treaty, establishing a reputation as a clever negotiator. He served as prime minister during the twenties and thirties, but was forced to resign in 1937. He had become one of the principal figures in the party–state bureaucracy and was therefore well situated to be elected president on Atatürk's death. As president, he kept Turkey out of the war but he became unpopular with the masses because of the virtual police state he established in which he was designated the 'national leader'. By 1945, İnönü had the foresight to see that times had changed and that he now had to preside over the dismantling of the single-party regime and the introduction of multi-party politics, though not necessarily democracy.

The mood in Turkey had changed dramatically since Atatürk's death, and the party that had played such a crucial role in the creation of the new Turkey was no longer trusted. The RPP was no longer seen as capable of leading Turkey in the postwar new world order. Initially, the Republicans were unaware of the changing mood in the country, convinced that all they needed to do in order to regain popularity was to carry out some reforms. The Democrats shared the same Kemalist philosophy, with perhaps a slight difference in emphasis: they were expected to enhance the government's legitimacy by acting as its official opposition. Initially, even the public did not take the Democrat Party seriously, for its programme hardly differed from that of the Republicans; after all, the constitution required that all parties adopt the six arrows of Kemalism. But the Democrats claimed that they would interpret these principles according to the new circumstances and that their aim was to advance democracy in Turkey. They wanted to curb the interventionist state and enhance individual rights and liberties. The Democrats were populists, who claimed that political initiatives should come from the people and not from the party or the state. They spoke for private enterprise and the individual, as the liberals had during the Young Turks era; very soon they had



won over much of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, the educated segment of the urban population, as well as journalists and academics. They already had the support of the landlords.

When the Republicans finally sensed hostility to their rule in the country, they began to liberalize the party and society. İnönü abandoned his titles of 'national leader' and 'permanent chairman' of the RPP and agreed that the party would elect a chairman every four years. But people saw these as cosmetic changes and they were right, for İnönü continued to lead the party until his ouster in 1972! The radicals in the RPP wanted their party to become a 'class party', to win over the peasants, workers, tenant farmers, artisans and small merchants and isolate the Democrats as the representatives of landlords and big business. However, despite these changes in the regulations, the conservatives remained dominant and the RPP continued to be a party that was all things to all men. As a result, the Republicans lost the support of most groups and were forced to rely on their traditional supporters in the most underdeveloped part of Turkey, in eastern and central Anatolia.

#### THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1946 AND 1950

İnönü decided to hold an early general election, in 1946 rather than in 1947, before the Democrats had more time to organize and become a real electoral threat. But Bayar said that the Democrats would boycott the poll unless the laws were made more democratic. The DP's boycott would have robbed the government of its legitimacy and therefore İnönü was forced to amend certain undemocratic laws in order to appease the DP. The electoral law was amended and direct elections were introduced. After 1908, elections were two-tiered: voters elected representatives locally, who then elected the parliamentary deputies from the party list. Universities were granted administrative autonomy and the press laws were liberalized.

The Democrats knew that they would not do well in the 1946 election because they had not completed their organization throughout the country: bureaucracy remained hostile to them, and the voters were not sure whether the multi-party system would continue to function. Thus the RPP's victory in 1946 came as no

surprise: it won 390 of the 465 seats, while the Democrats managed to win only 65 – not a bad showing in an election marred by corruption and state repression. But the political atmosphere was poisoned, which had a detrimental effect on the country's political life. The period after the 1946 election was crucial for the establishment of multi-party political life. The struggle between radicals and moderates within the RPP continued, but on 12 July 1947, President İnönü decided to support the moderates and undermine the radicals. Consequently, the pressure on the Democrats eased and they were allowed total freedom of action and equality with the governing party.

İnönü hoped to revive his party's political fortunes by adopting liberal measures. The economy was cautiously opened up to market forces; the currency was devalued, import facilities eased and banks were permitted to sell gold. These measures resulted in inflation, with the cost of living index rising from 100 in 1938 to 386.8 in August 1946, and to 412.9 as a consequence of the devaluation. The business community was encouraged by these measures but the voters were alienated even more. Bayar found that he could exploit economic discontent against the government. Although İnönü was known as a devout laicist/secularist, he allowed the government to restore religious instruction in schools. Religious concessions were considered of prime importance to isolate the Democrat Party as well as the Nation Party, formed in 1948 by conservative DP dissidents, who wanted even greater religious freedom. İnönü seemed to be abandoning three of the principal pillars of Kemalist ideology: statism, revolutionism, and laicism, and even embracing Islam. Having carried out these reforms, by 1950 the Republicans were so sure of success in the coming elections that they thought that the DP might become politically irrelevant; they even offered some seats to the Democrats so as to ensure the existence of an opposition in the new parliament!

İnönü's policy of pandering to popular sentiment and opening up the economy did little to enhance the party's reputation with the voters. When the general election was held on 14 May 1950, the voters delivered a devastating blow to the RPP and elected the Democrats with an overwhelming majority.

The Democrats had exploited the popular memory of past grievances inflicted during twenty-seven years of Republican rule.

Voters were told that nothing would change while İnönü remained in power; İnönü – not Atatürk – had come to symbolize single-party authoritarianism. The Democrats had also succeeded in winning over the bureaucracy by holding the party and not the state responsible for Turkey's problems. Without the tacit neutrality of the bureaucracy, if not its active support, the Democrats were unlikely to win, because Turkish people both feared and respected state officials and were often guided by them. When officials did not canvass for the governing party, the voters took note. Of the 90 per cent turnout, 53 per cent voted Democrat and gave them an overwhelming majority of 408 seats in parliament. The Republicans won a respectable 38 per cent of the vote, but only 39 seats; this was because they had instituted the winner-takes-all principle in the electoral system, a system that had served them well in the past.

The 1950 electoral triumph of the Democrats was seen, at the time, and is still described by some scholars, as a turning-point in the history of modern Turkey. The party in power had accepted the verdict of the voter, and this was seen as a great step forward for the democratic process, at a time when a struggle was raging between communist authoritarianism and the 'free world'. In actual fact, the change in Turkey was not as dramatic as it seemed. It is true that new political forces represented by the DP had entered the political arena, but in power they continued to work with the same instrument – the restrictive 1924 constitution – as had the Republicans. The great change in the 1950s resulted from the process of decolonization and the cold war, and that affected life in Turkey as well.

#### THE COLD WAR AND ITS EFFECTS ON TURKEY

As the Second World War ended, the Allies – Britain and the Soviet Union – were in the process of dividing Europe into spheres of influence. Until Germany's defeat at the battle of Stalingrad, Turkey had been benevolently neutral towards Berlin. After Stalingrad, Ankara began to favour the Allies. Stalin began to raise the question of the straits with Churchill, in Moscow in October 1944, and again in Yalta, in February 1945. The Allies agreed to discuss the question, to inform Turkey of their deliberations and to

guarantee her independence. Recently opened Soviet archives inform us that, as early as May 1945, Turkey proposed a bilateral treaty of friendship with Moscow, sending, so Stalin thought, a clear message that Ankara was willing to alienate its ally Britain. Heartened by what Stalin considered Turkish timidity, in June, he verbally demanded the lease of a base on the Turkish Straits and the concession of two territories, Kars and Ardahan – territories conquered by Tsarist Russia in 1878, and ceded by Lenin to Atatürk under the treaty of 1922. Stalin, we are told, looked upon the straits, not only as an issue of Soviet security, but also as a matter of prestige. He believed that Turkey, impressed with the victories of the Red Army, would give in to his demands, and then Washington and London would accept it as a *fait accompli*. Later, Vyacheslav Molotov, commissar for foreign affairs, admitted that Stalin had overplayed his hand and had been too arrogant in 1945. Soviet demands, said Molotov, were ill-timed and unrealistic. But Stalin insisted that he push for joint ownership of the straits. By 1946, realizing its mistake, Moscow had abandoned its claims on Turkey. Recent American scholarship, based on US archival documents, agrees that there were no Soviet demands, only proposals and conditions – and there is a major difference between demands and proposals – for renewing the Turkish–Soviet Treaty of Friendship of 1925 that expired in November 1945. Even the Turkish foreign minister, Hasan Saka, was relieved when he read the Soviet *démarche* and saw that there was no explicit demand for bases on Turkish soil.

The cold war crisis between Moscow and Washington over Greece, Turkey and Iran, made Turkey an important regional player. The crisis also allowed the Truman administration to push its programme of rearmament through Congress and the Senate. In Washington there were two schools of thought about dealing with the Soviets: the State Department viewed the Soviet challenge as essentially political and economic, and therefore best met by political and economic means; the Pentagon viewed the Soviet threat as primarily military, to be met by a system of alliances, of which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was the first. The Pentagon school prevailed in US relations with Turkey.

The cold war climate accelerated Turkey's involvement with Washington. Both parties believed that Turkey required foreign

capital investment for rapid economic growth, and this would only be forthcoming if Turkey joined the West and served its interests in the Middle East. Stalin's bullying tactics towards Turkey facilitated the rapprochement with Washington, especially as civil war broke out in neighbouring Greece. A friendly Turkey became a valuable asset for Washington, and was therefore included in the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the Marshall Plan, designed to hasten the economic recovery of Europe. The statist faction in the RPP was finally defeated in 1947, with the resignation of Prime Minister Recep Peker; thereafter both parties pursued a bipartisan policy, designed to project a stable image of Turkey to the West.

Ankara was not happy about its relations with the West. The West had made no commitment to defend Turkey in the event of Soviet aggression, and after the formation of NATO in 1949, Ankara wanted a guarantee that the West would come to its defence in case of war with the Soviet Union. Washington was reluctant to make such a commitment. The Pentagon was content to use Turkey's armed forces, which it was rapidly modernizing to blunt any Soviet attack in that region, and to have bomber bases in Turkey.

But İnönü wanted a firm commitment from Washington and not just military and economic aid. By the late 1940s, there was talk of non-alignment in Ankara's political circles, a concept that became popular in parts of the postwar world. In April 1949, when Foreign Minister Sadak visited Washington, Secretary of State Dean Acheson was struck by his argument in favour of Turkey's neutrality if she were given no US guarantee. US diplomats and military officers feared that Turkey might seek a position of neutrality and the United States would be unable to capitalize on its investments in Turkey.

Turkey's considerable bargaining position proved insufficient to win any concessions from Washington, and İnönü made no headway in the negotiations. When the Democrats came to power in May 1950, they pursued the same policy and their initiatives were not taken seriously either. The contribution of Turkish troops in the Korean War and Turkey's participation in Washington's 'containment policy' against the Soviet Union seemed to make no difference. When Celal Bayar, now president of Turkey, saw the American ambassador in February 1951, he expressed his personal

displeasure with the US–Turkish relationship and hinted at the possibility of neutrality in case of war with the Soviet Union. This had the desired effect. Despite British opposition (Britain wanted to restrict Turkey's membership to the Middle East Defence Organisation), both Turkey and Greece became full members of NATO in February 1952. Once in NATO, Turkey abandoned all her foreign policy options and became totally committed to the organization. Atatürk's policy of never wanting Russia and Turkey to be enemies again was abandoned; so was Kemalist geo-strategic thinking that Turkey was no longer a part of the Middle East. Inside NATO, Turkey assumed the role of 'bridge' between the West and the Middle East, a role that was institutionalized with the formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Britain. Its alleged aim was to contain the Soviet Union, but it was directed also against the Arab nationalist movement led by Nasser of Egypt. Although Washington did not join the pact, it remained the material and moral inspiration behind it. The Baghdad Pact established Turkey's leadership of the conservative regimes in the region and it became a link between NATO and the Middle East. But it also meant that Ankara became isolated from the emerging third world, especially at the United Nations.

## DOMESTIC POLITICS

In power, the Democrats aroused great hope in the country. They had brought to an end the era of authoritarian single-party rule. They promised to rule democratically and bring about modernization and prosperity. In actual fact, there was no real ideological difference between the governing party and the opposition: both parties were committed to the creation of a modern, prosperous Turkey. The Democrats employed the slogans of making Turkey into a 'little America', an idea put forward by a Republican politician in 1948, and of creating 'a millionaire in every quarter'. The opposition could not dispute a vision that they also shared; they only differed over the method of achieving these goals.

Perhaps the major difference between the Democrats and the Republicans was the speed with which the two parties wanted to develop Turkey. Having won such an overwhelming victory at the

polls, the Democrats believed that the nation stood behind their programme. They believed in 'majoritarian democracy' – that the majority could do as it wished because it was the majority by virtue of its victory at the polls. They were therefore intolerant of criticism and any obstacles that might stand in the way of their programme. They subscribed to the ideology of Kemalism, but only in so far as it was interpreted according to the needs and circumstances of the times. Some of the 'isms', they argued, had served their purpose and had to be modified. For example, Turkey no longer needed a paternalistic state, and therefore statism had become redundant in an age of free enterprise.

The Democrats saw themselves as social engineers who understood their society and knew what was best for the people; this was in keeping with the Kemalist dictum: 'for the people, despite the people'. They agreed that the Republicans had made a vital contribution to the creation of Turkey during the early republic but the RPP had become an anachronism and was no longer in touch with the people or their needs. The RPP in opposition was therefore expected to play the role of official opposition and watch patiently as the DP transformed Turkey's economy and society. As for the Nation Party, formed in 1948 by conservative Democrats who wanted greater religious freedom, it too was redundant because the DP would pass laws to liberalize religious practice in order to meet the spiritual needs of the Turkish people. On 16 June 1950, barely a month after they came to power, they passed a law restoring the call to prayer (*ezan*) in Arabic; the *ezan* had been called in Turkish only since June 1941. The Democrats also restored the language of the constitution to its Ottoman original and away from the reformed Turkish of the Kemalist era, and began the process of coming to terms with Turkey's Ottoman past. In the prevailing climate of the cold war and anti-communism, all parties left-of-centre were made illegal, and many of their leading members put in jail or exiled. Nazım Hikmet, a communist poet, had to flee the country and live in exile in the Soviet bloc, while the left-wing writer, Sabaheddin Ali, was murdered by right-wing extremists.

Their electoral success in the 1950 elections led the Democrats to believe that the people supported their programme and that they represented the 'national will' (*milli irade*) to which they would be

held accountable every four years at election time. For that reason, they did not take the opposition or its criticism seriously. During the early years of DP rule, the country seemed to be growing rapidly, thanks to the demand for Turkish products in Europe and the Korean War boom. Moreover Marshall Law aid also opened up the country to the West.

Turkey was led by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (1899–1960). He was chosen by President Bayar as his prime minister over the older and more experienced Fuad Köprülü (1890–1966), the intellectual, because Menderes belonged to a younger generation and was thought to have a vision for postwar Turkey. He belonged to a wealthy landowning family in the cotton-growing province of Aydın, in western Anatolia. Menderes had matured during the Kemalist era and had entered politics by joining Ali Fethi's Free Republican Party in 1930. When the party was dissolved, he joined the RPP and, in 1945, sided with the dissidents against the land reform bill. He was expelled from the RPP and became a founding member of the Democrat Party.

Menderes viewed political power as the tool necessary for Turkey's rapid growth. He had no time for amending the anti-democrat laws or the establishment of a neutral administration that the Democrats had called for while in opposition. In keeping with the principle of an 'above-party' president, Celal Bayar resigned from the DP and Menderes was elected party chairman. But that was a cosmetic reform, for Bayar was too closely associated with the party to cut all his ties from it. In other areas, the DP government tightened its grip on the penal code adopted in the mid-1930s from the Italian model, and laws became more repressive, in keeping with the frigid political atmosphere created by the cold war. Moreover the Republicans were kept under constant pressure by the threat of liquidating the party's assets.

The situation worsened after Menderes's victory in the 1954 election. Turkey was going through a period of prosperity and there was a mood of optimism in the country. Voters had benefited from economic growth and showed their appreciation by supporting a government that had opened up the country and made it less bureaucratic. The Democrats had distributed state lands to some landless peasants, introduced mechanization on the farms by importing agricultural machinery from the US and



increased production. The Agricultural Bank, founded in Ottoman times, extended credit to farmers, while the state subsidized wheat and cotton, as well as increasing storage facilities for farm produce. Weather during the first half of the 1950s had also favoured the farmer and world wheat prices were unusually high, thanks to the demand generated by the Korean War. As a result, the countryside, especially the big farmers, had benefited and were happy to vote for the DP.

The urban intelligentsia, the universities and the professionals, who had mostly supported the DP because it had promised political liberalization, were disappointed and became disillusioned with the party's performance in power. They saw that democratic and multi-party politics could not function with institutions inherited from the single-party period. Such institutions as the 1924 constitution and the penal code were anachronisms and had to be amended in order to suit Turkish society living during the second half of the twentieth century. The DP government showed no concern for such detail. Menderes became dismissive of critics as his power grew and smothered democracy within his own party. In opposition, the Democrats had won the support of the small working class in Turkey by promising them the right to strike, which had been denied them by the single-party regime. When Menderes was reminded of this promise, he replied: 'Is Turkey to have strikes? Let's have some economic development first and then we'll think about this matter'. That summed up his attitude towards democracy; for the time being, it was to be sacrificed on the altar of economic growth!

Despite their electoral strength, the Democrats suffered from an inferiority complex that left them feeling insecure. They may have won the support of the voters and were now the government, but they did not feel that the instruments of state – the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the army – stood behind them. These institutions were the creation of the RPP and were suspected of being loyal to the opposition. This was especially true of the army, which was thought to be loyal to İnönü, still known by his military title, İsmet Pasha. There were rumours of a military coup when the DP won the election in 1950, with subsequent great relief when the generals did not intervene. Nevertheless, Menderes carried out a purge in the top ranks of the army, and retired those who were considered

İnönü loyalists, replacing them with loyal Democrats. He did the same with a number of provincial governors and other senior positions in the bureaucracy. The Democrats suffered from what was described as the ‘Pasha factor’, an irrational fear that they would not be safe in office as long as İnönü led the opposition. They came to believe that İnönü, known as ‘the cunning fox’, was the cause of all their troubles, and that the Republican opposition would be ineffectual without him. Even the Republicans believed this myth, and no leader from within the party emerged to challenge İnönü’s leadership, even though he was already 70 years old in 1954. Had İnönü retired from political life when his party lost the 1950 election, Turkey’s history might have taken a different turn. Menderes and the Democrats would have felt more confident and perhaps would have behaved more fairly and justly towards the opposition. New leadership would have emerged within the RPP and the party would have reformed and adapted itself in keeping up with the needs of the times. While İnönü led the party, it was impossible to imagine any change; he was a figure from the past and cast a huge shadow under which nothing new could grow. For the Democrats, their ten-year rule was their failure to come to terms with the ‘Pasha factor’.

After Menderes was hanged by the military junta that seized power in May 1960, there was a droll joke doing the rounds of Ankara. Menderes went to heaven and met Atatürk one day, and Atatürk asked him about political life in Turkey. Menderes then recounted in detail all that had befallen the country since Atatürk’s death, ending with his own execution. Menderes concluded: ‘Well Pasha, that’s Kısmet (fate)’. ‘No Adnan’, replied Atatürk, ‘that’s İsmet, not Kısmet’!

Menderes’s undemocratic rule cannot be explained away simply by the RPP and the ‘Pasha factor’. However insecure he may have felt, he knew that the opposition was weak and disorganized and gave him nothing to fear. Menderes’s political apprehension was founded on the makeup of his own party. The Democrats had never been as homogeneous as they appeared to be while in opposition. The top echelon of the party’s leadership came out of dissidents in the RPP. But much of its provincial support came from people who entered politics only after the party was established in January 1946. Such people remembered the harsh rule of the

provincial gendarmerie and had an irrational hatred for the RPP and İnönü. Many were blinded by the spirit of revenge and wanted the party to take a hard line with the RPP, even while it was the governing party. They accused their leader of colluding with İnönü, and some even left the DP and went on to form the Nation Party in 1948. In power, these DP dissidents accused Menderes of being no different from the Republicans and of offering virtually the same programme.

Menderes was confronted repeatedly with such criticism at provincial party congresses. He soon learned that his internal opposition was more troublesome than the opposition in parliament. He knew that he could appease DP dissidents by taking harsh measures against the RPP. That policy partly explains the anti-democratic laws his government passed against the RPP, as well as laws against such institutions as the universities and the press. Menderes may have won over some of his dissidents, but these measures alienated the liberal intelligentsia, who had supported the DP from the very beginning because of its promise of political liberalization. The intelligentsia, though few in number, were articulate and were a voice in the universities, the press, and the professions. The DP government was expected to strengthen civil society by furthering democratic freedoms instead of curbing them. But Menderes's measures against the press, the opposition, and university autonomy, all suggested that he was not committed to a more free and democratic Turkey. The government's ability to close down the opposition Nation Party in January 1954 revealed how fragile party politics could be.

Menderes was transformed by his success in the 1954 election. His popular vote had increased, as had his representation in parliament. He became convinced that he had chosen the correct policies because the people said so; he felt he no longer needed to consult even sympathetic journalists who had supported the DP since 1946. The only effective check on government was a strong opposition in the assembly. Since the founding of the Republic, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was the most powerful institution of the state. National sovereignty was vested in parliament, which elected the president from among its members. The president then appointed the prime minister, who formed his cabinet from among the 'representatives of the nation' (*milletvekili*), as

members of parliament are designated in Turkey. They were (and are) expected to represent the nation and not the constituencies from which they were elected.

Under the 1924 constitution, parliament passed laws and there was no upper house to review these laws or a constitutional court to assess their constitutionality. The president alone had the veto to suspend laws, but he was too intimately associated with the governing party to act independently. Without a strong opposition party, the government could do as it pleased, providing it could keep its own party in line. That became Menderes's principal concern after 1954, for his political problems stemmed largely from within his own party.

DP liberals, who supported free enterprise and political liberalism, came out strongly against the government's policy of state controls over the economy and curbs on political activity. Such liberal Democrats either resigned or were expelled from the party. They included such prominent democrats as Fevzi Lütüf Karaosmanoğlu, who formed the Freedom Party in December 1955. Menderes became totally dependent on his parliamentary group and agreed to the resignation of his cabinet while he alone remained to form a new cabinet. In agreeing to this political manoeuvre, parliament confessed that there was no one else in the party able to lead the government or keep the party together. Thereafter, Menderes treated his parliamentary group with great humility and respect.

## ECONOMIC CONCERNS

The downturn in the economy after 1955 began to have an impact on Turkey's political life. Unfortunately, the economic miracle of the early fifties was based on flimsy foundations and was therefore doomed to collapse. Food and cotton production was based, not on improved agricultural techniques, but on an increase of acreage in cultivation. By 1954, the economy began to show signs of stagnation and the growth rate began to drop. The years 1956–9 were marked by spiralling inflation, with prices rising at 18 per cent per annum. Meanwhile the growth rate of the economy had levelled out to a mediocre 4 per cent, barely enough to keep up with the high birth rate. The economy had seen artificial growth and no

sign of development that became self-sustaining. The constantly rising inflation undermined the living standards of salary and wage earners. Military officers were directly affected and resented the loss of prestige their profession suffered as a result of the decline in their living standard. They complained that they were no longer able to marry into middle-class families because such families preferred to give their daughters to the emerging business class. That had grave political consequences and was one of the factors that led to the military coup d'état in 1960.

There was also a great shortage of foreign exchange, thanks to the government's policy of over-pricing the Turkish lira. Until the devaluation of 1958, the lira was kept at 2.8 liras to the dollar, while its real value was around ten liras. As a result, imports were subsidized by the government and were very cheap, while exports were prohibitively expensive. This policy encouraged corruption on a large scale; if a businessman had political patronage he was able to acquire foreign exchange cheaply and make a small fortune. Fortunes were made during this period, but the treasury was left bankrupt.

We don't know how the Democrats would have fared had elections been held in 1958 when they were due. Realizing that the economy would have been in worse shape in 1958, Menderes decided to call them early, in October 1957. Even so, the election marked the decline of the DP, with Republican seats increasing from 31 to 178. The Democrats were still very much in command, though they were forced to pursue a more populist policy, with the exploitation of religion for political ends. That was especially true after Menderes survived the air crash at Gatwick in London on 17 February 1959. Menderes's supporters exploited his survival as a miracle (fourteen others were killed) and he was seen as a man of destiny, chosen by God to serve a higher purpose.

By the time of the 1957 election, the Democrats no longer controlled the economy. Menderes believed that he faced only a short-term problem and that all he needed was time before his policies showed results. He turned to the West to seek help and in July 1958, Washington agreed to provide a loan of US \$359 million in order to consolidate Turkey's US \$400 million debt. In return, Menderes agreed to 'stabilize' the economy by devaluing the Turkish lira from 2.8 to 9.025 liras to the US dollar. The stabilization

programme did not have the desired effect, so in October 1959, Menderes went to America to seek more financial loans. But the Eisenhower administration refused to bail him out and Menderes returned empty-handed. He then decided to visit the Soviet Union in July 1960, to see if the cold war enemy would be more forthcoming with a loan. But he had decided late in the day to repair fences with Moscow; before any such visit could take place, Menderes was overthrown by his army.

#### THE ARMY ENTERS THE FRAY

Political tension had mounted after the 1957 election. The opposition was much stronger and had issues it could exploit against the government, but it lacked the means to bring down Menderes except by defeat in the general election. Menderes tried to bolster his authority by forming a nationwide front called the 'Fatherland Front', whose aim was to isolate his critics and disarm the opposition. Those who refused to join the front were denounced as 'subversives' and their names were broadcast in the media. Instead of bringing unity, the 'Fatherland Front' polarized political life. When this political manoeuvre failed to quell the opposition, the Democrats set up a committee, in April 1960, to investigate the opposition's 'subversive activities', whose aim, they claimed, was to engineer a military revolt. In Ankara, there were student protests, which spread to other parts of the country. Martial law was declared but to no avail; finally, on 24 May, Menderes declared that the investigating committee had completed its work and that he would hold early elections in September. But Menderes's declarations came too late. Groups of military officers, alienated from DP rule, had been conspiring since 1957 to bring about its end. They intervened on 27 May and dismissed the DP government.

Reform of Turkey's armed forces had been an important plank in the DP's programme. With the declaration of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the Pentagon had begun to provide modern weapons to an army that was still equipped with First World War vintage arms. Modernization was accelerated when Turkey became a member of NATO in 1952, and Menderes seemed to favour military reform when he appointed retired Colonel Seyfi Kurtbek as minister of national defence to carry out the necessary

reorganization. The Kurtbek reorganization plan was popular with younger officers, but not with the generals, who feared early retirement as they were considered incapable of mastering the new techniques of modern warfare. A hierarchical army, still Prussian in its attitudes, resented sharing power with junior officers. They came out in opposition to the reforms and spread rumours that Kurtbek was planning a military coup. Menderes responded by postponing the reforms and Kurtbek decided to resign in July 1953, realizing that his programme had been shelved.

For Menderes, reorganization of Turkey's armed forces was not a priority. He was happy to maintain the status quo and not challenge his top brass. He decided to win over some of the important generals to the party, one of the most prominent being General Nuri Yamut who had made his reputation in Korea and was well-known to the Pentagon. While such senior officers sided with the Democrats, Menderes felt secure from any threat from pro-İnönü generals.

Money for the armed forces was not on the Democrats' list of priorities; Menderes preferred to spend Turkey's limited resources on building the country's infrastructure, its roads and factories, in order to accelerate economic development. The country was already spending more in relation to its national income than most other NATO allies. Military expenditure had already risen substantially from US \$248 million in 1950 to US \$381 million in 1953, an increase of 54 per cent, and this figure kept growing throughout the 1950s. The Turks thought that the country's military expenditure would fall once they were members of NATO, for the alliance would subsidize Turkey's armed forces. That did not prove to be the case, and Menderes had no intention of spending more money from the budget to increase military salaries so that they would keep up with the spiralling inflation. Expenditure on military reform would have to wait until the economy generated a larger surplus.

Once Turkey joined NATO, not only did it spend more resources on the military, but the very character of its armed forces changed dramatically. The officers were exposed to new technology and methods of warfare, and ideologically they became more cosmopolitan, abandoning parochial nationalism in favour of Cold War anti-communism. They were sent for training to other

NATO countries, where the way of life was totally different from the one at home. They acquired a new world view and a desire to reform Turkey. They became politicized and resented the political strife in their midst. Membership of NATO also intensified the division within the officer corps, along both technological and political lines. The Democrats managed to co-opt the generals so thoroughly that the conspirators had difficulty in recruiting a full general to lead their conspiracy. Turkey's armed forces in the fifties had become divided along lines of rank and economic status.

Disaffection among the officers was triggered in the mid-fifties by the spiralling inflation, political instability, and a general sense of discontent in urban areas. Being mainly from the lower middle class, they shared the grievances of that class, whose position in society was being rapidly eroded by the free-market philosophy of the governing party. Such people deplored what they perceived as the erosion of moral, traditional values that had made the Turkish people what they were. The Democrats were undermining these values in favour of crass materialism that glorified wealth and ostentation. That is how Orhan Erkanlı, a radical member of the 1960 junta, expressed himself soon after the coup:

The clique in power after 1954 trampled on all the rights of the people. They deceived the nation and dragged the country into economic and social ruin. Moral values were forgotten and people were made oblivious of them. The institution of the state was transformed into an appendage of the party organization. The pride of the Turkish armed forces, which are the only organized force in the country, was hurt on every occasion; the uniform which is the real legacy of our history brought shame to those who wore it. (*Cumhuriyet*, 20 July 1960)

Discontent in the armed forces took a political form, reflecting the inter-party struggle of those years. The officers came to see the problems of Turkey in the way they were articulated by the Republican opposition and the press. The solutions that were acceptable to them after they seized power were also borrowed from the intelligentsia that supported the opposition. Only a few officers with a radical bent, men like Alparslan Türkeş and Orhan Erkanlı, had an agenda for taking Turkey in a direction different from the one envisaged by the elite. These people may well have been influenced by what they were witnessing in such neighbouring



countries as Nasser's Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan – all under military rule in 1960. But in Turkey, the hierarchy was well established in the armed forces and the radicals were soon marginalized by the senior officers. Henceforth it was they who established the political agenda for Turkey for the rest of the twentieth century.

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# 6

## Military Guardians, 1960–1980

### GOVERNMENT BY JUNTA

Rather than the election victory of May 1950, it was the period that followed the military coup of 27 May 1960, which marked the beginning of a new phase in Turkey's political, social, and economic life. Few of the 38 officers who constituted the military junta came to power with any preconceived notions of Turkey's political future. Such men as Colonel Alpaslan Türkeş (1917–97), who went on to play an independent political role as leader of a neo-fascist party, had their own radical agenda. Most simply followed the lead of the intelligentsia, to reform the country's politics in keeping with the needs of the times.

The aims of the junta were explained in the radio broadcast announcing the coup on the morning of 27 May 1960.

Honourable fellow countrymen! [announced Colonel Türkeş] ... Owing to the crisis into which our democracy has fallen, in view of the recent sad incidents, and in order to avert fratricide, the Turkish armed forces have taken over the administration of the country. Our armed forces have taken this initiative for the purpose of extricating the parties from the irreconcilable situation into which they have fallen ... [and will hold] just and free elections as soon as possible under the supervision and arbitration of an above-party administration ... [They will hand] over the administration to whichever party wins the election.

This initiative is not directed against any person or class. Our administration will not resort to any aggressive act against individuals, nor will it allow others to do so. All fellow countrymen, irrespective of the parties to which they may belong, will be treated in accordance with the laws.

Most of the officers wanted to return to their barracks after holding 'just and free' elections and restoring power to the politicians. However, their plans changed when some law professors from the universities were called in to advise them. The 38 officers who formed the National Unity Committee (NUC) represented a broad coalition of factions in the armed forces. The reason why the Committee was so large was precisely because any number of secret factions claimed to be involved in the coup and wanted to be represented. Those left out of the junta were disgruntled and became an element of instability in the armed forces, and attempted to carry out coups during the next three years.

The NUC, having no plan of its own, took the advice of academics and formed a commission to prepare a new constitution. Professor Siddık Sami Onar, professor of law and rector of Istanbul University, chaired the commission. Soldiers had captured political power, but it was intellectuals who turned the 27 May movement into a revolution, a 'revolution of the intellectuals'. The ideas that the Onar Commission put forward were not original; they had been in circulation since the mid-fifties when it was understood that there could be no true democracy under institutions inherited from the single-party period. Responding to the DP's autocratic rule, the opposition began to formulate reforms for when they came to power. The RPP promised to amend the constitution and establish a bicameral parliament, so that the upper house could monitor the legislation passed by the lower chamber. The Republicans made a number of promises: a constitutional court to test the legality of laws; proportional representation so as to prevent parliament being dominated by one party; the right to strike for the unions; the right to unionize for state employees; to repeal anti-democratic laws; and to establish a neutral bureaucracy.

The Onar Commission adopted most of these ideas; it also claimed that the DP had lost its legality because it had failed to respect the constitution and other institutions such as the press, the

armed forces and the universities. Therefore their removal from power by the junta was quite legal. The professors legitimized the coup and allowed the junta to stay in power.

#### NATIONAL UNITY COMMITTEE: INTERIM GOVERNMENT

Having legitimized the coup, the commission recommended that the NUC create a new state structure and institutions before holding elections and restoring power to the civilians. It proposed a new constitution, a new electoral law, and new laws and institutions that were in keeping with Turkey's place in the democratic world. The NUC became the interim government legalized by a provisional constitution in June 1960. It began to exercise sovereignty on behalf of the Turkish nation, until an assembly had been elected under the new constitution. It held legislative power directly and executive power through the cabinet appointed by the Head of State, who was also Chairman of the NUC. Only the judiciary functioned independently of the junta.

There was much factionalism within the NUC. General Cemal Gürsel (1895–1966) was chosen as president, head of state, prime minister, and commander-in-chief, simply because he was amiable and without ambition and therefore stood above the factions. There were two factions that struggled for power: the moderates supported the Onar Commission's proposals and wanted to restore power to civilians; the radicals, mainly lesser officers, including Colonel Türkeş, wanted to retain power and restructure the Turkish state and society more radically than Professor Onar's proposals. They spoke of creating a 'new culture' and a populist political system without parties, akin to Nasser's Egypt.

The factional struggle lasted until 13 November, when the moderates ousted fourteen of the radicals and exiled many of them to embassies abroad. The purge of 'the fourteen' was welcomed by the bourgeoisie which disliked their collectivist radicalism, but it angered serving junior officers and cadets and created instability in the armed forces. Some officers who had been active in the 1960 coup, but had been kept out of the NUC, began to conspire again. One, Talat Aydemir, attempted two coups that were aborted, the first on 22 February 1962 and the second on 20/21 May 1963. The days of

military coups from below were over. The military coup of 27 May 1960 was the first and the last successful military intervention made from outside the hierarchical structure of Turkey's armed forces.

### THE 'SECOND REPUBLIC'

Active officers saw the danger of intervention from below or 'outside the chain of command' and took measures to prevent such occurrences in the future. They formed the Armed Forces Union (AFU) in 1961, a body that included all ranks and which monitored activities throughout the military. Within a short time, the AFU had become the arbiter of political power and the guarantor of the new constitution. Meanwhile, a new constitution had been written and put to a referendum on 9 July 1961. It received a lukewarm reception and almost 40 per cent voted against the constitution. People feared the return of the RPP and single-party rule, even although the new election law guaranteed proportional representation and therefore a multi-party parliament.

The 1961 constitution was radically different from its predecessor. There was now a bicameral parliament, with the lower chamber (the National Assembly) of 450 deputies, who were elected every four years by a system of proportional representation. The Senate consisted of 150 members, elected for a term of six years by a straight majority vote, with one-third retiring every two years. All the members of the NUC were made life senators, while the president nominated 15 senators. The two chambers in joint session constituted the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The assembly elected the president for a term of seven years, from among its own members, by a two-thirds majority. Cemal Gürsel was elected the first president of the Second Republic. He appointed the prime minister, who chose the rest of the cabinet. The cabinet was responsible to the assembly.

The Constitutional Court became one of the most controversial institutions of the Second Republic. It reviewed the constitutionality of legislation and sent back many measures, much to the annoyance of conservative governments. The guarantees of freedom of thought, expression, association and publication contained in the constitution were as important as the new institutions. The state became a 'social state' promising 'social and economic rights', with provisions

for the State to plan economic development so as to achieve social justice, and individuals to have the right to own and inherit property and have the freedom of work and enterprise.

The military high command was also given a role in government. Article III created the National Security Council (NSC) which consisted of 'the Ministers provided by law, the Chief of the General Staff, and representatives of the armed forces'. The president (himself a retired general) or, in his absence, the prime minister, presided over the NSC. Its function was to assist the cabinet 'in the making of decisions related to national security and co-ordination.' The term 'national security' was so broad and all-embracing that the generals were able to interfere in virtually every question before the cabinet. In March 1962, the powers of the NSC were increased even further, and the chief of general staff became virtually autonomous of the minister of war because Article 110 made him responsible to the prime minister.

The armed forces were given autonomy and were recognized by the civilians as partners and guardians of the new order they had just created. The generals soon became a vital part of Turkey's political and socio-economic life. The pay and living standards of officers were increased substantially so that they were no longer affected by inflation. Retired generals were sent as ambassadors or were appointed directors of corporations and banks. In this way they were integrated into the system!

The military entered the world of business and industry in 1961, when the Army Mutual Assistance Association (generally known by its Turkish acronym OYAK) was created. Capital was generated by the contribution of ten per cent of officers' salaries and then invested in some of the most lucrative ventures in the economy. OYAK functioned as another corporation managed by civilian managers and technocrats, but it was attached to the ministry of defence. It provided loans and other benefits to its members and sold goods at discounted prices to soldiers and their families, in supermarkets called 'army bazaars'. This service was another hedge against inflation. OYAK has continued to expand and diversify so that it is now to be found in virtually every area of the economy from automobile production to insurance and banking; it is sometimes described as the 'third sector' of the economy, along with the state and private sectors.

The military had become the guardians of a system of burgeoning capitalism rather than such abstractions as the 'nation' or 'Kemalism', though the rhetoric of the past has been retained. The principal concern was with maintaining stability and to intervene whenever that was threatened, no matter where the threat came from. But the generals disliked movements of the Left for they threatened the system; but they were equally hostile to parties of the Right if they were the source of instability. While they were in sympathy with parties whose free market ideology they shared, the generals no longer allied themselves to specific parties or their leaders; parties and leaders now wooed the generals.

### ECONOMIC REFORMS

While resolving political issues inherited from the DP decade, the NUC was forced to lay new foundations for the economy. The Democrats had pursued a haphazard economic policy that brought about growth rather than development; the NUC opted for a policy that would bring about development and growth. To accomplish this ambitious task they created the State Planning Organization (SPO), whose principal function was to supervise the economy according to a five-year plan. The SPO was created in September 1960, and was included in the new constitution. It was an advisory body, chaired by the prime minister and therefore influenced by the party in power. Moreover, the plan had to be approved by the cabinet and the assembly before it could be implemented; as a result, the entire process of planning became political and ideological. Under coalitions and neo-Democrat governments that ruled once multi-party politics were restored, Article 41 of the Constitution became a dead letter. It promised that 'Economic and social life shall be regulated in a manner consistent with justice and the principle of full employment, with the objective of assuring for everyone a standard of living befitting human dignity.' Such promises did not suit Turkey's nascent business/industrial community, who had become politically influential. Rather than the 'social state' promised by the 1961 constitution, they wanted a state that would discipline and control the workers; they believed that the right to strike or collective bargaining was a luxury for a country at Turkey's stage

of development. For the moment, capital and labour were forced to coexist, but the coexistence came to an end in March 1971, when the military intervened in order to resolve the contradiction in favour of capital.

Meanwhile the five-year plan was launched in 1963, and Turkey embarked on a path of rapid industrialization based on the model of producing goods it had formerly imported. Goods such as automobiles, refrigerators, televisions, etc. were usually made in collaboration with such foreign firms as Ford or Philips; Turkish capitalists were not entrepreneurs who would risk creating anything original which could compete on the world market. They were concerned about making quick profits. They refused to permit structural change by allowing state economic enterprises to reorganize and become efficient competitors. They wanted the state to subsidize the private sector as in mixed economies. There was no land reform, no taxing of farm incomes, or measures to increase productivity. But despite the lack of structural reform in both sectors, the economy grew at the SPO's target rate of 7 per cent. The world economy was favourable, as it had been in the early fifties. There was a demand for Turkish workers in Germany, undergoing its 'economic miracle'. Export of labour helped Turkey in two ways: with employment, as peasants left the land, and with foreign exchange, as workers sent back remittances to their families in German marks. Turkey's economy soon became dependent on these remittances.

Despite the plan, economic expansion remained lopsided. The agrarian sector failed to grow as fast as the planners hoped, while the urban sector grew rapidly, but more in construction and services than industrial production. With low export earnings, the economy depended on the savings of Turkish workers in Europe. When the European economy entered a downturn in the early 1970s, the impact on Turkey was severe.

The planners had succeeded in transforming Turkey's economy and society within a few years. Turkey was no longer predominantly agrarian, with a small state-run industrial sector, as it had been in the 1950s. By the end of the 1960s, there was a dynamic private industrial sector, which contributed as much to the gross national product (GNP) as agriculture. But by 1973, industry had overtaken agriculture.



## CHANGING SOCIETAL STRUCTURES

Industry led to urbanization as Anatolian peasants settled in shanty towns in and around the major cities. By the sixties, there was a small working class that became active politically, led by a class-conscious leadership free to act under the new constitution. Workers had acquired the right to bargain collectively and to strike, but they continued to be led by the conservative Confederation of the Workers' Union of Turkey (Türk-İs). This confederation, organized with the advice of the American Federation of Labour–Congress of Industry Organizations (AFL–CIO), chose to be 'non-political' and called only for economic gains. But in 1967, a few unions affiliated with Türk-İs broke away and formed the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DİSK). Their demands were both political and economic and they had the support of the recently founded Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT).

The bourgeoisie had also grown, both in size and in confidence, during the sixties. In the past it had relied exclusively on the governing party to further its cause. But in 1971, it found its own pressure group, the Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen (TÜSİAD), which has played an important political role ever since. Consumption patterns changed as more goods became available, and the introduction of radio (in the fifties) and television in the seventies transformed social and political life. Both radio and television were important for the success of smaller political parties with limited financial resources, as they could appeal directly to voters through their broadcasts.

The process of monopolization under large corporations in partnership with foreign capital began to undermine local and much smaller enterprises, simply because they were unable to compete. This led to bankruptcies and the closure of thousands of workshops, threatening the livelihood of millions. Meanwhile, new patterns of consumption caused inflation and a demand for higher wages and salaries. All these changes in Turkey's economy and society aggravated an already unstable political situation when the NUC restored multi-party politics in 1961.

The 1961 Constitution provided the people of Turkey with a greater degree of political freedom than they had ever enjoyed since the creation of the Republic. The new state was described as

a 'social state'; it gave greater civil rights than ever before, autonomy to the universities and the right for students to organize associations, and workers enjoyed the right to strike. In this environment of political freedom, workers and leftist intellectuals united to form a socialist party, the WPT, and provided an ideological alternative to the debate on political life framed in the past on Kemalist terms.

## THE FORMATION OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES

The 1961 Constitution and new laws had changed the political structure, but not the underlying structures. The DP had been dissolved; many of its leaders who were put on trial for violating the Constitution were imprisoned, and three ministers – Prime Minister Menderes, Finance Minister Polatkan and Foreign Minister Zorlu – were executed. The Democrats remained popular at a grass-roots level and the neo-Democrat parties that were formed in 1961 depended on that vote bank. In the 1961 elections, the Justice Party (JP) and the New Turkey Party (NTP) won 48.5 per cent of the vote between them (34.8 and 13.7 per cent respectively). İnönü's RPP won only 36.7 per cent, insufficient votes or seats in the assembly to form the government. As the generals would not permit a neo-Democratic government, İnönü was asked to form the first of three coalitions which governed Turkey from November 1961 to 1964.

These years were marked by political instability and it was only the threat of military intervention that kept the coalition together. The Justice Party gained strength, especially under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel (1924–), becoming the most popular party after the local elections of November 1963. When the third İnönü coalition resigned on 12 February 1965, because it had failed to win a vote of confidence, Demirel was ready to take charge. The last coalition was led by an Independent elected on the JP list and Demirel therefore ruled by proxy. The role of the coalition was to lead Turkey to the election of 1965; this brought the Justice Party to power and restored a semblance of stability.

The Justice Party was founded in February 1961 and was initially led by a retired general, Ragıp Gumüşpala, who had the trust of the armed forces. He was expected to keep the neo-

Democrats in check. When he died in June 1964, the party chose Süleyman Demirel, the least controversial candidate, as chairman. He was an engineer and a technocrat, who came to the top because the NUC had eliminated the top layers of DP leadership after the coup. Coming from a modest rural background, he was able to appeal to ordinary people, especially the Anatolian migrants of the shantytowns who were able to identify with him as someone who had succeeded by his own talents.

## THE NEW POLITICS AND THE WIDER WORLD

Political life in the sixties was dramatically different from what it had been in earlier decades. The country had been politicized and the 1961 Constitution provided a new framework for ideological discourse. For the first time a Left emerged that challenged politics as usual, especially Turkey's foreign policy. The country no longer felt isolated and became conscious of what was happening in the world around, especially as students could now read left-wing Marxist literature, which was widely available, even in small towns. Conservative forces, alarmed by these trends, began to organize against the Left, describing their fight as a struggle against Moscow's communism.

Politics in Turkey were influenced by the cold war and events in the Middle East. Policymakers in Washington had been alarmed by the rise of nationalism in the Middle East and Asia and concluded that nationalism was as great a threat to Western interests as communism. Consequently, in November 1958, the US government issued an internal document – National Security Agency document 5820/1 – arguing that Islam could be used as an antidote to nationalism and communism. After 1960, many Turkish nationalists began to criticize US policy and their government's unquestioning loyalty to it. The NUC continued to reaffirm Turkey's commitment to NATO, and during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, İnönü stood by Washington, despite the Soviet nuclear threat. But Turks learned that the Kennedy Administration had bargained away the Jupiter missiles in Anatolia in its negotiations with Moscow. Soon after, it was revealed that in case of war with the Soviet Union, NATO planners had decided that much of Anatolia, apart from Istanbul and

western Anatolia, was expendable! Turkey's foreign relations had become a major factor in everyday politics.

### THE CYPRUS QUESTION

The crisis with Greece over Cyprus in the winter of 1963/4 brought the situation to a head. The Menderes government became embroiled in the Cyprus question wherein the Greek-Cypriot national movement sought independence from Britain and union with Greece. Initially, Ankara and the Turkish Cypriots – about 20 per cent of the island's population – supported Britain and the status quo. By 1955, when Britain's hold was weakening, Ankara asked that Britain return the island to the Turks from whom she had acquired it in 1878. Both Britain and Turkey were convinced that Greek Cypriots would prefer British to Turkish rule! When the Greeks found that proposal unacceptable, Ankara proposed partition; since that too was out of the question, Ankara proposed and pressed for partition in 1957. After prolonged negotiations, in 1959, the parties agreed to the creation of a republic in Cyprus, with Britain, Greece, and Turkey agreeing to guarantee the constitutional rights of the Turkish-Cypriot community. On 15 August 1960, the Republic of Cyprus came into being with a Greek-Cypriot president (Archbishop Makarios) and a Turkish-Cypriot vice president (Dr Fazıl Küçük).

President Makarios found the power-sharing constitution unworkable and said he would not be bound by the 1960 treaty guaranteed by Britain, Greece, and Turkey. Violence broke out on the island between the two communities in late 1963 and on 13 March 1964, İnönü, as one of the guarantors, threatened unilateral action unless there was an immediate cease-fire. Makarios rejected İnönü's note, though he lifted the siege from Turkish districts and hostages were released.

In Turkey, nationalist passions were aroused and there was overwhelming support for military intervention, as everyone believed in the justice of the Turkish cause. In January 1966, the publication of a letter from President Johnson to Prime Minister İnönü (sent in June 1964) created a furor throughout the country. İnönü was told that the Turks could not use arms provided by Washington without US consent, and he issued a warning that NATO would

not come to Turkey's aid 'against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies.'

Anti-American demonstrations followed, to the extent that visits by the US Sixth Fleet to Turkish ports became virtually impossible. The demonstrations continued until the military intervention of 12 March 1971. The nationalists and leftists began calling for a non-aligned Turkey, and even the government asked the foreign ministry to re-examine the country's foreign relations in light of the prevailing world conditions. After due consideration, the foreign ministry proposed turning more to a Europe which was then in the process of forming a common market and political union. The Turkish general staff decided to create a division independent of NATO to be used when 'national interest' required, as in Cyprus.

Anti-Americanism polarized society into a conservative Right and a nationalist and radical Left, sometimes described as neo-Kemalist. The Left viewed the US as the leader of the capitalist world upon which Turkey had become dependent. They interpreted Turkey's history since 1919 as a struggle for independence against imperialism – independence that the sultan had been willing to abandon merely to remain in power. After the Second World War, both the RPP and the DP had betrayed Kemalism by accepting the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, joining NATO and the Baghdad Pact, and making Turkey an appendage of the West. Recent events had shown that such a policy was against the national interest and therefore had to be abandoned. Such was the criticism of students' clubs in the universities, the Workers' Party, and the unions. The RPP was influenced by some of these radical ideas and responded by adopting what was described as a 'left-of centre' political line and adopting the slogan that 'this order must change'.

The Right was alarmed by these radical nationalist ideas and attacked them as communist propaganda. It turned to Islam – as the US National Security Agency had suggested in 1958 – as the 'antidote to communism'. The 'Association to Combat Communism', founded in 1962, exploited Islam as an ideological tool against the Left. This trend continued throughout the 1960s, encouraged by money from Saudi Arabia, where an organization

known as the 'Union of the World of Islam' had been founded to combat nationalism and communism. Turkey's provincial lower middle classes also used Islam to mobilize support for their cause in response to such internal developments as rapid industrialization and the growth of monopolies that undermined local crafts and commerce.

The Justice Party had come to power in 1965 and had to deal with these new forces. Its leader, Süleyman Demirel, symbolized the new face of capitalism intimately associated with the US. He had spent a year in the United States as an Eisenhower fellow and was then employed by a US multinational construction company engaged in Turkey. He and his policies were therefore an easy target for attacks from the Left and the religious Right, which described him as a freemason. By the late sixties, Demirel's position had become virtually untenable. The Cyprus question remained unresolved, with Turkish-Cypriots besieged in their enclaves or emigrating to Britain and Australia. Students and workers became more militant, and anti-Americanism increased along with US involvement in Vietnam, the pro-Washington 'Colonels' coup' in Greece in April 1967, and the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. The last two events consolidated US hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean and weakened Turkey's role in the region.

The struggle between labour and capital became bitter, especially after students and workers in Paris almost succeeded in carrying out a revolution. These events were influential in Turkey; they encouraged the Left but showed the government the potential threats to its power. In 1967, some unions had already broken away from the pro-government and 'non-political' confederation (Türk-İş) and formed their own confederation (DİSK), which they described as 'revolutionary'. Türk-İş had been unofficially affiliated with the Justice Party, which enabled the government and employers to control the workers. Government and employers were alarmed by the workers' militancy and their growing strength at the expense of the docile Türk-İş. When they saw that they were losing control of the unions, they decided to act and regain control before it was too late.

## POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION

As well as Leftist militancy, the government also had to confront a political Right that was fragmenting under the impact of socio-economic developments. Small enterprises throughout Anatolia owned by the traditional middle classes were unable to survive the competition of the large cosmopolitan corporations situated in the Istanbul-Marmara region. They felt that Demirel had betrayed them and given his support to the large holding companies. This resulted in their defection from the Justice Party after the 1969 election, thus weakening its electoral support. They began to turn to such small Rightist parties as Colonel Alparslan Türkeş's neo-fascist Nationalist Action Party (NAP), or the Reliance Party formed by Professor Turhan Feyzioğlu who left the RPP in protest at its left-of-centre programme, or the National Order Party (NOP) founded by Professor Necmettin Erbakan (1926–), or the Democratic Party formed by JP dissidents. Türkeş was an ultra-nationalist who claimed to be opposed to both monopoly capitalism and communism; Feyzioğlu was simply right of centre and had little to offer that was different from Demirel; Erbakan used 'Islamic' discourse to criticize the monopolies as lackeys of the Christian/Jewish West. Türkeş and Erbakan's parties acquired electoral strength only in the 1990s; until then they were not an electoral threat to the JP, but useful allies in coalition governments of the 1970s. As for the Reliance Party, it proved to be ephemeral and dissolved itself in the 1970s. But for the moment, the fragmentation of the Right became the major factor of political instability.

By the early 1970s, the situation in Turkey had become explosive. Student and working-class militancy, social and economic changes, growing political conflict, and the world situation proved to be a dangerous mix. There was a 'revolution of rising expectations' – expectations that were not being met for the majority of the people. There was widespread unemployment, aggravated by the end of the 'German economic miracle' that had siphoned off workers throughout the sixties. Population grew rapidly without the job market or the educational system capable of absorbing the younger population. Overcrowded schools and universities were ideal for recruiting militants for the Left and the Right, and these youths

played a crucial role in creating the political instability that led to military intervention on 12 March 1971.

Demirel had attempted to control the situation in the assembly by having the ‘national remainder system’ of the 1961 electoral law abolished in March 1968. This provision had permitted the Workers’ Party 14 seats in the 1965 assembly, and its representatives had played a very important role in the ranks of the opposition. The amendment had changed that and in 1969, the WPT won only 2 seats. The party’s leader, Mehmet Ali Aybar (1910–95), had warned the assembly that ‘if this law passes, unrest in the country will rise to another level ... you will be responsible for whatever befalls our democracy’. The Left, no longer having an outlet for expressing discontent in the assembly, vented their frustrations in the street, though the Workers’ Party itself did not encourage subversion or violence. The Left was convinced that Demirel had shut off the parliamentary road to reform and power; the only way forward was via a military coup, made in partnership with radical officers who were sympathetic to the idea of a ‘National Democratic Revolution’. This group became even more militant and espoused the ideas of Maoism and the Latin American urban guerrillas.

Demirel, having undermined the parliamentary Left, set out to destroy the political trade unions, led by DİSK, and to strengthen Türk-İş. The law the government wanted to amend would eliminate a union unless it represented at least one-third of the workers in a factory. That provision was expected to destroy DİSK. Workers – not only DİSK members – came out in protest against the law on 15/16 June 1970 and paralysed the Istanbul-Marmara region; the authorities shut down ferry services across the Sea of Marmara to prevent the protest from spilling over into European Istanbul. The Right described the protest as ‘a dress rehearsal for revolution’, and observers predicted that the military would intervene as civilians were unable to maintain law and order. Demirel had often complained that he found it impossible to govern with such a liberal and permissive constitution, suggesting that it had to be amended and made more authoritarian.

The generals were aware of the Left’s contact with radical officers. The National Intelligence Organization and military intelligence, both created in 1963, knew of the conspiracies in the



military from their moles. The press reported purges of officers in 1970 when 56 generals and 516 colonels were retired. There was a threat of intervention from officers outside the 'chain of command', and the senior generals decided to forestall it and appease the radicals by carrying out a reform programme of their own.

At the beginning of 1971, Turkey was in a state of turmoil. Leftist student militants robbed banks, kidnapped US servicemen, and attacked American targets. The Gray Wolves, neo-fascist militants linked to NAP, attacked professors who were critical of the government. There was constant strike activity and more work-days were lost between 1 January and the military intervention of 12 March 1971 than during any previous year. The Islamists became more aggressive and openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces.

On 8 March, Demirel, unable to control the situation, lost the support of his party's group. This triggered the military intervention, for the generals rationalized that Demirel had to go now since even his party no longer supported him. Therefore on 12 March, five senior generals – the chiefs of general staff and the commanders of the army, navy, and air force – presented a memorandum to President Cevdet Sunay and the speakers of the two chambers. They demanded the government's resignation and the formation of a strong, credible cabinet, capable of implementing the reforms envisaged by the constitution. Demirel reluctantly resigned and his resignation cleared the way for an 'above-party' government that could pass the anti-democratic measures considered necessary to govern Turkey in turbulent times.

#### THE MEMORANDUM REGIME AND AFTER, 1971–1980

The coup of 12 March was thought by many to have been made by radical-reformist officers who supported the 1961 Constitution. The memorandum held the Demirel government responsible for Turkey's 'anarchy, fratricidal strife, and social and economic unrest', and called for a government – formed within the framework of democratic principles and inspired by Kemalist ideas – that would implement the reformist laws envisaged by the constitution.

But priority was to be given 'to the restoration of law and order' and that meant crushing the Left. The Workers' Party was

proscribed on the same day as the memorandum was issued, its leaders accused of carrying out communist propaganda and supporting Kurdish separatism. All youth organizations affiliated to the Dev-Genç (the acronym for the Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey) were closed down. Offices of such groups as the 'Ideas Clubs' in the universities, and branches of the Union of Teachers, and DİSK were searched by the police. Meanwhile, 'Idealist Hearths', NAP's youth wing, acted as vigilantes against leftists. The principal aim of this attack on the Left was to intimidate the workers and curb union militancy.

After Demirel's resignation, the new junta was undecided as to how they should exercise the power they had just seized. The Greek colonels' experience deterred them from taking over directly, and so they decided to act through an above-party civilian government and a conservative assembly. In Professor Nihat Erim, who described the liberal 1961 Constitution as a luxury for Turkey, they found a politician who would be acceptable to both the JP and the RPP. Professor Erim (1912–80), though a Republican in the 1940s, was able to work comfortably with the Democrats and later the Justice Party. He was an ambitious man and he was quite willing to collaborate with the military, though it cost him his life when the 'Revolutionary Left' assassinated him in 1980.

Erim formed a cabinet of managers and technocrats, designed to carry out the reforms proposed by the generals. His ministers came from the World Bank (Atilla Karaosmanoğlu), from OYAK (Özer Derbil), from the Turkish Petroleum Company (İhsan Topaloğlu), and the SPO (Şinasi Orel). There were also notorious anti-reformist ministers, but they were supported in the assembly. The Erim cabinet was unlikely to carry out democratic reform! First and foremost, he had to deal with outbreaks of terrorism by the so-called 'Turkish People's Liberation Army' (TPLA). It was said by some that behind the terrorists were dissident military officers, while others claimed that terrorism was the work of provocateurs from Turkey's intelligence service, agents who had infiltrated the Left, just as the FBI in America had infiltrated the Weathermen and the Black Panthers.

The state responded by declaring martial law in eleven of Turkey's 67 provinces and unleashing brutal repression. Urban

Turkey, including Istanbul and Ankara, and the south-east, the centre of Kurdish nationalism, were placed under martial law. Political life was totally paralyzed; all meetings and seminars of professional associations and unions were prohibited; two newspapers were suspended and bookshops were ordered not to sell publications proscribed by the authorities. Publications of the neo-fascist Right continued to circulate freely. Two prominent journalists, Çetin Altan, an ex-Workers' Party deputy, and İlhan Selçuk, a radical Kemalist, were taken into custody and tortured; this was the first sign of an impending crackdown on intellectuals. On 3 May, all strikes and lockouts were declared illegal, much to the relief of the Employers' Unions.

The abduction on 17 May of Ephraim Elrom, Israel's consul in Istanbul, aggravated the repression. The military regime was provoked and responded by imposing draconian measures against the Left, and power was placed in the hands of martial law authorities. Hundreds were taken into custody, including such famous authors as Yaşar Kemal and Fakir Baykurt. Torture became routine; rather than to extract information, it was designed to break the will of political prisoners so that they would give up politics. Repression failed to save Elrom; it might even have hastened his murder on the night of 21/22 May, when the authorities ordered a house-to-house search in Istanbul. Political repression under martial law became the order of the day for the next two years.

The government amended the 1961 Constitution, which the Right blamed for the country's problems. Virtually every institution of state and society was modified: the trade unions, the press, radio and television, the universities, the Council of State, the Constitutional Court, the assembly, the Senate and the Court of Appeal. The liberal rights and freedoms guaranteed by the 1961 Constitution were curbed so that – in Professor Erim's words – the amended constitution guaranteed 'that there is no going back to the period before 12 March'. The democratization of the sixties had proved too costly and the liberal constitution too great a luxury for a country that wanted to make rapid progress along the capitalist path.

The amendments were made without public debate and were supported by all parties. Only Mehmed Ali Aybar, who had been expelled from the Workers' Party before 12 March, became an

Independent deputy and protested in the assembly: 'The proposed amendments of the Constitution are against the basic principle of our current democratic constitution; their aim is to proscribe socialism and for that reason cannot be reconciled with the contemporary understanding of a democratic regime.' Erim agreed: the constitution was closed to socialism but not to social democracy.

The assembly and the Senate passed 35 amended articles and introduced nine new provisional ones. The Turkish state was no longer a 'social state'; it had given up all pretence of establishing any kind of social justice. When there was the possibility of carrying out genuine reform, Demirel created a governmental crisis by withdrawing JP ministers from the cabinet. He was looking ahead. The military regime was transitional and would restore power to the parties by holding elections that he intended to win. Therefore it was important to retain the party's popular base and not support reforms that would benefit only the major corporations. Eleven reformist ministers, who had fought to reform the economy, finally understood that reform was dead when Demirel's former minister of finance was appointed to the cabinet in December 1971. They resigned in protest and Erim was forced to follow.

Erim's second cabinet (11 December 1971–17 April 1972) became dependent on Demirel's support and was unable to pass any significant reformist legislation. Apart from the constitutional amendments, Erim had accomplished little except a ban on opium cultivation, a decision made under severe pressure from the US; the decision was reversed in 1973 when party politics were restored. The next two cabinets, led by Ferit Melen and Naim Talu, were essentially caretaker ministries, whose function was to prepare the country for elections in October 1973. During this period, the social and economic problems remained unresolved and Turkey remained under martial law. But with the promise of elections, the mood of the country began to change. Since 1950, Turkish voters have taken elections very seriously as a way of expressing their hopes and discontent. But before the next election, the parties in parliament had to elect President Cevdet, Sunay's successor. Since 1960, the presidency had mediated civilian–military relations and the president had always been a

military man, chosen by the generals. His election by the two chambers was considered a formality. In March 1973, when Sunay's term ended, the generals expected parliament to elect General Faruk Gürler, Commander of the Land Forces. Gürler had retired and was appointed senator from the presidential quota so that he could become a candidate for the presidency. But Demirel and Ecevit, leaders of the two largest parties in parliament, refused to collaborate. After much wrangling, the generals told the politicians to elect their own president, provided that he was acceptable to the armed forces. Finally, on 6 April 1973, parliament elected retired Admiral Fahri Korutürk as Turkey's sixth president. He was a military man and independent of the parties, but was known to be cosmopolitan and liberal, a senator who had opposed the creation of State Security Courts. His election was seen as a rebuff for the military.

### THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1973

By the summer of 1973, the stage had been set for a general election. The state had been strengthened against the forces of civil society. Machinery for crushing dissidents was in place, whether in universities or factories. But as a response to these changes, the Left gathered around the RPP, which had become a social democratic party under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit (1925-). Social democracy had become an important ideology in the seventies, and was partly responsible for the military intervention which was to take place on 12 September 1980.

The RPP's social democracy partially filled the gap left by the dissolution of the Workers' Party in July 1971. Republicans had moved 'left-of-center' in the mid-1960s and the right wing of the party had left after the election of 1969. The military coup of 1971 divided the party even more over the question of whether to support the military regime or not. İsmet İnönü, the party's chairman, had come out on the side of Erim; Ecevit, the general secretary, had opposed Erim and resigned. Ecevit's political future at that point looked bleak, but he became more populist and asked the party to abandon its elitism, summed up in the old slogan: 'for the people in spite of the people'. His populism began to pay off and he won the support of party organizations in the provinces. Alarmed by this

trend, İnönü called an extra-ordinary party congress in May 1972 and confronted Ecevit. İnönü, certain of defeating his rival, asked the party to choose between himself and Ecevit. Much to everyone's surprise, the party voted for Ecevit and İnönü resigned as the party's chairman on 7 May. He had occupied that office since November 1938 when Atatürk died. The following week the congress elected Ecevit as the new chairman of the now social democratic RPP.

The 1973 election aroused great expectations throughout the country. It was impossible to predict how the parties, especially the RPP, would fare. Demirel and the Justice Party seemed best placed to win, for he had maintained control over his party and showed its strength during military rule. The RPP under Ecevit was still untried and İnönü's resignation from the party in November 1972 seemed to weaken it further.

The small parties of the Right – the Democratic Party, the Nationalist Action Party, the Reliance Party, the Republican Reliance Party after its mergers with the Republican Party in July 1972 – were not considered a threat. The new National Salvation Party (NSP), formed in October 1972 by Islamists as successor to the National Order Party which was dissolved in May 1971, was an unknown quantity.

In 1973, the NSP projected a more serious image than had its predecessor, emphasizing its opposition to the growth of monopolies and dependence on foreign capital. Necmettin Erbakan (1926–) called for heavy industry and an economy based on Islamic values such as interest-free banking. The political Islamists wanted to cultivate an image of 'Islamic socialism' (though they never used those words!) for this was more likely to appeal to the voters than 'Islamic fundamentalism'. Its propaganda was so successful that the NSP became the third party after the RPP and the JP in 1973. Thereafter the challenge of political Islam and the rising counter-elite had to be taken more seriously.

The election results were most revealing; the RPP victory had been a surprise, but the Right had fragmented more seriously than predicted. The JP vote had diminished from 46.5 per cent in 1969 to 29.8 per cent, to the benefit of the Democratic Party and the NSP; they won 11.9 and 11.8 per cent of the vote respectively in their very first election. The Reliance Party vote was reduced and the NAP made a modest gain of 0.4 per cent.

The RPP victory surprised most people, but the party failed to win sufficient votes and assembly seats to govern on its own; Ecevit won 33.3 per cent of the vote and 185 seats and needed 226 to form the cabinet. Nevertheless, the party fortunes were on the rise; not since 1961 had it been so successful. The new social democratic identity had helped and the RPP won its votes in the progressive, industrial belt of Turkey and not in its traditional stronghold of backward, east and central Anatolia. The party was attractive to urban migrants, who saw social democracy as the ideology of the future.

The rightist parties, which had garnered over 60 per cent of the vote, failed to agree on a government. Therefore Ecevit was asked to form the government. He offered to form the government with the secular parties of the Right – the JP and the DP – whose leaders turned down his offer. Ecevit then invited NSP's Necmettin Erbakan, who accepted the offer. Both parties were committed to protecting 'the little man' from the monopolies, and to economic development with social justice. They both claimed to believe in democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms. They agreed to paper over their differences on cultural values for the moment. For example, the Republicans wanted to emulate the example of social democratic Europe, and the Islamists were wary of it!

#### COALITION GOVERNMENT: RPP–NSP

In the end, the RPP–NSP coalition was formed due to political opportunism – and it collapsed for the same reason. Both leaders had to establish their legitimacy and leading the government was the best way to do so, especially for Erbakan whose NOP had been banned in 1971. Nevertheless it took three months of hard bargaining before the coalition was finally announced in January 1974.

The coalition presented a moderate programme that alarmed neither the business community nor the generals – although the Right opposed the government's proposals for a general amnesty for political prisoners, the restoration of rights lost by the unions, and to heal the wounds left by the military regime. The Right denounced the programme as an invitation to anarchy at a time when unemployment was rising as a result of economic depression in the West.

The formation of the Ecevit-led coalition was marked by political violence instigated by 'the Grey Wolves'. Political terrorism had become a staple of Turkish life, intensifying throughout the seventies until it became the pretext for the military coup in September 1980. Before the 1971 coup, leftist terrorism had been designed to ignite revolution; the aim of rightist terrorism was to demoralize the country and create a climate of uncertainty in which military law and order would be welcomed by the masses. In opposition, Demirel was both provocative and intimidating. He often referred to Bülent Ecevit as 'Büllende', an allusion to the Chilean President Allende, who had been killed during the CIA-backed military coup of 1973, suggesting that Ecevit might share Allende's fate!

After receiving a vote of confidence on 7 February 1974, the coalition began to carry out its campaign promises. Poppy cultivation was restored, and an amended amnesty bill was passed, resulting in the release of hundreds of political prisoners. Ecevit's growing popularity caused tension in the coalition, especially after he ordered the army to intervene in response to a coup d'état in Cyprus against President Makarios. On 15 July, the National Guard of Cyprus, acting on orders from the junta in Athens, overthrew the government and seized power. When Britain refused to intervene jointly with Turkey, Ankara decided to intervene unilaterally, as one of the guarantors of the 1960 Treaty. Turkish troops landed on the island on 26 July and launched a second offensive on 14 August, capturing 40 per cent of the island. There was now a de facto partition of Cyprus. Relations between Greece and Turkey were already tense because of a dispute over territorial waters in the Aegean Sea. Relations deteriorated even more as a result of the Cyprus issue; even now, the search for a diplomatic solution has yet to be found, despite regular negotiations.

In Turkey, Ecevit became an instant hero and tensions between him and Erbakan became so intense that Ecevit decided to resign on 18 September, convinced that a fresh election would bring his party to power. But there were no elections because the parties of the Right refused to sanction them, knowing that they would be committing political suicide if they did so. Ecevit's crisis created a situation during which there was no government for 241 days. A caretaker government failed to obtain a vote of confidence and



Demirel was finally able to form a rightist coalition, known as 'the Nationalist Front', on 31 March 1975.

The Nationalist Front was composed of the Justice, Salvation, Reliance and Nationalist Action parties and was supported in the assembly by independents who had defected from the Democratic Party. The strong presence of the NAP, with its leader Türkeş as deputy prime minister, gave the coalition a neo-fascist complexion. The slogan 'Demirel in Parliament, Türkeş in the Street' was popularized by the activities of the Grey Wolves, who began to terrorize the social democrats in order to undermine their electoral strength. The extreme left-wing forces, organized in such factions as the 'Revolutionary Left' (Dev-Sol) and the Revolutionary Path (Dev-Yol), responded and added to the confusion.

The formation of the Demirel coalition ended the possibility of an early general election, and the coalition partners used the opportunity to colonize the state apparatus. The Justice Party controlled the media; NAP and NSP took over education, recruiting their militants from the schools and universities they now controlled, and control of the ministry of customs enabled them to import arms for their movement. The militants of the Right considered themselves as part of the state now that their leaders were in a governing coalition which gave them protection and the ability to terrorize their political opponents. They not only attacked RPP meetings (even in Ecevit's presence), but also the Alevis, a Shia sect in Anatolia, as well as the Kurds, because they supported the Republicans who were secular and not ultra-nationalist.

Despite the violence, the RPP's position improved in the Senate election on 12 October 1975 and the party's vote increased to almost 44 per cent, in comparison with 35.4 per cent in 1973. The JP's share also increased from 30 to 40 per cent, while the smaller parties of the Right declined. By the mid-1970s a two-party system seemed to be gaining momentum. Under these conditions the splinter parties wanted to avoid an early general election and were determined to continue the Nationalist Front coalition, even as they struggled to strengthen their parties before the election. Political violence continued into 1976; Demirel proposed declaring martial law but was rejected by his Islamist partners who feared the secularist military. It was an open secret that the NAP was

guilty of fomenting the violence, but no action could be taken as its leader was the deputy prime minister.

There was fear of some sort of fascism under Türkeş because of his party's role in the violence during the 19 May Youth Day celebrations of 1976. Even Demirel was alarmed and decided to agree to an election in order to free himself from the hold of his extremist partners. The constitution required that the election be held by October 1977, but in April, the JP and the RPP voted to bring the date forward to 5 June 1977.

The tempo of political violence increased once elections were announced and reached its climax during the May Day celebrations of 1977. The workers had organized a huge rally against 'the rising tide of fascism' and everything went off peacefully until shots rang out and a panic was created that led to 34 people being trampled to death and hundreds wounded. People were convinced that the May Day massacre had been orchestrated by rightist forces within the state to intimidate voters. But five weeks later, when the election was held, the voters were not intimidated. The turnout was higher than in 1973 – 72.4 per cent as against 66.8 per cent – and the RPP won 41.4 per cent against 36.9 for the JP. The Islamist vote declined, and only the neo-fascist NAP increased its assembly seats from 3 to 13; violence and state power had been effective!

This time, Ecevit fell short by 13 of the 226 seats required to form a Republican government. He formed a minority government, but failed to win a vote of confidence; on 21 July 1977, Demirel again formed the second Nationalist Front, even though the business community, led by TÜSİAD, proposed a JP–RPP coalition. The two major parties acted in the interests of their leaders rather than on behalf of the 'national consensus' of the business community. Although the business community was becoming more powerful and articulate, it was still not able to dictate politics to the parties. Elections had failed to provide stability, and political life became even more polarized and political violence continued unabated. The Second Front coalition, marred by ideological contradictions, fell apart after the local election of 11 December 1977, when Demirel failed to obtain a vote of confidence. In the JP, moderates resigned because the party had become captive by extremists. The following week, Ecevit

formed a coalition with independents who had resigned from the JP and conservatives from the Reliance Party. Such a coalition was not designed to carry out reforms and it soon undermined RPP's electoral support; forming a coalition with conservatives proved to be a major political error on Ecevit's part, almost as great as his resignation in 1974.

Apart from his failure to institute reform, Ecevit also failed to restore law and order; there were 30 political murders during the first 15 days of 1978. In July, when the police failed to cope, Ecevit called in the gendarmerie, the first sign that martial law was on the way. The Right began to assassinate prominent intellectuals, the most dramatic killing being that of Abdi İpekçi on 1 February 1978. One of the most prominent liberal journalists committed to democracy, he was also a close friend of Prime Minister Ecevit, who had himself begun his career in journalism. As usual, very few rightists were detained. When İpekçi's assassin was finally arrested, he turned out to be Mehmed Ali Ağca, who before long acquired universal notoriety as the Turk who made an attempt on Pope John Paul II's life in Rome in April 1981, after escaping from a Turkish military prison.

Because it was secular and supported the RPP, the Grey Wolves now targeted the Alevi community, a fringe Shia sect in Anatolia. They were attacked in Malatya (April 1978), Sivas (September), and Bingöl (October), the violence being designed to destroy them economically. In the assembly, the opposition began calling for the imposition of martial law, which Ecevit was reluctant to implement, hoping to control the situation with a stricter application of existing laws. But the Alevi pogrom in Kahramanmaraş, a small town in central Anatolia, on 22 December, altered his plans. There were many deaths and hundreds were wounded when the Grey Wolves went on the rampage, shouting 'no funerals for communists and Alevis'. Air force jets and an armoured unit were sent to restore the peace and on Christmas Day, Ecevit was forced to order martial law in 13 Anatolian provinces. His failure to end terrorism was a crucial reason for the loss of support among voters. But even under martial law, terrorism continued, the opposition claiming that Ecevit was placing restrictions on the generals so that they were unable to deal with the terrorists. Nevertheless the generals now

controlled the Kurdish-populated areas in eastern Anatolia and were able to ban May Day celebrations in 1979. These measures eroded support for Ecevit even more, so that when partial Senate and some by-elections were held on 14 October, the RPP's vote declined, while that of the JP increased in both these elections. Again there was a high turnout of 73 per cent; despite everything the voters still had faith in the ballot box. Following his defeat, Ecevit resigned on 16 October. Since the country found another Front coalition repugnant, Demirel formed a minority government on 12 November, rejecting the bourgeoisie's appeals for a 'grand coalition' with Ecevit. With the support of the Right, Demirel received a vote of confidence on 25 November 1979.

#### TURKEY'S RENEWED STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The strategic importance of Turkey changed dramatically after the 1978/9 Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. The West needed a stable regime in Turkey, something the political parties had been unable to provide it with; perhaps the generals could. By December 1979, the generals began discussing the timing and nature of their next military intervention. First of all, they agreed to tell the politicians to put their house in order. Had they wanted to end terrorism and bloodshed, they ought to have intervened long before September 1980, but they seemed more concerned about the consequences in Iran and the outbreak of a 'second Cold War' with the Soviet Union. As early as April 1979, *The Guardian's* Brussels correspondent wrote: 'Not surprisingly Turkey ... is now seen as a zone of crucial strategic significance not only for the southern flank [of NATO] but for the West as a whole'. But Turkey, in her current state of political turmoil, was incapable of assuming her new responsibilities. In January 1980, when the terms of the new US–Turkish Defence and Cooperation Treaty were being finalized, Demirel refused to allow the use of Turkish bases by any future Rapid Deployment Force or to facilitate Greece's return to the NATO political structure, unless Turkey's rights in the Aegean were recognized. Washington concluded that, under Demirel, Turkey could not play the regional role that was being assigned her: it seems that only the military could.

The generals made unilateral concessions to Greece regarding Aegean airspace, without even informing the foreign ministry, and in March, the signing of the Defence and Cooperation Treaty anchored Turkey to the West; Ecevit's attempt to have a 'multi-dimensional' foreign policy was abandoned. Demirel also gave the generals full authority to crush terrorism which, they said, came only from the Left, for the Grey Wolves were considered allies of the state in its struggle against the communists. But the generals failed to put a stop to the violence that often took as many as 20 lives a day. The unending violence prepared the ground for military intervention, and many welcomed the generals' coup as salvation from the anarchy and chaos that gripped the country.

#### MOUNTING ECONOMIC GLOOM

As well as terrorism, the economy also required a regime of strict discipline and social peace that only the military could provide. Throughout the seventies, all the coalitions had neglected the economy, until Ecevit was forced to attend to it in 1978/9. During this time, successive governments had to cope with a worldwide economic downturn, the oil-price shock of 1974, the US embargo of 5 February 1975, and European sanctions that followed on the heels of the Cyprus intervention. The cost of military occupation of northern Cyprus and subsidies to the Turkish-Cypriot government were an added burden to the economy. With an eye to elections, the parties had pursued a populist policy and provided subsidies with public money to all sectors, to encourage high employment and economic growth. They borrowed money to finance the budgetary deficits. In the end, Ecevit had to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and accept its harsh terms as the price of the economic bailout. But the IMF and TÜSİAD wanted even more concessions than Ecevit was willing to make so that the austerity programme could be implemented. Finally Ecevit curbed consumption at home in order to encourage exports and all this undermined his support in the October 1979 Senate elections, forcing him to resign.

Thanks to US support, the economy showed signs of recovery following the revolution in Iran. The Demirel minority

government implemented the IMF's programme under Turgut Özal (1927–93) who was appointed his economic adviser. Özal was a technocrat who saw politics as an impediment to the implementation of economic measures he introduced on 24 January 1980. The Turkish lira was devalued by 30 per cent and prices of virtually every commodity – oil and oil products, cement, sugar, paper and coal, cigarettes and alcohol – rose sharply in an attempt to cut consumption. The aim was to create a new economy based on exports rather than internal consumption. Turkey was thrown open to the capitalist world and globalization.

Özal's economic programme was the beginning of a transformation which would cause much social and economic turmoil. Özal asked the generals for a five-year respite from party politics for the success of his recipe, and that is precisely what the military coup of 12 September 1980 gave him. The generals planned to build new foundations for the political system in order to provide long-term stability by de-politicizing Turkish society; the restructuring of 1971 had proved insufficient. The country was tired of the antics of politicians and was ready to accept a military takeover. Demirel could not stop the terrorism because he needed the NAP to prop up his minority government, and the Islamists had to be appeased for the same reason. The generals were ready to intervene and the date for the coup was set as 11 July. But Ecevit's failure to bring down Demirel with a censure motion postponed the coup; and the generals did not want to be seen as doing something which Ecevit had just failed to do. Erbakan's support had saved Demirel in June. But in August, Ecevit and Erbakan agreed to introduce a motion of censure against Demirel's (and the generals') foreign policy and, on 5 September, Hayrettin Erkmen, Demirel's foreign minister, was forced to resign. The next day, a 'Save Jerusalem' rally in Konya angered the generals, as the secular state was openly insulted by this. There were other motions of censure against Demirel in the pipeline, but they could not be implemented because of a lack of quorum on 9 and 10 September. Political life had been paralysed. On 12 September, the generals intervened and, to the relief of the country, seized power.

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# 7

## The Military, the Parties, and Globalization, 1980–2003

### RESTRUCTURING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Few people were aware of the intentions of the generals when they captured power; they claimed that they had intervened in order to save the state and its people from social division, economic breakdown, and the anarchy and violence for which the parties and politicians were responsible. They promised to restore the authority of the state in an impartial manner. To do that, the generals set up the National Security Council (NSC) headed by Kenan Evren, who was chief of staff, and composed of army, navy, air force, and gendarmerie commanders. The NSC was merely a front for other senior officers of the armed forces, who were divided as to the course of action they should take. As is often the case, there were moderates and hardliners, the latter in charge of martial law and restoration of law and order. General Necdet Uruğ, commander of the First Army and martial law, was a hardliner who was able to impose his will on his fiefdom. But these factional differences never emerged into the open because the generals abided by the well-established hierarchical principle: they all agreed to be committed to Kemalism which, since the death of Atatürk in 1938, still carried the symbolic significance of avowed loyalty to the original ideals of the republic. The hardliners won the internal debate and the NUC agreed to reconstruct the entire



political system on new foundations by composing a new constitution, disqualifying former politicians and introducing new ones, and even establishing the military's own political party to contest elections. Their main intention was to dismantle once and for all the liberal regime introduced by the 1961 Constitution.

The NSC began by suspending the constitution, dissolving parliament, closing down the parties and detaining their leaders. Professional associations, such as those of lawyers and doctors, were suspended, including the trade unions; strikes were declared illegal and striking workers were ordered back to work. Employers applauded these measures as a step towards restoring the economy. Military officers replaced provincial officials, mayors, and governors whose political affiliations were suspect.

On 16 September, head of state General Kenan Evren announced the junta's plan to de-politicize society, so as to render any future military intervention unnecessary. He promised radical changes in virtually all areas of Turkish life, but left foreign policy and the economy – then in the process of being restructured by the programme of 24 January 1980 – untouched. The new cabinet, led by retired Admiral Bülent Ulusu, was announced on 21 September: most of the ministers were bureaucrats, professors and retired officers, and Turgut Özal, who had been charged with economic restructuring by Demirel, was retained. Özal had worked in the World Bank and was known to financial circles in the West and within the business community in Turkey. He was trusted by the junta to run the economy. The regime also adopted a pro-Western foreign and military policy, which was judged crucial in Washington after the revolution in Iran and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. On US prompting, the Ulusu government lifted the Turkish veto against the return of Greece to NATO's military command without a *quid pro quo*; Greece had left the military command following Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974.

The junta gave priority to restructuring political life. They began by crushing all aspects of 'the Left' – extremists, social democrats, unionists, and even members of the Peace Association who included the very elite of Turkish society. The extreme Right, aligned with NAP, was also crushed, though the junta embraced its ideology, designating it as the 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis'. For the time being, 'combating terrorism' became the junta's principal

task. Arrests followed and thousands were taken into custody; torture became widespread and systematic, besmirching the reputation of the regime in the West. But the junta, relying on US support and its strategic importance, was undeterred and brutal repression continued.

Having established a semblance of law and order, the following year, in October 1981, the NSC appointed a consultative committee to write a new constitution. Meanwhile, a law was passed abolishing all political parties and confiscating their assets. In November, the 'Higher Education Law' placed education into the hands of so-called 'nationalist-conservatives' and liberal faculty members were dismissed from the universities. In January 1982, the calendar for restoring political life was unveiled after the NSC had made amendments to the draft constitution and presented it to the people in a referendum. If the people accepted the constitution, elections would be held in late 1983 under the new political parties and elections law.

A public debate followed Evren's declaration and the intelligentsia began to anticipate a return to normal political life. Alarmed by that trend, the generals issued a law on 12 February 1982, forbidding former politicians from engaging in public political debate. Arrests followed and Bülent Ecevit, the former prime minister, was put on trial and imprisoned. This was a clear warning that the country was still under martial law.

Presented to the public on 17 July, the draft constitution centralized power in the office of the president. He could dissolve parliament and call a general election if parliament was paralysed, rule by decree, and virtually appoint the constitutional court. A presidential council, the NSC in new guise, advised him. Other provisions would curb freedom of the press and the unions. This was to be a 'democracy without freedoms'! The political provisions of the draft constitution were tightened even further following public discussions. On 19 October, the junta strengthened presidential powers by allowing him to veto legislation and constitutional amendments, which would then be put to a referendum. The president was also to be given the power to select military judges and high-ranking officials, to appoint the chief of staff (in consultation with the prime minister he appointed), and to convene and preside over NSC meetings. If the new constitution was approved

by the people on 7 November, General Evren would automatically become president for the next seven years, and the other four generals of the NSC would be his advisers! Finally, the new constitution would rule out legal action against orders and decisions signed by the president. New laws would disqualify all members of the 1980 parliament from political activity for five years and all party leaders for ten, and new parties could not be formed if most of their members came from the old ones. The intention was to introduce new and 'clean' politicians into the system – but that proved impossible to accomplish.

When the draft constitution drew criticism, the junta banned all discussion of the document, although Evren was permitted to disseminate propaganda on its behalf. Voters understood that only by voting 'Yes' for a constitution they disliked, would civilian rule be restored. Therefore they voted overwhelmingly in favour of it – 91.37 per cent of the valid vote – though the generals interpreted the referendum as a vote of confidence in the regime! Thus Kenan Evren became Turkey's 7th president on 19 November 1982, convinced that the people loved him as another Atatürk – whom he tried hard to emulate.

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES

Having legitimized the constitution, the generals set about finding politicians who would be loyal to their philosophy. On 12 November, President Evren announced elections in October 1983, if all went well. They set about forming a 'state party' and the hardliners won this battle when retired general Turgut Sunalp was chosen to head this party instead of the moderate, Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu. The new parties law came into effect on 24 April 1983 and the NSC lifted the ban on politics the next day. New politicians could be vetoed by the NSC for any reason and the new parties were obliged to accept the legacy of what has come to be known as the '12 September regime'.

Of the new parties founded in the spring of 1983, only three proved to be politically viable. One was the social democratic party, or SODEP, founded by Professor Erdal İnönü, the son of İsmet İnönü. Its support came from former Republican voters and the Left. The second party was called the Great Turkey Party,

which was Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party under proxy leadership. The generals shut down the Great Turkey Party and vetoed SODEP's candidates to prevent the party from contesting the election. Had these two parties been allowed to survive, a stable two-party system might have been restored. But the generals wanted to establish new politics and politicians, and these parties represented the old. The third party was founded by Turgut Özal and was called the Motherland Party, or ANAP by its Turkish acronym. Özal claimed that his party was neither Left nor Right, but represented all the political tendencies in existence before the 1980 coup. General Sunalp headed the 'state party', the Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), while Necdet Calp, İsmet İnönü's former private secretary, led the Populist Party, which was intended to fill the political vacuum left by the dissolved RPP. The generals calculated that Sunalp and Calp would become the new politicians committed to the 12 September philosophy and Özal would lead a party of no political consequence; after all, he was merely a failed politician who had stood as an Islamist candidate on the MSP ticket in 1977 and had not been elected. Had he been elected, he too would have been disqualified by the generals, but US support and intervention saved him from veto.

The election campaign opened on 16 October, and meetings held by both Sunalp's and Necdet Calp's parties failed to stir any public interest, for both men were uninspiring leaders. Voters simply did not trust a military man – or a former high bureaucrat such as Necdet Calp – to lead the country back to democracy. Sunalp had declared that his first commitment was to the state, then democracy, then to the party. In contrast, Özal was the only candidate who projected a liberal, anti-statist image and promised a swift return to democracy. Voters had forgotten Özal's role in the 'Bankers' scandal' of 1982 in which thousands had lost their savings, and which had resulted in his forced resignation. But the generals did not expect Özal to win and even wanted his party to merge with that of General Sunalp!

### THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1983

Despite – or perhaps because of – the generals' open support, Sunalp lost and Özal won the election on 6 November. Özal's

Motherland Party (ANAP) won 45.15 per cent of the vote, while Calp's Populist Party won 30.46 per cent and Sunalp's National Democracy Party came third with only 23.27 per cent of the votes cast. Having imposed a monetary fine of about US\$25 for those not voting, there was a record turnout of almost 93 per cent. However, in spite of his victory Özal's position was barely legitimized, simply because the two genuine parties – SODEP and the Great Turkey Party – had not been allowed to contest the election. Consequently, the municipal elections the following year turned out to be the proving ground for ANAP. Özal took very seriously the challenge posed by SODEP and the newly-formed True Path Party which replaced the Great Turkey Party and exploited the advantages of patronage, in order to win. Patronage became the hallmark of his administration, especially the system of 'discretionary funds' established for the purpose of strengthening the executive against the legislature. These 'funds' became a valuable source of money outside the budget and beyond the control of the assembly or the finance ministry.

Özal won the municipal election but his vote declined from 45 to 41 per cent. Votes for the National Democrats and the Populists plummeted to below 10 per cent, marking their demise. The centre-left SODEP and the centre-right TPP became the opposition though they still lacked representation in the assembly, having to wait until 1987 before this was remedied. For the moment, Özal ruled without serious opposition in the assembly. He was a pragmatist who bragged that his government was essentially non-ideological: ANAP was not a continuation of the dissolved parties but contained their best elements and ideas. It was conservative like the JP, traditionalist like the Islamists, nationalist like the neo-fascists, and left-of-centre like the RPP because it believed in social justice. In reality, ANAP was conservative, undemocratic and wedded to the values of globalization and the free market. Liberals who questioned the party's leadership and its policies were forced to leave.

Turgut Özal concentrated on the economy and left the generals to maintain law and order. He had asked for five years of 'social peace' – that is to say, no strikes or protests – and the generals were providing that. The social democrats were divided between SODEP and the recently formed Democratic Left Party (DLP), and only the True Path Party provided any sort of challenge. ANAP

had become a family affair with Turgut's brothers, Korkut and Yusuf, and his wife Semra, playing active roles. They recruited young men with experience of the US 'Reagan revolution' which they wanted to emulate in Turkey.

Just as conservatives in the US said they spoke for 'the silent majority', so Özal claimed to speak for the 'central pillar' of Turkish society, the *ortadirek*. His promise of a bright prosperous future for Turkey and the removal of many restrictions on the economy and society caught the imagination of the people. Turkey, he promised, would 'skip an era' and become a major power because his would be the government that 'got things done'! By 1986, however, Özal was again challenged by former party leaders banned by the generals but who were now guiding the leading parties: the True Path Party fronted for Süleyman Demirel; the Democratic Left for Bülent Ecevit; the Welfare Party for Necmettin Erbakan; and the Nationalist Labour Party for Alparslan Türkeş. The Populist Party and SODEP had merged and become the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), the principal party of the Left. The Right seemed more divided than ever with nine parties; for the moment, only the Motherland and the True Path Parties mattered.

#### FORMER POLITICAL LEADERS RE-EMERGE

One of the principal issues of Turkish politics in 1986 was the removal of the ban on former politicians. Demirel was gaining in popularity among the liberal Right and eroding ANAP's electoral support. The business community began to hedge its bets and financed the campaigns of both parties! Reacting to public pressure to restore the political rights of his rivals, Özal decided to put the question to a referendum and, although he campaigned vigorously for a 'No' vote, on 6 September 1987 the people voted to restore political rights. The banned political leaders were now back in business, finally reversing one of the most radical measures of the generals. To counter this, Özal decided to bring forward the general election before Demirel had time to get organized. When this was held on 29 November 1987, ANAP won 36.29 per cent of the vote which translated into 64.9 per cent or 292 seats in the assembly thanks to Özal's amended election law. In 1983, 45.1 per cent of the vote had given only 211 seats! Demirel described the

new Özal government as 'the election-law cabinet' and the ministry lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Özal had also lost much of his glitter and realized that it would be difficult to win any future election after seeing the results of the local elections in March 1988. In the four years since 1983, ANAP'S popularity had slipped from 45 to 22 per cent despite the patronage it had enjoyed. In August 1988, Özal tried to call another early general election for November but the measure was defeated in a referendum and Özal's prestige took another blow. He had done nothing to further the democratic process and all the laws passed by the junta – the trade unions law, the higher education law, the law on elections and political parties, the press law, the penal code law, and the law governing the running of Turkey's radio and television – remained on the books. Furthermore, corruption associated with the 'Özal dynasty' had damaged his reputation. Özal therefore decided to enter the running for president when President Kenan Evren's term expired in November 1989. His party had the votes in the assembly and that is what mattered. Özal was duly elected Turkey's eighth president by his party on 31 October – opposition deputies boycotting the session – and assumed office on 9 November, the second civilian president of the Republic. Within ANAP, the so-called 'Holy Alliance' of Islamists and Nationalists calculated that they would now be able to gain control of the party with Özal out of the way.

Özal's presidency (1989–93) was marked by political instability. Yıldırım Akbulut, the new prime minister, a puppet of the president, was not respected in the country. The opposition announced that they would remove Özal from the presidency as soon as they won the next general election. In light of the growing Kurdish insurgency in south-eastern Turkey, there was talk of another military intervention; the Islamists became more vocal, and there were political assassinations in the capital and Istanbul in early 1990. In March the business lobby called for an early poll under a new elections law in order to restore political stability; however, the arrival of ex-president Kenan Evren in Ankara to confer with the chief of staff, raised political tensions. On 9 April, the government responded to the situation by passing an 'anti-terrorism law', which gave the army and police extra-ordinary powers. Late in July, the National Security Council had these

emergency powers extended for a further four months in the eight provinces in the south-east.

Within weeks, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 transformed Turkey's situation dramatically and the political crisis was forgotten for the time being. Turkey was in the midst of an international crisis that redefined her place in the world, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year. Her strategic importance had faded with the end of the Soviet threat, but with the Gulf Crisis and the emergence of new Turkic states in Central Asia, Ankara gained a new significance. Özal bypassed the cabinet and supported President Bush's policy, gambling that Turkey would come out a winner, thereby garnering the goodwill of America and Europe. Ankara shut down the oil pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean on 7 August, and agreed to permit foreign troops to be based in Turkey. But chief of staff, General Torumtay, disagreeing with the way Özal was conducting policy without any consultation, resigned on 3 December. The soldier had advised a cautious policy that Özal had described as 'cowardly and timid'; nevertheless Torumtay's resignation reined in Özal and forced him to be more guarded and less adventurous. It seemed as though Özal was looking ahead to the partition of Iraq, and the formation of a Kurdish state that would join Turkey in a federation. He wanted to occupy Mosul and Kirkuk in Iraq and asked Torumtay how many troops would be lost in the invasion. Given a figure of thirty or forty thousand, he gave up the idea of invasion!

The Gulf Crisis exploded into war on 16 January 1991, ending with a cease-fire on 28 February. The influx of Iraqi-Kurdish refugees into Turkey aggravated the Kurdish insurgency and the economic situation. As a result, ANAP's standing in the country declined even further in favour of Demirel's True Path Party. ANAP hoped to strengthen its position by electing Mesut Yılmaz as its replacement leader for Özal, defeating the nationalist-religious faction. Yılmaz was 43 years old and a graduate of the Faculty of Political Science in Ankara. In contrast to Yıldırım Akbulut, he was modern, cosmopolitan, pragmatic and spoke a foreign language, German. He seemed to represent a leader who might revive the party's declining fortunes. Now Prime Minister Yılmaz decided that the party had better chance of success if elections were held before



the economy declined even further. The assembly therefore voted to hold elections on 20 October 1991.

But the elections did not turn out well for Yılmaz: Demirel's TPP won the majority with 178 seats, while ANAP won only 115, and Erdal İnönü's social democrats, 88 seats. Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party won 62 seats, but only because the Islamists had formed an electoral alliance with the neo-fascists, an alliance that proved to be ephemeral. ANAP, without Özal, had survived, and Demirel, the principal leader of the Right since the sixties, had assumed his rightful place. Although there were hardly any ideological differences between ANAP and TPP, the two centre-right parties, there was no question of a merger, which would have permitted a strong government. With too many vested interests at stake and too much to lose on ANAP's part to contemplate a merger, Yılmaz preferred to be in opposition. Therefore Demirel formed a coalition with the social democrats in November 1991, a coalition he had refused to form with Ecevit in the 1970s! The Demirel-İnönü cabinet was supported by 266 seats in the Assembly and 48% of the popular vote. In theory, the government was strong and capable of providing stability and solutions to Turkey's problems. The principal problem requiring attention was the economy.

## ECONOMIC PROBLEMS RETURN TO THE FORE

Turkey's economic development had gone through some radical phases since the fifties. After a decade of an unplanned economy during that decade, the country had quite successfully practised 'import substitution industrialization' in the sixties and seventies and had succeeded in creating an internal market for its goods, but these goods were never competitive and found no export market. In order to become competitive, the unions had to be disciplined and wages had to be cut. All this had proved impossible to accomplish under party politics and the coalition government of the 1970s. Consequently, one of the tasks for the military regimes of the eighties was to end party politics and establish a basis for economic development under the influence of 'global market forces' or globalization. Turkey had to become more productive and pay lower wages to its workers so as to be competitive.

The government was told to make a number of crucial changes in preparation to enter the global market. These included state withdrawal from production, in which it had played a vital role since the 1930s, in order to focus on building the country's infrastructure, its roads, communications systems and dams, to meet its energy needs. Other imperatives included the privatization of state economic enterprises, and the private sector and foreign capital were to be given the primary role in production. Also, the state had to abandon protectionism because protected industries, anti-statists argued, were weak and inefficient and provided consumers with expensive and inferior quality goods. Quality goods could be exported, thus attracting the much needed foreign exchange.

One of the results of these policies was that income distribution, always skewed, became much worse and undermined the middle and lower classes, while the rich prospered. According to the World Bank, Turkey was one among seven countries with the worst records for income disparity. According to Turkish economists, between 1980 and 1986, thirty trillion liras had been transferred from wages and salaries to the private sector. The SPO calculated that in ten years, the share of wages in Turkey's GNP declined from 36 per cent in 1977 to 18 per cent in 1987.

Despite the pain felt by the majority of the population (for there was no safety net), the economic policies of the 1980s produced remarkable results. Inflation fell and foreign exchange and imported consumer goods became available. The mood of the country was upbeat and optimistic after the depressing years of the late 1970s. The press spoke of an 'export miracle' because export earnings had increased from US \$2.3 billion in 1979 to US \$11.7 billion in 1988. This 'miracle' was aided by the Iran–Iraq war (1980–88) when Turkish goods were in great demand by both belligerents, and for a period, Turkish exports to the Middle East overtook those to Europe, Turkey's principal market. Corruption was endemic during these years, especially with regard to the so-called 'phantom exports' reported by companies so as to obtain export subsidies from the state.

Export subsidies benefited the large holding companies in western Turkey at the expense of smaller enterprise in Anatolia, although consolidation amongst these smaller enterprises became

a feature, marking the rise of conglomerates strong enough to compete with the capitalist ventures of Istanbul and the Marmara region. These companies were known as the 'Anatolian Tigers' and they became the supporters of Erbakan's Welfare Party, which acted in opposition to the companies united in TÜSİAD. The Anatolian Tigers formed their own association known as MÜSİAD, standing for the 'Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen', although it was no secret that the 'M' in the acronym was the code word for 'Muslim', 'Independent' being intended to deceive the secularists. Meanwhile, such well-established conglomerates as Koç and Sabancı had grown and achieved what was described as 'global reach', due to investment in the Balkans, Russia, and the Turkic republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union, even though Turkey itself needed capital investment. In the summer of 1992, President Özal held a conference to launch economic cooperation among states of the Black Sea region. The idea was a good one, although Turkey lacked the resources to play the kind of role that Özal aspired to. This was the age of 'economic Darwinism' – survival of the fittest while the small and the weak were eliminated or swallowed up in mergers. At home, the state encouraged this trend, but it was unable to act abroad because of its economic weakness.

Turkey had become a strategic asset in the 'second cold war' after the revolution in Iran (1978–9) and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1978). The victory of Andreas Papandreou's socialist party in Greece in 1981 – ending nearly 50 years of conservative hegemony – increased the value of Turkey to US policy makers. Özal declared that it was his policies that had enabled Turkey (in his words) to 'turn the corner' and 'skip an epoch', and that Turkey was on the way to becoming 'the Japan of West Asia'. But all this was an illusion, for investments in industry actually declined in relation to those in the service sector, making tourism – a fickle industry at best – a major source of foreign exchange. People who became wealthy were rentiers not entrepreneurs. The so-called export miracle had been financed through a massive foreign debt, whose service costs became a nightmare for the government. Turkey expected to be able to pay off her debts by 1995, but in the end could not do so; even by 2002, she had not paid them off, and the Ankara Chamber of Commerce calculated that over the past

two decades, the country had paid such vast sums in interest payments that its economic future was threatened.

### TURKEY'S CHANGING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Nevertheless, Turkey's society and economy were transformed under Özal. Turkey had become a consumer society, serving about ten per cent of the urban population who were articulate enough to make demands on the state and have these demands satisfied. Everything was available to the new rich, even though advertising in the media – especially television – brought consumer goods into the homes of the less affluent as well! Cars, especially imported cars, became a status symbol, as did works of art, antiques and rare books. But the vast majority, living on wages and salaries, were barely able to survive, given the constantly rising cost of living. Employment patterns were also changing: university graduates no longer wanted to work for state concerns where salaries were low, but in the private sector, preferably for foreign companies, where salaries were high and the future promising. Universities were privatized to serve this new clientele and to produce the business managers which the private sector constantly needed. English was now the *lingua franca* of this class and positions were even advertised in the Turkish press in English, a language foreign to the majority.

Turgut Özal died on 17 April 1993, soon after his return from an exhausting tour of the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union. He was succeeded as president by Süleyman Demirel, who was elected by parliament on 16 May. Demirel believed that he would retain control over the True Path Party if he handed it over to Mrs Tansu Çiller (1946–), whom he had promoted within the party. She was not the obvious choice, for she was a relatively young and inexperienced newcomer to the party and there were more seasoned men who had stronger claims to leadership. But Çiller had the advantage of being younger, female, attractive, and well educated in comparison with her rivals. Not only was she an economist, but she was also fluent in English and German, had a cosmopolitan outlook and was well acquainted with the West. Around the world, voters seemed to prefer young, dynamic leaders

and Turkey was no exception. A youthful Mesut Yılmaz had taken over ANAP from Özal, and İnönü's SHP went in the same direction when he retired and elected a younger leader in September 1993. It made good political sense to elect a woman as TPP's leader, thereby strengthening the party's position in the forthcoming election. She would counter the qualities of her rivals, especially among female voters, who made up over half the electorate. The open support that the business community gave Çiller could not be ignored either. Moreover her success was expected to enhance Turkey's image in the West as a forward-looking Muslim country from an Islamic world that seemed to be looking to the past for inspiration.

Çiller came to public notice in the late eighties as one of the critics of Turgut Özal's economic policies. The support she enjoyed in the business community enabled her to enter Süleyman Demirel's circle as a consultant on economic matters. She was elected from Istanbul and entered parliament in 1990. Demirel appointed her minister of state in charge of economic affairs. Before entering politics, she had taught economics at Bosphorus University in Istanbul, having earned degrees in America at the Universities of New Hampshire and Connecticut. Thus at the party's convention, she defeated her male rivals and became the party's leader and the first woman prime minister of Turkey.

Çiller's coalition with the social democrats won a vote of confidence on 25 June 1993, and she took charge of the country's destiny. Being the junior partners, the social democrats' political position in the country had begun to erode among voters as SHP supported the policies of a right-wing leader. The social democratic programme was too timid to attempt to challenge the system and yet too daring to be accepted by the conservatives in the business community. The programme, premised on a fast rate of growth, was incapable of dealing with the economic crisis of the nineties. There was therefore no obstacle to Çiller's programme. Her success depended on her ability to find answers to Turkey's many problems: the economy, entry into the European Union and a solution to end the Kurdish question. Turkey was being held to ransom since August 1984, when the PKK – the Workers' Party of Kurdistan – launched its insurrection. This war was estimated to cost US \$7 billion a year! If the conservatives failed to find a solution, the Islamists were standing in the wings to challenge them.

## THE KURDISH QUESTION

The Kurdish question in its modern form had emerged in the 1960s, when the ‘peoples of the east’ demanded greater cultural freedom and questioned the state’s policy of assimilation. Their demands were related to the backwardness of the region, which had largely been ignored by Ankara, especially during the period of multi-party politics. The market economy favoured by the Democrats had benefited large landowners, tribal sheiks, and the rich peasants. Landlessness increased during these years as peasants could no longer afford to cultivate their plots and therefore sold them and became labourers. A survey conducted in 1984, the year the insurrection began, revealed that 45 per cent of peasant families in the province of Diyarbakır and 47 in Urfa had no land. The private sector concentrated industrial production in western Anatolia, close to the ports for shipment to world markets. As a result, there was high unemployment in the east and south-east and the people, Kurds and Turks, lived in conditions that were often described as feudal.

In the 1960s, the Kurdish intelligentsia hoped that it would be able to make gains by working through the Workers’ Party of Turkey and the left-of-centre RPP. But the political elite in Turkey, especially in the military, refused to promote a political solution, convinced that the armed forces could crush any challenge to the state, a challenge that was described as ‘separatism’ and fragmentation of the state. Ever since the aborted Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, Turks had lived under the ‘Sèvres complex’: they feared that the Western world had not forgotten its defeat at the hands of the Nationalists and that they were now trying to reimpose terms – in the form of a Kurdish state and Armenian irredentism – that it had failed to impose in 1920.

Initially, the elite saw the Kurdish insurrection as a minor internal matter that could be dealt with by military means. In the eighties, the generals took a harder line and in 1983 passed a law forbidding the use of any language other than Turkish. This law was applied only to the Kurds, who were not allowed to give ‘Kurdish’ names to their children, and the army often brutalized and humiliated them in the east. Özal had tried to deal with this problem politically but made no headway: he repealed the

language law and even went so far as to claim that he was half Kurdish, but to no avail. Ironically, there were many Kurdish members of parliament, especially from the social democratic party; the Kurdish party they had formed had not been allowed to contest the general election and so they had joined the social democrats in order to enter parliament.

The situation changed dramatically in 1991, after the Gulf War and the defeat of Saddam Hussein. Northern Iraq was liberated and Iraqi Kurds were given control of the region and protected by the Western powers. The PKK acquired modern weapons in northern Iraq, and began to act more like an army than guerrilla bands. Its fighters were able to retreat into territory under the control of Iraqi Kurds, forcing the Turkish army to make regular incursions into Iraqi territory in order to destroy PKK bases. They also had the unofficial support of such neighbouring countries as Iran, Syria and Greece, who made use of the Kurds to embarrass Ankara. In the 1980s, the PKK had claimed to be a Marxist organization, but after the fall of the Soviet Union, it began to adopt Islamic discourse. The conflict was also internationalized and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) began to monitor the conflict, accusing Turkish armed forces of violating the human rights of the Kurdish population.

While politicians tried to soften the conflict, the army and the extreme Right escalated it. In 1992, Prime Minister Demirel went so far as to declare that they recognized the 'Kurdish reality', a fact that governments had tended to deny. In Washington, in December 1994, Turkey's ambassador, responding to an editorial in the *Washington Post*, noted that the Kurds were only one of 26 different ethnic groups living in Turkey. They were not a minority, but were co-owners of the country. 'Diversity in the Turkish population is similar to that found in the United States'. This statement suggested that sections of officialdom in Turkey were coming round to an inclusive definition of nationalism/patriotism, abandoning the exclusive nationalism of the extreme Right. Two weeks later, the press quoted Premier Tansu Çiller as proposing that Atatürk's famous aphorism, 'Happy is he who calls himself a Turk', be altered to 'Happy is he who calls himself a citizen of Turkey'.

But such ideas had no effect on the military campaign and the conflict in the east, which was a drain on the economy and cost

thousands of lives each year, and intensified in the years after 1992. It seems that money was being made out of the continuation of this conflict and the war profiteers did not want it to end. The army sent about one-quarter of a million troops and mobilized so-called village guards from amongst Kurdish tribes, who were paid to fight the PKK, thus providing them with money and 'employment'. Villages were evacuated and destroyed so that the PKK, not finding local support, would become 'a fish out of water'. An estimated two million refugees from such villages sought shelter in the cities throughout Anatolia. Those more fortunate fled to Western Europe, where they formed a vocal lobby for the PKK and agitated on its behalf, internationalizing the conflict.

The declaration of a unilateral cease-fire by Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK's leader, in March 1993, was seen as a sign of weakness by the generals, who thought they could now destroy the insurgency by stepping up their operations. They launched major incursions into northern Iraq in January 1994 and March 1995, but to no avail. The insurgency continued to cost thousands of lives each year, as well as isolating Turkey from the West. Nor were moderate Kurdish politicians allowed to become part of the political process by forming political parties, competing in elections, and putting forward their case in parliament. The People's Labour Party was banned by the constitutional court in August 1993, as were its successors, who were finally succeeded by HADEP (People's Democracy Party) in May 1994. Members of parliament belonging to these parties were imprisoned for 'separatist activities', closing the door to a political solution. Throughout the 1990s, European support for the Kurds continued to grow, with an estimated half a million displaced Kurds throughout Europe. In June 1998, a Kurdish rally in Dortmund was addressed by a former Danish prime minister, a former Greek minister, as well as the Green Party. So while the PKK had been weakened militarily, it had gained in diplomatic strength.

Ankara forced the Syrian government to expel Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK from Syria in October 1998 and finally captured him in Nairobi, Kenya in February 1999. He was tried and sentenced to death on 29 June 1999. The sentence was not carried out because Ankara awaited the outcome of a review of the sentence by the European Court of Justice. By now the Kurdish cause had



been taken up by the European Union, which insisted that Ankara abolish the death penalty and grant Kurds the right to have education and broadcasting in Kurdish before Turkey would be considered for accession talks for membership to the EU. In the year 2002, these two issues divided the coalition government and threatened its very survival.

The war against the PKK also exposed the unofficial alliance between elements of the state and the criminal element, or 'mafia', known in Turkey as the 'deep state'. This relationship, though an open secret often referred to in the press, came out into the open as a result of an automobile accident in November 1996, known as the Susurluk incident. In July, a journalist had said in an interview that he wished the state would give up being a gang of criminals and abide by the rule of law. He was vindicated when a Mercedes crashed into a tractor on the Balıkesir–Istanbul road, resulting in the deaths of three of the four passengers. Those killed included Abdullah Çatlı, a neo-fascist militant involved in the murder of leftists in the 1970s, and now a criminal working with the state, his girlfriend, and Hüseyin Kocadağ, deputy chief of police for Istanbul and involved in state security matters. The surviving man, though injured, was Sedat Bucak, a Kurdish tribal chief and a member of Tansu Çiller's TPP, involved in the village guard movement against the PKK. The collusion between state officials, criminals and neo-fascists had begun in the seventies, when the military entered into an alliance to crush the Left. Such an alliance became unnecessary after the 1980 coup, but was revived during the Özal administration when criminals infiltrated the state mechanism and bought officials with money generated by 'phantom exports' and smuggling. This alliance was later used against the PKK and other 'enemies of state', and that is why their crimes went unpunished.

The incident aroused great anger in the country and was seen as another turning-point in Turkey's politics. But there was no serious outcome because too many politicians and officers had been involved over the years. Nevertheless, the public were now aware of the complicity between the state and criminals, an activity that continued despite the revelations. Turkey seemed to have more urgent matters to attend to, perhaps the most urgent being relations with the EU.

## TURKEY AND THE EEC

Turkey joined the Western world, led by Washington, after the Second World War. The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO cemented the relationship and secured Turkey's position within Western security arrangements. In the fifties, as the European Economic Community took shape, Ankara followed Greece and applied for association with the EEC, wanting to become part of the economic system. After the Johnson Letter of 1964, Turkey became lukewarm to the US connection and began to see itself more as a part of Europe; Europe had become a major market for Turkish products and the supplier of capital goods. The ties became stronger as Turkish workers migrated to Europe, comprising about three million people or about five per cent of Turkey's population. Ankara signed the Association Agreement with the EEC in 1963. But in July 1980, when Turkey was asked to apply for full membership at the same time as Greece, Premier Süleyman Demirel put off the application in order to appease anti-EEC Islamists and win their support for his weak minority government. Greece joined the EEC the following year, while Turkey missed the boat. Since then, Turkey's attempts to join the EEC – later the European Union (EU) – have ended in failure and disappointment. But the customs union agreement that came into effect on 1 January 1996 marked Turkey's entry into the world of globalization, with almost total dependence on so-called 'market forces'. With the customs union, Turkey had given up its best bargaining card; the EU was now able to demand conditions before Ankara was allowed to negotiate a timetable for full membership.

## TURKEY'S POLITICAL MALAISE

The roots of Turkey's political malaise, and its failure to resolve many related problems, are to be found in the political regime created after the coup d'état of 12 September 1980. By disqualifying former politicians and creating new institutions, the generals succeeded in de-politicizing the entire system. By the time the political rights of former politicians – Demirel, Ecevit, Erbakan and Türkeş – were restored with the 1987 referendum, the entire

political architecture of the country had been altered. The centre-left and the centre-right had been fractured and non-systemic parties like the Islamists and the neo-fascists were able to play a critical role. During these years, Turkey had become part of the globalized world, accepted by both centre-left and centre-right, with the result that the social democratic parties were only that in name. There was no longer any significant difference between the parties save for the rhetoric; that was the end of ideology. And this is why social democrats under various leaders could co-habit with the True Path Party throughout the 1990s.

When Turgut Özal died in April 1993, Demirel's decision to become the next president proved disastrous for his party. Under Tansu Çiller's leadership, the party declined rapidly, leading to the Welfare Party winning the general election of 24 December 1995 with 21.38 per cent of the vote and 158 seats. Çiller is said to have even considered going to war with Iran to boost her vote! True Path's vote declined to 19.18 per cent and 135 seats, and ANAP's to 19.65 and 133. The centre-right parties had won almost 40 per cent of the vote and 268 seats, and could have formed a stable government had they united; but that was out of the question given the rivalry between the leaders. The social democrats also won over 25 per cent of the vote – the DLP won 14.64 and the RPP 10.71 – but they too could not unite because of rivalry between the leaders. The other parties failed to clear the 10 per cent hurdle required to enter parliament.

Again a coalition government proved difficult to form. The Islamists failed to do so; so did Çiller, though she tried to unite the centre-right under her leadership. In fact, TPP split as a result of her leadership and dissidents formed the Democrat Turkey party. While politicians were squabbling and bargaining, the press reported that people in the south-eastern province of Hakkari were struggling to feed themselves from rubbish heaps. Because of the war against the PKK, poverty had reached unbearable proportions.

## NEW POLITICAL COALITIONS

Finally in March 1996, after much unsuccessful horse-trading, Mesut Yılmaz formed the 'Mother-Path' coalition between ANAP

and the TPP, supported by Ecevit's Democratic Left. The new coalition had a rotating premiership on the Israeli model, with Yılmaz as PM in 1996 and Çiller in 1997. Immediately, Erbakan began to harass Tansu Çiller with threats to investigate alleged corruption. Anticipating an early election and pandering to his electorate, Erbakan also made statements provocative to the secularists, praising Iran's Islamic revolution and promising to lead a revolution that he said would be painful but unavoidable. He called for an Islamic version of NATO, an Islamic common market and an Islamic equivalent of UNESCO, before establishing an Islamic Union.

The 'Mother-Path' coalition was too unstable to accomplish anything. When an IMF team arrived in Ankara in late May 1996, it warned the government of an impending financial crisis because of the huge budget deficit. Tensions within the cabinet forced Mesut Yılmaz to resign on 6 June. The government had lasted 90 days; it had taken 60 days before it was formed. Few people were surprised, and most agreed that Erbakan would have to be included in the next coalition or the country would have to go to an early general election. Business circles also accepted the fact of Islamist participation, but they hoped that the next coalition would lead Turkey to an election under a new electoral law. Political instability had led to economic instability and that had to end; otherwise observers once more predicted military intervention and an early conclusion to the experiment in democracy. The results of a survey conducted by Anadolu University suggested that people were losing confidence in politicians, the local administration, the private sector, the universities, the IMF and the media; only confidence in the military increased.

Three days after Yılmaz's resignation, the Welfare Party asked parliament to investigate how Tansu Çiller had accumulated so much wealth in so short a time. Çiller had campaigned on the platform that she was the salvation for a secular Turkey threatened by the rising tide of 'fundamentalism', and that she would never form an alliance with the Islamists. But she succumbed to Erbakan's blackmail and agreed to form a coalition, providing he froze the investigation against her. Erbakan, ever the opportunist, agreed and a 'Welfare-Path' coalition, with Erbakan as prime minister, was announced on 29 June 1995.

Erbakan's ministry came under pressure from secularist forces from the very beginning. Most of the press, monopolized by Turkey's media moguls, was hostile. Erbakan was criticized about his visit to Iran and other Muslim countries in August, even when he was following in the footsteps of other prime ministers who had visited these countries regularly to further economic relations. The monthly National Security Council meetings, dominated by the generals, were an embarrassment to Erbakan as he was forced to accept policies – the growing relations with Israel, for example – that were distasteful. The press excoriated him for the rebuff he had received when he visited Libya in October when Colonel Muammer Qadhafi had criticized Turkey's Kurdish policy. Feelings were running so high that the press spoke of the possibility of military intervention and even Mesut Yılmaz acknowledged rumours of a coup. Yet Libya was an important market for Turkey's contractors and their spokesman noted that members of his association wanted new projects in Libya despite the unpaid debt and the political wrangling following Erbakan's visit: 'We don't want to lose a market worth billions.'

#### CONTINUING POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY

The economy, already in poor shape, suffered as a result of the political instability. There was a flight of capital, and foreign capital in particular was not being invested in the country. Economists calculated that US \$70 billion of Turkish capital had left the country to be invested in the West; US \$45 billion was thought to be in Switzerland. Compared to September 1995, foreign investment had declined by 63 per cent, or US \$67 million, in the same period in 1996. The Central Bank predicted that the economy would face higher deficits in 1996 amid increased uncertainty about the government. The current account deficit was expected to rise to US \$6–7 billion in 1996 compared to US \$2.3 billion in 1995; the public sector borrowing was expected to reach 9–10 per cent of GNP as compared to 6.5 per cent in 1995. By the end of the year, the Turkish lira had depreciated 65 per cent against the US dollar compared to 35 per cent in 1995. The dollar declined to 107,500 liras compared to 59,500 in 1995, and the decline

continued throughout the next four years into the new millennium, when the lira sank to 1,700,000 liras.

Erbakan tried to improve relations with the generals at his party's congress, where he was greeted by military music. He denied that he was attempting to steer Muslim and secular Turkey away from the West and declared that Turkey was merely carrying out its own individual foreign policy. He even visited Anıtkabir, Atatürk's Mausoleum, something he had failed to do while in opposition, since Islamists had bitter disdain for the secular, anti-Islamic policies of the founder of the republic. The press noted that the government had increased the subsidy for the ballet and the opera by 129 per cent, cultural activities which Islamists had frowned upon as foreign and alien to Turkish culture. Visits made by Erbakan to various countries, especially the relationship with Iran, had annoyed Washington, and Erbakan wanted to appease the US. Consequently, in December 1996, he sent his minister of state to Washington 'in order to make ourselves better understood by our friend, America'. Fehim Adak was expected to discuss important issues, working to increase cooperation and to reassure the suspicions of US policy makers.

Erbakan's efforts to appease the secularists and the US were bound to fail, given the vast gap between the now moderate leadership of the Welfare Party and its militant rank and file, upon whom the party's success in elections depended. The leadership was becoming moderate and centrist because of the gains the Anatolian bourgeoisie – the 'Anatolian tigers' – had made since the 1980s; the 'tigers' wanted to share in the benefits of globalization, and these were forthcoming only if the party was in power. The rank and file, on the other hand, had only suffered economic loss during these years and remained radical in their demands. Erbakan continued to pay lip service to radicalism and was happy to talk of an Islamic common market and NATO, and a Muslim M-8 to counter the influence of the Western group of wealthy nations known as the G-7.

In February 1997, the Welfare Party mayor of Sincan, a village on the outskirts of Ankara, organized 'Jerusalem Day', to call for the liberation of the city from Israel. The Iranian ambassador was invited and, making anti-secular statements, he called for the establishment of Islamic law in Turkey, while the crowd demonstrated in

support of Hamas and Hizbullah, two Islamist groups waging armed struggle against Israel. Secularist forces in Turkey were infuriated and appalled by the rally so close to the capital, and the generals responded by sending tanks through Sincan as a warning. The mayor was arrested, the Iranian ambassador declared a *persona non grata*, and an investigation launched against the Welfare Party. The Welfare Party had provided the generals with a pretext to curb the Islamic movement and they did so, with what is described as a soft or 'post-modern coup'.

### SECULARISTS AND ISLAMISTS

The National Security Council, presided over by Erbakan, met on 28 February 1997. Political Islam was declared to be more dangerous than Kurdish nationalism and Erbakan was humiliated into accepting a twenty-point programme. The programme was designed to undermine the influence of political Islam by purging its supporters from the state apparatus and curbing the schools for prayer leaders and preachers, schools whose expansion the generals had legislated for after September 1980 in order to counter the influence of 'leftist ideologies'. A law extending secular education from 5 to 8 years was passed in August, and its aim was to weaken the hold of political Islam on Turkey's lower and lower middle class youth. The measure sparked angry demonstrations throughout Turkey, because it was blocking employment opportunities for an entire deprived section of population.

Premier Erbakan's position had become untenable and he resigned on 18 June 1997, hoping that President Demirel would appoint Tansu Çiller as prime minister and that the Welfare-Path coalition would continue. But Demirel appointed Mesut Yılmaz instead and an investigation was opened against the Welfare Party. The Islamists realize that their party would be dissolved, so in December 1997, they formed a new party, the Virtue Party (VP – Fazilet Partisi) with Recai Kutan as its leader; in January, the Constitutional Court banned the Welfare Party, confiscated its property and banned Erbakan and the party's principal leaders from politics for five years. Each time the Islamist party was dissolved, its successor claimed to be more moderate and less Islamist. By May 1998, Kutan seemed to be abandoning the

hardline Islamism of Erbakan and no longer spoke of leaving NATO or of introducing Islamic banking. He also went to Anıtkabir to pay his respects to Atatürk, a demonstration that the Islamists were willing to join the mainstream of political life.

Nevertheless, the Virtue Party was dissolved by the constitutional court in June 2001. It was described as a hotbed of fundamentalism, especially for the role it had played in promoting the headscarf in its campaign against the secular state. In July, Erbakan's supporters formed Saadet, or the Felicity Party, while in August, the reformists in the Virtue Party formed the Justice and Development Party, or AK Parti, which they claimed was secular. But its leader was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (1949–), the former mayor of Istanbul who had been imprisoned for inciting religious hatred and violation of secularism. He soon became the most popular leader, and polls showed that his party would win the next election.

The Yılmaz-led coalition, with the Democratic Left and the Democrat Turkey Party, lasted until November 1998. Yılmaz resigned on a censure motion brought by the opposition that charged him with corruption as well as links with the 'mafia'. In July, the coalition had already agreed that the election should be held on 25 April 1999. But Ecevit, one of the few politicians not tarred with the brush of corruption, was able to form his coalition with independents on 11 January 1999, with the task of leading the country to elections. The capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, in Kenya on 15 February, changed the mood of the country and improved the chances of nationalists in the coming election.

The nationalistic mood in Turkey explains why the Democratic Left and the Nationalist Action Party acquired the most votes in the general election in April 1999. The results were regarded as a political earthquake – the DLP and NAP emerging as winners while ANAP, TPP and CHP had collapsed. Turkey had moved to the extreme right. Though the Islamist vote had fallen from 19 per cent in 1995 to 15.94%, they had done very well in municipal elections, capturing the major cities of Turkey. The pro-Kurdish party, HADEP, had failed the at national level, but won control of the cities in south-eastern Turkey – Diyarbakır, Batman, Bingöl, Hakkari, Siirt, Şırnak – with large Kurdish populations. Results suggested that there would be a polarization of the conflict with NAP in government.



Ecevit had reinvented himself into an ardent nationalist and abandoned his leftism, while NAP had always flouted its extreme nationalism. His electoral success did not reflect the success of the Left, for Ecevit no longer spoke of changing the system as he had in the 1970s; nor did he associate himself with the leftward trend in Europe. The centre-right – ANAP and the True Path Parties – had collapsed, because voters were tired of the corruption and bickering between the parties and their leaders and preferred to vote Islamist, or in 1999, nationalist right. The voters' anger against Çiller and Yılmaz was responsible for NAP's success.

It was no surprise that when the next coalition was formed, it was composed of the DLP (supposedly centre-left), ANAP (centre-right) and NAP (extreme right). The principal concern of government was the economy and Ecevit noted on 30 May, that 'our economy is facing a serious problem. Political uncertainty, the world crisis, and foreign debt payments totalling US \$30 billion have caused the Turkish economy to enter a bottleneck. We must rapidly revive the economy.' The prognosis looked good, as the coalition promised stability and a willingness to work together. The business community supported the government, while the generals were left to build up the military. They had plans to invest in an arms industry (Israel was expected to supply the technology), investing US \$150 billion over the next ten years to make Turkey the most important regional military power. Turkey would have AWACS and 561 helicopters, giving it the strongest fleet in the region. When he was asked about his country's arms purchases, Baki İlkin, Turkey's ambassador to the US, replied: 'We are restructuring the army so that it has more mobility and rapid action units. We are surrounded by a lot of crises, in the Balkans, Kosovo, internal troubles in Georgia, The Caucasus, and we are following developments in Iraq.' Commenting on his country's political situation, Hüsamettin Cindoruk, a seasoned politician, noted that 'Turkey had failed to emerge from the status of a military republic'.

The devastating earthquakes of 17 August and 12 November 1999 put a damper on Turkey's economic plans. So dismal was the state's response to this tragedy that people believed the earthquakes were a turning-point in the country's political life. Civil society had responded energetically and had become self-reliant and assertive, while the state had weakened. But that proved not to

be the case and the state soon reasserted itself, although the government's performance in rectifying the damage done by the earthquakes remained poor. Perhaps the improved Turkish–Greek relationship that resulted from 'earthquake diplomacy' was a positive outcome, establishing a friendship between the two foreign ministers. But the real issues between the two governments – the Aegean dispute and Cyprus – remained unresolved.

The three-party coalition seemed to be working well, though they could not agree on amending the constitution in order to give Demirel a second term as president when his term ended on 5 May 2000. But the parties agreed to elect Ahmet Necdet Sezer, president of the Constitutional Court, as Turkey's 10th president. He was a liberal, who wanted to see the 1982 constitution amended so as to permit free speech on such issues as Kurdish rights and political Islam. He was independent-minded and often took positions that did not please the parties that had elected him. In February 2001, these qualities led to a spat with the prime minister, which triggered the most serious economic and political crisis in republican history.

#### THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF EU ENTRY

Entry into the European Union had become the mission of government. In October 1999, a Union commission had recommended that Turkey be considered as a candidate, providing it met the so-called Copenhagen criteria, which included economic reform, human rights and the protection of minorities, i.e. the Kurds. The coalition also accepted the IMF's bitter prescription that asked for a 25 per cent inflation rate and a reduction in military expenditure, in order to cut the budget deficit. The three partners had agreed to await the European Court's review of the Öcalan trial before proceeding on the death sentence. NAP's leader, Devlet Bahçeli, seemed to have come round to Ecevit's way of thinking, despite dissent in his party and the demand for Öcalan's execution. But the murder of Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, an academic-journalist, on 21 October, was interpreted as a blow against democratization and rapprochement with Europe. There had been similar murders and the killers were still at large.

Meeting the EU's conditions for accession divided the coalition, despite the compromises of the leaders. A strong government

would have carried out the reforms, not because the EU called for them, but because the reforms would make Turkey into a democratic society, bring it in line with the modern world and establish social peace. But Turkey lacked such a government. She had already made important economic concessions when she joined the customs union in 1996, without any of the substantial benefits that came with membership; that is why membership was so crucial. Polls suggested that around 60–70 per cent of the population favoured joining the EU, but felt pessimistic about the attitude of Europe towards Muslim Turkey. Would a ‘Christian club’ ever allow a Muslim country to become a member? The military’s response was mixed: a retired general declared that EU membership was against Turkey’s history and contradicted the Kemalist revolution, while Chief of Staff General Kivrikoğlu declared that ‘joining the EU was a geopolitical necessity’. The generals were opposed to the EU demand that the military be brought under civil control, as in Europe. PM Ecevit therefore rejected TÜSİAD’s proposal to abolish or diminish the role of the generals in the National Security Council. Big business was in favour of joining and TÜSİAD, its political lobby, insisted that Turkey needed companies that could compete in the global market, and proposed mergers between banks and companies.

The coalition had already lasted for 21 months, the longest and most stable government of the last five years, when a storm broke unexpectedly and created the worst economic crisis in the republic’s history. On Monday, 19 February 2001, PM Ecevit got into a row with President Sezer, when the latter rebuked him for turning a blind eye on corruption in the cabinet and for obstructing investigations. Corruption had been widespread in the coalition and Ecevit, himself incorruptible, had tolerated corrupt ministers. The prime minister stormed out of the meeting, declaring that ‘This is a serious crisis’. His words triggered a run on the financial markets and stocks plunged 7 per cent in a matter of minutes as investors feared that the coalition would fall. Interest rates rose as high as 3000 per cent and the Central Bank lost around US \$5 billion – one-fifth of its foreign reserves – as investors dumped liras for dollars and euros. This was the result of deregulations, which allowed investors to take out their investments and run for safer markets. Turkey’s financial situation had

been weak for some time, and Ecevit's words merely triggered a storm that was about to break.

The IMF again stepped in, having already provided Ankara with US \$11.4 billion in loans in November 2000, and Kemal Derviş, a vice-president at the World Bank, was sent to supervise economic and financial reforms as minister of the economy. The government agreed to privatize such state-owned assets as Turkish Airlines, the state petrol station chain, the oil-refining company, the electricity company, the national oil and gas pipeline company, Vakıfbank, the government-owned savings bank and the state spirits and tobacco monopoly. All this privatization was expected to raise about US \$10 billion, if buyers could be found.

The ongoing economic crisis, the stabilization programme launched in January 2000 and the IMF prescription had already had severe consequences for society at large. The general situation was aggravated now by this new crisis. People were dying for lack of medicines as pharmaceutical companies stopped exports to Turkey. There was massive unemployment as plants shut down, and small businesses were squeezed out as a result of the reforms, which were marked by tight credit, slow production to bring down inflation and higher taxes.

Some NAP ministers obstructed the implementation of economic reform and the World Bank had to apply pressure to get things moving. The National Security Council, alarmed by the situation, discussed the possibility of a social explosion if the economy continued to deteriorate. Already there were demonstrations against the extravagance of the rich, and chants of such slogans as 'the plunderers are here, where are the workers?' and 'the bosses are here, where are the workers?' There were rumours that the coalition would not survive the crisis and there would be an interim government to prepare for fresh elections. As a result, on 16 July, Ecevit warned that speculation about an interim government of technocrats was undermining confidence in democracy and shaking the markets' confidence in the coalition's ability to carry out the IMF reforms. Next day, Enis Öksüz, MHP's minister of transport and communications, who had opposed Kemal Derviş and IMF reforms, resigned.

There was no short-term cure for Turkey's economic ills and the people continued to protest and suffer. Markets had fallen to a new

low and the US dollar had risen to a new high of 1,500,000 liras. While the minimum wage was 100 million liras, unions calculated that the poverty line had risen to 797 million liras for a family of four, forcing workers to live in poverty. In November, workers from all over Turkey marched to Ankara to protest 'unemployment, poverty, corruption and war'. Outside the PM's residence, a mother of three set herself on fire, screaming 'I am starving to death'. In November, when the government issued a report on the state of the economy, 14,875 workplaces had closed down in the first eight months of the year, resulting in a million unemployed. Families were falling apart and crime had increased. The report also showed that the gap between rich and poor had increased and there was no safety net in place to protect the poor and the unemployed.

The attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon, on 11 September 2001, suddenly enhanced Turkey's role in President Bush's 'war against terrorism'. The Turkish government joined the war wholeheartedly, and was rewarded with more loans from Washington. Turkey was to receive an additional US \$13 billion urgently, to help its recovery programme. Ankara opened its airspace and bases to US transport, and Ecevit declared that 'the fact that the US found the evidence against Bin Laden persuasive, persuades us also'. The government agreed to send 90 members of its special forces to Afghanistan, Foreign Minister İsmail Cem declaring that: 'this is not only the US's war; it is Turkey's war as well ... This is not a war against Islam; terrorism has no religion ... or geography'. Ecevit asked that 'friendly and allied countries recognize Turkey's importance and take Turkey's needs into consideration' when the time came for loan requests.

Meanwhile the coalition was making an effort to carry out reforms in order to satisfy the EU. Parliament adopted a package of 34 constitutional amendments to liberalize society; but there was no agreement on such critical issues as abolishing the death penalty, giving the Kurdish people the right to broadcast and have education in Kurdish or to limit the generals' power in the political life of the country. While Mesut Yılmaz and the liberals in the coalition supported these issues, Devlet Bahçeli and the NAP (and many generals) were opposed. Liberals argued that Turkey had no alternative but the EU; Bahçeli and the extreme right opposed the

EU, arguing that demands for ‘the abolition of the death penalty, education and broadcasting in Kurdish were a plot against the unity of Turkey, sponsored by the ‘so-called pro-EU lobby in Turkey and EU officials’. Bahçeli was concerned about the votes of the lower middle classes in Anatolia, who were hurt by the process of globalization and who voted for such parties as the NAP and the Islamists. He wanted to guarantee their votes in the coming election.

The political and economic situation was adversely affected when the 77-year old Ecevit was suddenly taken ill and hospitalized on 4 May 2002. His illness created a crisis, brought on by speculation as to whether he would step down and who would succeed him; the stock market responded by a sharp decline. He was hospitalized again on 17 May, but refused to resign as he believed that his resignation would lead to the break-up of the coalition and early elections, and a political crisis at a time when the country was focused on the economy and accession to the EU. The coalition was paralysed. The three parties knew that an early election might mean that they would not clear the 10 per cent hurdle and would be left out of the next parliament. Polls showed that the new party, the Justice and Development Party, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former Islamist mayor of Istanbul, was considered the favourite in an early election. The only bright spot came in June, when the Turkish [soccer] team reached the semi-final of the World Cup tournament before being defeated by the eventual winners, Brazil.

Devlet Bahçeli’s call, on 7 July, for an early election to be held on 3 November brought the political crisis to a head. The next day, Deputy PM Hüsametdin Özkan, and three others all belonging to the DLP, resigned. More resignations of ministers and legislators followed, until Ecevit announced that he would step down if the coalition no longer enjoyed a majority in parliament. When Foreign Minister İsmail Cem resigned from the cabinet and the party, there was talk of a new political party, led by İsmail Cem, Kemal Derviş and Hüsametdin Özkan, which would govern the country with the support of centre-right parties (ANAP and TPP). The new party would marginalize the extreme nationalists and carry out the reforms necessary to satisfy the EU before the Copenhagen summit on 12 December 2002. However, on 16 August, Ecevit, having

failed to resign, agreed to lead the country to an early election. The DLP dissidents had failed in their political manoeuvre to capture power and establish a totally pro-EU, IMF coalition. They had also burned their boats when they resigned and had no choice but to form a new party to contest the election.

The New Turkey Party was formed on 22 July, with former foreign minister İsmail Cem as its leader. Kemal Derviş, the most significant member of the troika failed to commit himself, leaving the new party weak and colourless. When he resigned in August, he joined the RPP after attempting to bring about a union of the centre-left, even including elements from the centre-right. He wanted to create a political movement – ‘Contemporary social democracy’ he called it – capable of coming to power on its own at the next election and forming a strong government that could carry out the reforms necessary to end the political and economic crises that had plagued Turkey throughout the 1990s. When he failed to form such a movement, Derviş realized that the NTP would fail, as all new parties in Turkey tend to. He therefore joined the only centre-left party, the RPP, which was likely to succeed. Surveys showed that the party under Deniz Baykal was receiving only about 6 per cent of the vote, while the AK party was in the 20 per cent range. Baykal had failed to enter parliament in 1999 and it was doubtful that he would do so in 2002. But once Derviş joined the RPP, the establishment’s media promoted Derviş and the RPP endlessly and the party’s ratings began to increase. By early September the polls showed that the RPP had moved up from 6.9 to 14.3 per cent, thanks to the ‘Kemal Derviş factor’. Meanwhile, the AK Party’s vote had risen to almost 25 per cent. Confronted with this reality, on 18 September, TÜSİAD’s chair Tuncay Özilhan, speaking for the business community, stated his preference for a CHP-AKP coalition, especially if Kemal Derviş was in charge of the economy. This was the hope of the bourgeoisie: that the election of 3 November would produce a two-party coalition so that the RPP would control any ‘extremist, Islamist’ tendencies of its AK Party partners.

The election results on 4 November therefore produced a surprise when the AK Party emerged as the winner with over 34 per cent of the votes and 363 seats, more than the number required to form the government. The RPP had won 19 per cent of the votes

and had 180 seats and became the only opposition. All the other parties had failed to clear the 10 per cent barrier and therefore had no representation in parliament. It seemed that the voters had humiliated and eliminated the former party leaders – Bülent Ecevit, Devlet Bahçeli, Necmettin Erbakan, Mesut Yılmaz, and Tansu Çiller. Even the newly-founded ‘Young Party’ of the business tycoon, Cem Uzan, won only 7.2 per cent of the vote. Professional advertisers had run his campaign and given the voters musical concerts and free food, as well as much publicity in the Uzan-owned media.

What accounted for the success of the AK Party and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan? If the polls were right, the voters wanted a new leader and not a new party and Erdoğan fitted the bill. He was a new kind of leader who did not come out of the system as did most of his rivals. He came out of the rough-and-tumble district of Istanbul called Kasımpaşa, from a humble background, lacked a modern education, and did not speak a foreign language. But he had proved himself as mayor of Istanbul and as a politician who could get things done – and is said to have become a US dollar millionaire in the process. He was the symbol of the party and not its sole leader, and he was being persecuted and prosecuted by the establishment.

Although the AK Party had its roots in political Islam, most of its leaders had moved to the centre and declared their party to be secular democratic and conservative Muslim democrats rather like the Christian democrats in Europe. Surveys showed that the party’s support was 51 per cent rural and 49 per cent urban, and largely male. Housewives (17 per cent) tended to vote AKP while urban working women tended not to. The AK Party was not a continuation of the former parties of political Islam, whereas the recently formed Felicity (Saadet) Party was. The voters marginalized the FP, giving it only 2.5 per cent of the vote even although Necmettin Erbakan, the foremost leader of Turkish political Islam, had campaigned vigorously for the FP and was himself defeated when he ran as an independent. The AKP had come to represent the counter-elite that had emerged in Anatolia; it had finally come to power. That is why the Istanbul daily, *Sabah*, described the election as ‘the Anatolian revolution’.

But the party still relied on Islamist support though only a minority (22 per cent) still called for the Sharia while 43 per cent



opposed it. Overall the fear of the Sharia had declined to just one per cent of the population. AKP took 27 per cent of its vote from the FP's base and 22 per cent from other parties. The party had a broad social base and it would be incorrect to call it the party of 'political Islam'; nor had it won a 'protest vote'. Voters, alarmed by the ongoing economic crisis, massive unemployment and rising prices, placed their hopes in a leader who had managed to govern Istanbul efficiently; they believed he could do the same throughout Turkey.

Since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could not become a member of parliament or the prime minister because of his prison sentence, Abdullah Gül was appointed prime minister on 16 November. He was regarded as caretaker prime minister until the constitution is amended, allowing Erdoğan to take his place.

Abdullah Gül was born in Kayseri in 1950. He has a Ph.D. in economics from Istanbul University and has studied in England. He taught economics and worked for the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia before entering politics in the Welfare Party in 1991. In August 2001, he was one of the founder members of the AKP. He is a man of some experience, perhaps more so than the charismatic Erdoğan.

The Gül government faced a number of interconnected challenges: the new UN (Kofi Annan) plan for the reunification of Cyprus, which has added pressure to find a settlement for the island's problem; the question of EU accession, which will now be taken up in December 2004, after Ankara's human rights record has been reviewed, before a date is given for further talks; negotiations with the IMF and Turkey's huge debt; the problem of the economy at home and related unemployment and poverty; human rights and torture; the headscarf issue and the generals' warning; the possibility of a US war with Iraq in which Ankara, under great pressure from Washington, finally agreed to deploy US troops in order to open a northern front against Baghdad. These monumental challenges are waiting to be met. The government has begun cautiously. They know that while they control parliament and the cabinet, they do not control the state, that is to say the armed forces and the entire bureaucracy.

There is also the danger that this two-party formula might create a political situation which existed in the 1950s: 'a majoritarian

democracy' in which the Democrats claimed that they could do as they wished because they held such an overwhelming majority in parliament. This led to undemocratic behaviour on the part of the DP, with military intervention in May 1960. But the AKP seems to have learned from past experience and should therefore behave responsibly towards the opposition as well as the secular population, which is now in the majority. Moreover, 45 per cent of the electorate is not even represented because of the 10 per cent electoral barrage and that makes the government's position less legitimate.

Prime Minister Gül seemed to be aware of the situation. In his first statement to the press he declared: 'We have no secret agenda. I will take care to ensure transparency and accountability ... We are not going to spring any surprises ... We are not elitist. We are children of the people, people who come from the middle class and poor segments of society. Our priority is to give them some relief. We will work hard. First of all, we will deal with the State Security Courts and the detention period.'

But Abdullah Gül was regarded as the caretaker prime minister, waiting until the constitution had been amended in order to permit Erdoğan to be elected to parliament and become prime minister and party leader. The world was already treating Erdoğan as though he was at least the co-leader. He made statements and went on visits around the world where he was treated as the true leader. He visited Athens, Copenhagen, New York, Washington, Moscow, and Davos and he was given the red-carpet treatment in all these places. The constitutional amendment was passed in January 2003 and Erdoğan was elected to parliament on 9 March in the Sürt by-election. Abdullah Gül resigned on 11 March and President Sezer appointed Erdoğan as the new PM.

Meanwhile on 1 March, Turkey's establishment experienced a trauma resulting from parliament's defeat of the government's motion to permit the deployment in Anatolia of 62,000 US troops intended to open a northern front in the war against Iraq. Some one hundred MPs from the governing party voted against the motion in collaboration with the opposition. The vote was a major surprise because one month earlier, on 6 February, parliament had agreed to allow US forces to modernize their bases and transport heavy equipment to northern Iraq via Turkey. Virtually everyone

was convinced – the media, big business, the generals, the politicians – that Turkey would be an active member of the US led coalition. The ‘rewards’ were thought to be considerable: US financial aid and soft loans worth billions of dollars necessary to get a crisis-ridden economy on its feet and influence in post-war Iraq, as well as construction sub-contracts to rebuild a war-torn Iraq. The government’s defeat showed that the governing party was deeply divided. In electing the AKP, the voters had swept aside much of the old political establishment and opened the door to a new generation of leaders from the Anatolian heartland. Unlike earlier party governments, the AKP was not a tightly-controlled political party doing the bidding of its leader and manipulated by the elites. It was responsive to popular opinion and the anti-war demonstration had been significant in directing the negative vote. As some Turks noted, the concept of democracy had changed as a result.

The Erdoğan government now has much to get on with. The damaged relationship with Washington makes Erdoğan’s task much harder though both sides are already trying to repair the damage. The Cyprus question remains unresolved after the failure of the UN plan to reunite the island, and so do the relations with the EU. Washington’s post-war policies in the region will have a direct impact on Turkey’s future. How the AKP government deals with these problems will be a momentous challenge, especially for an inexperienced and divided party.

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# Chronology of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey

## THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 1260–1923

- 1071 Battle of Manzikert opens the way to Turkic invasions of Anatolia.
- 1096 The first crusade.
- 1207 Seljuks capture Antalya from the Byzantines.
- 1219 Mongols begin the conquest of Anatolia; they conquer Iran and establish the Ilhanid dynasty, ruling from 1256 to 1336.
- 1261–1300 Foundation of gazi principalities of Menteşe, Aydın, Saruhan, Karesi and Ottoman in western Anatolia.

### 1. *Osman Gazi, c.1290–1324*

### 2. *Orhan Gazi, 1324–1362*

- 1326 Bursa conquered, becoming the first capital of the Ottoman state.
- 1331 İznik (Nicae) conquered.
- 1336 Fall of the Mongol Empire in Iran.
- 1345 Ottomans annex the beylik of Karesi, opening the road to Europe.
- 1354 Occupation of Gallipoli and Ankara.
- 1361 Conquest of Adrianople (Edirne), the second Ottoman capital.

### 3. *Sultan Murad I, 1362–1389*

- 1363–1365 Expansion into Thrace and southern Bulgaria.
- 1371–1373 Victory at Chermanon over Byzantium; Ottoman suzerainty recognized over the Balkans.

- 1385 Sofia conquered.  
 1387 Antalya conquered from the Hamid Emirate.  
 1389 (15 June) Battle of Kosovo and defeat of Balkan coalition.
4. *Bayezid I, Yıldırım (the Thunderbolt), 1389–1402*
- 1396 Battle of Nicopolis, marking the defeat of the crusaders.  
 1402 Battle of Ankara and destruction of Bayezid's empire by Timur.  
 1402–1413 Interregnum: civil war among Bayezid's sons with the victory of Mehmed I.
5. *Mehmed I, 1413–1421*
- Consolidated Ottoman power after the civil war.
6. *Murad II, 1421–1451*
- 1423–1430 Ottoman–Venetian struggle for Salonica.  
 1425 İzmir annexed and western Anatolia reconquered.  
 1439 Serbia annexed.  
 1444 Battle of Varna; Ottomans regain control of the Balkans.  
 1448 Second battle of Kosovo.
7. *Mehmed II, Fatih (the Conqueror), 1451–1481*
- 1453 Conquest of Constantinople.  
 1459 Morea conquered.  
 1461 Greek empire of Trabzon conquered.  
 1463–1479 War with Venice.  
 1468 Karaman conquered.  
 1475 Conquest of Genoese colonies in the Crimea.
8. *Bayezid II, 1481–1512*
- 1485–1491 War with the Mamluks of Egypt.  
 1493 Jews expelled from Spain; set up a printing press in Istanbul and then Salonica.  
 1499–1503 Wars against Venice.
9. *Yavuz Sultan Selim I, 1512–1520*
- 1514 Defeat of the Safavid ruler, Shah İsmail at Chaldiran.  
 1516 Eastern Anatolia and Syria annexed.  
 1517 Conquer of Egypt; the Sharif of Mecca accepts Ottoman sovereignty.
10. *Sultan Süleyman I (The Law Giver/the Magnificent), 1520–1566*
- 1521 Conquest of Belgrade and Rhodes (1522).  
 1526 Battle of Mohacs; Hungary becomes an Ottoman vassal.  
 1529 First siege of Vienna.  
 1534 Conquest of Tabriz and Baghdad from the Safavids.

- 1537–1540 War against Venice.
- 1538 Naval Battle of Dui in India against the Portuguese.
- 1541 Hungary annexed.
- 1553–1555 War with the Safavids.
- 1565 Siege of Malta.

*11. Selim II, 1566–1574*

- 1567 Armenian community sets up printing press.
- 1569 Capitulation privileges granted to France to improve trade.
- 1570 Capture of Tunis and Cyprus.
- 1571 Ottoman naval defeat at the Battle of Lepanto.
- 1573 Peace with Venice and the Holy Roman Empire.

*12. Murad III, 1574–1595*

- 1578–1590 Annexation of Azerbaijan.
- 1580 Capitulations granted to England.
- 1584–1592 Devaluation and growing population pressure lead to inflation and social turmoil. Janissary revolt in Istanbul (1589); revolts continue into 1592.
- 1593 War against the Hapsburgs.

*13. Mehmed III, 1595–1603*

- 1596ff Celali rebellions in Anatolia; continue until mid-seventeenth century.
- 1603–1639 Wars with Iran.

*14. Ahmad I, 1603–1617*

- 1606 Peace with Austria.
- 1609 Attempts to suppress Celali rebellions in Anatolia.
- 1612 Dutch capitulations.
- 1618 Peace with Iran; Ottomans lose Azerbaijan.

*15. Osman II, 1618–1622*

- 1621 Invasion of Poland.
- 1622 Osman assassinated.

*16. Mustafa I, 1622–1623*

*17. Murad IV, 1623–1640*

- 1623 End of fratricide; Prince İbrahim remains the only surviving Ottoman prince. For the sake of dynastic succession, he is not killed but isolated in the Palace and allowed to lead a life of debauchery.
- 1624–1628 Rebellion in Istanbul and Anatolia.
- 1627 Ottoman Greeks set up printing press.
- 1637 Cossacks capture Azov on the Black Sea.
- 1624–1639 War with Iran and fall of Baghdad.
- 1638 Ottomans recapture Baghdad from Safavids.

18. *İbrahim I, 1640–1648*

- 1640 Azov recaptured.
- 1645–1669 Wars with Venice.
- 1648 İbrahim assassinated.

19. *Mehmed IV, 1648–1687*

- 1648–1651 Regency under Mehmed's mother, Valide Sultan Kösem.
- 1649–1655 Anarchy in Istanbul; Janissaries control Istanbul, and landed notables Anatolia. Venice continues blockade of the Dardanelles.
- 1656–1659 Age of the Grand Vizier begins under Köprülü Mehmed, who restores order in the empire.
- 1661–1676 Grand Vizierate of Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha.
- 1663 War against Austria.
- 1669 Peace with Venice.
- 1672–1676 War with Poland and Treaty of Zuravno.
- 1676–1683 Grand Vizierate of Kara Mustafa.
- 1677–1681 Struggle with Russia for the Ukraine.
- 1683 Second siege of Vienna.
- 1684 Austria, Poland and Venice form Holy League against Ottomans.
- 1686 Fall of Buda; Russia joins the alliance; Venetians invade the Morea.
- 1687 Second battle of Mohacs; military rebels depose Mehmed IV.

20. *Suleyman II, 1687–1691*

- 1688 Austria captures Belgrade.
- 1689 Austrians advance to Kosovo; Russians in the Crimea.
- 1689–1691 Grand vizierate of Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa. Carries out reforms and recaptures Belgrade from Austria in 1690.

21. *Mustafa II, 1695–1703*

- 1695 Fall of Azov to Russia.
- 1696 Ottoman counter-attack in Hungary.
- 1697 Ottoman defeat at Zenta.
- 1698–1702 Grand Vizierate of Köprülü Hüseyin.
- 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz; marks a turning-point in relations between Ottomans and Hapsburgs. Ottomans now forced on the defensive and begin to take European threat seriously.
- 1700 Peace with Russia.
- 1703 Military rebellion: Mustafa II deposed.

22. *Abmed III, 1703–1730 (Tulip Period)*

- 1709 Ottomans grant asylum to Charles XII of Sweden.
- 1711 Peter I (the Great) of Russia defeated at Battle of Pruth; but rebellions in the provinces of Egypt and Syria.

- 1713 Treaty with Russia: Ottomans recover Azov.  
 1714–1718 War with Venice and Austria (1716), leading to fall of Belgrade.  
 1718–1730 Grand vizierate of Damad İbrahim Pasha.  
 1718 Peace of Passarowitz with Austria and Venice; Ottomans forced to cede parts of Serbia and Wallachia while recovering Morea from Venice.  
 1723–1727 War with Iran.  
 1727 Hungarian convert, İbrahim Müteferrika sets up first printing press. Because of opposition from the conservatives, the press is shut down in 1743 and reopened in 1784.  
 1729 Count Alexander de Bonneval, a French officer, invited to Istanbul to modernize the engineer and bombardier corps of the Ottoman army.  
 1730 Patrona Halil rebellion: Ahmad III deposed, ending Tulip Period.

23. *Mahmud I, 1730–1754*

- 1730–1736 War with Iran and loss of Azerbaijan.  
 1736–1739 War with Russia and Austria.  
 1739 Peace Treaty with Austria and Russia: Belgrade recovered.  
 1740 Ottoman–Swedish alliance against Russia.  
 1743–1746 War with Iran.

24. *Osman III, 1754–1757*

25. *Mustafa III, 1757–1774*

- 1768–1774 War with Russia.  
 1768 Baron de Tott arrives to modernize the army (see 1729).  
 1773 Rebellion in Egypt.

26. *Abdülhamid I 1774–1789*

- 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca: crushing defeat for the Ottomans at the hands of Russia; Crimea and northern coast of Black Sea become independent. Catherine the Great obtains right to protect Orthodox Church in Istanbul. This treaty marks beginning of the Eastern Question. Sultan recognized as Caliph of all Muslims, a claim confirmed under subsequent treaties.  
 1783 Russia annexes the Crimean Khanate.  
 1784 Printing press reopened.  
 1787–1788 War with Russia.  
 1788 Sweden declares war on Russia.

27. *Selim III, 1789–1807*

- 1789 Revolution in France.  
 1792 Treaty of Jassy.



- 1798–1801 Napoleon's army invades Egypt and occupies Ottoman province with ease; for first time since crusades of the eleventh century, heartlands of Islam invaded by a Christian power.
- 1801 Beginning of revolt in Serbia, which becomes autonomous in 1815.
- 1804 Russian annexation of Armenia and northern Azerbaijan.
- 1805 Mehmed Ali begins rule in Egypt as Ottoman governor and establishes a dynasty that lasts until 1952.
- 1807 Selim killed by reactionaries and his reform programme crushed by Janissary revolt.

### 28. *Mustafa IV, 1807–1808*

### 29. *Mahmud II, 1808–1839*

- 1808 Document of Alliance signed between Porte and provincial notables.
- 1812 Treaty of Bucharest.
- 1821 Beginning of Greek War of Independence.
- 1826 Mahmud destroys Janissaries after their failure to crush the Greek insurrection, which exposes weakness of the Janissary army. Mahmud now carries out reforms to establish a new system.
- 1829 Great Powers establish Kingdom of Greece.
- 1832 Mehmed Ali of Egypt defeats Ottomans at battle of Konya.
- 1833 Treaty of Hünkâr-Iskelesi with Russia, marking zenith of Russian power in Istanbul.
- 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Trade Convention establishes free trade regime in the empire.
- 1839 Battle of Nezib.

### 30. *Abdülmeçid I, 1839–1861*

- 1839 Reform programme known as *Tanzimat* launched with Imperial Rescript of Gülhane.
- 1853–1856 Crimean War between the Ottomans, England and France, and Russia.
- 1856 Treaty of Paris. The Porte forced to move into 'the European political, cultural and economic orbit'. The Porte launches reform charter, the Imperial Reform Edict.
- 1858 Land Code establishing private ownership in the empire.

### 31. *Abdülaziz, 1861–1876*

- 1868 The Ottomans, taking the Red Cross as a model, establish the 'Red Crescent Society'.
- 1869 Galatasaray Lycée opens in Istanbul.
- 1870 Bulgarian Church created by the Porte, independent of authority of Greek Orthodox Church.

- 1875      6 *October*: The Sublime Porte declares bankruptcy.  
 1876      Abdülaziz forced to abdicate and commits suicide.  
 International conference held by ambassadors of Great Powers to discuss reform in the Ottoman Empire.  
 First constitution announced 23 December 1876.

32. *Abdülhamid II, 1876–1909*

- 1876      31 *August*: Abdülhamid succeeds Murad V, who is declared insane.  
 1877      19 *March*: Parliament convened.  
 24 *March*: Russia declares war to support rebellions in the Balkans that began in 1875.  
 1878      *February*: Constitution shelved.  
 3 *March*: Treaty of San Stefano ending war with Russia signed, forcing Porte to make major concessions.  
*June*: Congress of Berlin revises the Treaty of San Stefano in Porte's favour.  
 1881      Formation of Ottoman Public Debt Administration to regulate Ottoman finances.  
 1885      Bulgaria occupies eastern Rumelia.  
 1896–1897      Insurrection in Crete; successful war against Greece.  
 1898      Kaiser Wilhelm II's state visit begins on 18 October; he proclaims himself a friend of the Muslim people.  
 1908      Military mutiny and the restoration of the Constitution on 24 July.  
 1909      Abortive counter-revolution of 13 April designed to destroy the CUP, and Armenian massacres in Adana carried out to instigate European intervention. Abdülhamid deposed.

33. *Mehmed V (Mehmed Reşad), 1909–1918*

- 1911      War with Italy in Libya.  
 1912      Conservative military intervention against CUP leads to its downfall.  
 1912–1913      Balkan Wars and Ottoman defeats.  
 1913      Unionists seize power on 23 January.  
 1914      In April, the Porte sends troops and distributes arms to the Armenian community in Bitlis province to protect it from assaults by local Kurdish tribes.  
 In July, the Chamber votes for 40,000 pounds for the salaries and expenses of the two European Inspectors-General of the 'Armenian' provinces and their staff to carry out reform.  
 2 *August*: Secret treaty with Germany after beginning of war in Europe.  
 1915      Throughout the year, Gallipoli campaign and Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia threatens existence of the

- Ottoman Empire.  
 Secret agreements signed between England, France and Russia to partition the Ottoman Empire after the war.
- 1916 *June*: Arab revolt in the Hijaz; British advance into Palestine and Iraq.
- 1917 Revolution in Russia in March and November eases pressure on Ottomans.
- 1918 *28 October*: Ottomans sign armistice with England.

#### 34. *Mehmed VI (Vahdettin), 1918–1922*

- 1919 *28 March*: Italians land at Antalya, pre-empting Greeks.  
*14 May*: Greek army invades İzmir.  
*19 May*: Mustafa Kemal lands in Samsun, marking beginning of war of liberation.  
*28 June*: Balıkesir congress to organize resistance; followed by other regional congresses, Erzurum (23 July) and Sivas (4 September). In Erzurum and Sivas, delegates agree that Anatolia belongs to Turks and Kurds.
- 1920 *18 March*: Istanbul parliament meets for last time and adjourns *sine die* after protesting British actions.  
*23 April*: Grand National Assembly opens in Ankara, electing Mustafa Kemal as president.  
*10 August*: Treaty of Sèvres partitioning Asia Minor; treaty rejected by Nationalists is never enforced.
- 1921 *21 January*: National Assembly passes Law of Fundamental Organization, marking formation of a new state.  
*16 March*: Nationalists signed Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union.
- 1922 *9 September*: Nationalists re-enter İzmir, marking defeat of Greek army.  
*1 November*: National Assembly abolishes the sultanate but retains the caliphate; Vahdettin, the last sultan, flees on a British warship.

#### THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, 1923–2002

- 1923 *8 April*: Mustafa Kemal announces formation of People's Party; 'Republican' is added later and it becomes the RPP.  
*24 July*: Treaty of Lausanne signed, recognizing the state of Turkey.  
*13 October*: Ankara is declared capital of the new Turkey.  
*29 October*: Republic of Turkey proclaimed and Mustafa Kemal elected president.
- 1924 *3 March*: Caliphate abolished and Ottoman family exiled.

- This is a setback for conservative opposition; state begins to control organized Islam.
- 1925 *17 November*: Opposition to Mustafa Kemal forms Progressive Republican Party.  
*11 February*: Kurdish tribes led by Sheikh Said rebel against Republican regime.  
*3 June*: Progressive Republican Party dissolved and opposition crushed, enabling Mustafa Kemal to launch his radical reform programme to secularize state and society.  
*25 November*: Fez banned and 'Hat Law' passed.  
*30 November*: Dervish Orders proscribed.  
*17 December*: Soviet–Turkish Treaty of Friendship (renewed in 1935).
- 1926 *17 February*: Secular civil code introduced giving equal civil rights to women; criminal code follows on 1 March.
- 1927 *28 October*: First republican census gives a population of 13.6 million.
- 1928 *9 April*: Reference to Islam as 'religion of the state' removed from constitution.  
*9 August*: Roman alphabet adopted, thereby severing the republic culturally and intellectually from its Ottoman past.
- 1930 *3 April*: Women given the vote in local elections.  
*12 August*: Mustafa Kemal allows the founding of Free Republican Party but has it dissolved on 17 November when it attracts popular support.  
*23 December*: Islamic demonstration in Menemen, western Turkey, leads to the murder of an officer and forces the regime to rethink its ideology.
- 1931 *10–18 May*: At the RPP's convention, the 'six arrows' – Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Laicism (state control over religion), Statism and Revolutionism/Reformism – adopted as regime's ideological platform.
- 1932 *19 February*: People's Houses founded to educate and spread regime's ideology around the country.  
*18 July*: Turkey joins League of Nations and rejoins the West.  
*26 September*: First Language Congress launched so as to make Turkish principal language of the new nation.
- 1933 *30 January*: Hitler comes to power in Germany.  
*9 February*: Balkan Entente between Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania signed.
- 1934 *9 February*: Turkey, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Greece sign the Balkan Pact.  
*16 June*: Iran's Shah Reza Pahlevi's state visit to Turkey.  
*26 June*: Law requiring all citizens of Turkey to take last names.  
*26 November*: Grand National Assembly (GNA) bestows the name Atatürk ('Father Turk') upon Mustafa Kemal and

- abolishes all Ottoman titles of honour and rank such as Pasha, Bey, Hanım and Gazi.
- 5 December: Turkish women given right to vote and hold office.
- 1935 25 January: Aya Sofya mosque in Istanbul restored as a museum.
- 3 October: Mussolini's Italy invades Abyssinia; Turkey more fearful of Italian designs on western Anatolia.
- 7 November: Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression with USSR renewed for 10 years.
- 1 December: Non-Aggression Pact signed with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.
- 1936 8 June: New Labour law passed forbidding strikes and lock-outs and introducing compulsory arbitration.
- 18 July: Civil war in Spain; Turkey supports Republicans.
- 20 July: Montreux Convention signed, permitting Turkey to militarize the straits.
- 25 October: Rome–Berlin Axis signed.
- 25 November: Anti-Comintern Pact signed between Germany and Japan.
- 1937 5 January: Article 2 of Constitution amended to read: The Turkish State is Republican, Nationalist, Populist, Statist, Secular and Revolutionary.
- March–September: uprising by Kurdish tribes crushed.
- 8 July: Turkey signs Saadabad Pact of Friendship with Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.
- 1 November: Atatürk appoints Celal Bayar as prime minister, replacing İsmet İnönü, seen as move against statist in RPP.
- 1938 5 July: Turkey begins to occupy *sancak* of Alexandretta, France having virtually conceded it separate status in May 1937. It becomes a part of Turkey in June 1939 following Franco-Turkish agreement.
- 10 November: Atatürk dies after prolonged illness.
- 11 November: İsmet İnönü voted in unanimously as president.
- 26 December: At the Extra-Ordinary Congress of the RPP, Atatürk is proclaimed party's 'founder and eternal leader' and İnönü the 'permanent National Chief'.
- 28 December: İnönü introduces his policy of reconciliation, with opposition to Atatürk and Kemalism.
- 1939 12 January: Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Atatürk's foreign minister since March 1925 and a known Anglophile, is appointed to London.
- 18 January: National Defence Law gives government broad powers to regulate economy.

- 26 *March*: In general election, many staunch Kemalists left out while a number of old opposition elected.
- 8 *May*: Ankara signs trade agreement with Germany.
- 12 *May*: England and Turkey sign joint declaration of friendship and mutual assistance in case of aggression or war in the Mediterranean region.
- 29 *May*: İnönü permits formation of Independent Group which would act as opposition in the assembly.
- 26 *June*: Turkey and France sign non-aggression pact; France agrees to return Alexandretta (Hatay) to Turkey; Turkey annexes Hatay on 20 June.
- 23 *August*: German–Soviet Pact signed; for Turkey, pact marks end of any possibility of tripartite guarantee against threat of fascist aggression.
- 1 *September*: Germany invades Poland and begins World War II. Turkish foreign minister goes to Moscow for talks but receives no guarantees. Turkey declares her neutrality when Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- 17 *October*: The Turkish government believed that Moscow sought to change the Montreux convention of 1936, leading to suspicion in Ankara of Moscow's motives.
- 19 *October*: Anglo–French–Turkish Fifteen Year Mutual Assistance and Alliance signed in Ankara.
- 1 *November*: President İnönü declares Turkey will remain neutral while maintaining her friendship with Britain and Soviet Union.
- 1940 18 *January*: Another 'National Defence Law' passed to prevent hoarding and profiteering.
- 1940 2 *November*: Fascist Italy attacks Greece. Turkey's support becomes even more vital to Britain. Meanwhile, Hitler tries to buy off Stalin by concessions at Turkey's expense.
- 1941 28 *February*: Hitler writes to İnönü, reminding him that Turkey's interests lie with the 'new order' Hitler is creating in Europe; letter received well in Ankara.
- 25 *March*: Turco–Soviet Mutual Declaration of Neutrality.
- 18 *June*: Non-aggression pact with Germany after Germans occupy Balkans.
- 21 *June*: Germany invades Russia, easing fears of a German invasion of Anatolia and encouraging pan-Turkist activities.
- 26 *June*: Law passed allowing call to prayer (*ezan*) be made in Turkish not Arabic; law is repealed on 16 June 1950.
- 9 *October*: Turco–German Trade agreement, marking rapprochement with Berlin. Later in month, Turkish generals tour Russian front as German guests.
- 7 *December*: Japan bombs US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor

- and US joins war. Hitler declares war on United States of America on 11 December.
- 1942 *11 November*: Encouraged by German victories, government enacts so-called Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) that discriminates against Turkey's non-Muslim minorities.
- 1943 *2 February*: German army surrenders at Stalingrad after long siege, marking turning-point in war and Turkey's domestic and foreign policy.
- 1944 *15 May*: Wealth Tax law annulled.  
*18 May*: Government begins to prosecute anti-Soviet Turrists to demonstrate its change of policy.
- 1945 *7 May*: Germany surrenders.  
*7 June*: Demand for political liberalization from member of RPP. On same day, Moscow proposes modification of Turco-Soviet border and joint defence of the straits as condition for renewing 1925 Treaty which expired in November.  
*7 July*: Businessman Nuri Demirağ founds National Development Party.  
*6 September*: US Congress delegation arrives in Turkey to pressure government to liberalize its economic policies.  
*21 September*: Adnan Menderes and Refik Koraltan expelled from RPP.  
*1 November*: President İnönü calls for formation of a serious opposition party.  
*3 December*: Having resigned as a deputy on 28 September, Celal Bayar resigns from RPP in order to form a new party, the Democrat Party.  
*4 December*: Offices of newspaper *Tan*, which has criticized government, destroyed by a crowd organized by state officials; incident takes place while Istanbul is under martial law.
- 1946 *7 January*: Democrat Party formed by Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Refik Koraltan and Fuad Köprülü.  
*5–7 April*: The US battleship *Missouri* visits Istanbul, a symbol of US support for Turkey against Soviet pressure.  
*5 June*: Law permitting direct elections instead of two-tier elections passed.  
*21 July*: Early general election, held before the DP could organize and under pressure from state apparatus, ends in RPP victory.  
*22 August*: Turkey rejects Soviet offer of joint defence of the straits.  
*4 December*: Martial law is extended for further six months.
- 1947 *12 March*: Truman Doctrine – US promises support for Turkey and Greece against Soviet subversion. Turkey enters cold war.  
*12 July*: İnönü declares himself a non-partisan president and

- supports legitimacy of the DP; hardline Prime Minister Recep Peker forced to resign on 9 September.
- 1949 *1 August*: As cold war continues, president informs Congress it is important for Middle East that Turkey be fully armed.
- 1950 *9 March*: Turkey and Iran recognize Israel.  
*14 May*: Democrat Party wins overwhelming electoral victory in general election and Adnan Menderes forms new government on 22 May.  
*25 July*: Democrats decide to send troops to Korea.
- 1952 *21 February*: Turkey and Greece join NATO.  
*3 March*: General Eisenhower, NATO's commander, arrives in Turkey.
- 1953 *29 May*: 500th anniversary of conquest of Constantinople is celebrated for first time, marking a turn towards neo-Ottomanism' and increasing tension with Greece over Cyprus.
- 1954 *2 May*: General election – Democrat Party wins a crushing victory, which seems to confirm its popularity and therefore increases autocratic tendencies of leadership.  
*20 August*: Mammoth demonstration in Athens in support of independence of Cyprus from Britain and union with Greece. On 28 May, PM Menderes declares that Greece will never acquire Cyprus.
- 1955 *24 February*: Baghdad Pact signed between Iraq and Turkey; later joined by Iran, Pakistan and Britain. The Democrats believe that Turkey is playing a pivotal role in the region on behalf of the West.  
*6/7 September*: Anti-Greek violence in Istanbul and İzmir sponsored by government to show public sentiment on Cyprus issue; events get out of hand and prove an embarrassment to government.
- 1956 *31 October*: Suez war – Israel, Britain and France attack Egypt. In Hungary, uprising against Soviet domination.
- 1957 *27 October*: Democrats win general election but their majority declines sharply because of the falling economy and PM Menderes's increasingly undemocratic behaviour.
- 1958 *26 May*: Nine army officers put on trial accused of conspiracy against government; the first sign of political dissent in armed forces.  
*14 July*: Military coup in Iraq leads to overthrow of monarchy and end of Baghdad Pact, which is soon to be called the Central Treaty Organization, or CENTO.  
*20 July*: US marines land in Beirut using Incirlik in Turkey as base.  
*23 August*: Government devalues Turkish lira by 321%,



- introduces the IMF's stability programme and receives US \$359 million in loans.
- 1959 *17 February*: PM Menderes survives plane crash in London where he attends conference on Cyprus; his survival seen as a miracle and heightens his charisma.  
*19 February*: London Agreement between Turkey, Greece and Britain is signed, leading to formation of Republic of Cyprus in 1960.  
*31 July*: Turkey applies for associate membership of the European Community.
- 1960 *28 April*: Martial law declared in response to student demonstrations in Ankara and Istanbul. Army enters political arena and government puts an end to all political activity.  
*27 May*: Military coup overthrows DP government and rules through junta called National Unity Committee (NUC). DP is closed down on 29 September and its members put on trial for violating constitution.  
*13 November*: Fourteen radical members of NUC who oppose restoration of political power to civilians are purged.
- 1961 *28 February*: Justice Party formed and ten other parties follow in preparation for restoration of political life on 25 March.  
*11 July*: New, liberal constitution accepted by NUC after referendum of 9 July.  
*17 September*: Adnan Menderes and two of his ministers are hanged; soldiers execute Menderes in order to destroy his charisma!  
*28 October*: General election leads to series of unstable coalition governments until 1965, when Justice Party wins the majority and forms cabinet.
- 1962 *23 February*: Junior officers dissatisfied with outcome of post-1960 regime, carry out a coup but it is aborted.
- 1963 *20/21 May*: Talat Aydemir's second coup foiled; this time he is hanged.
- 1964 *4 June*: President Johnson's letter to PM İnönü warns him not to depend on NATO if Turkey intervenes in Cyprus and has a confrontation with Moscow. Inter-communal violence in Cyprus paralyses terms of 1959 London Agreement; also marks beginning of anti-Americanism in Turkey, especially after it becomes public on 13 January 1966.
- 1965 *30 June*: Süleyman Demirel, who became leader of JP on 28 November 1964, describes left-of-centre policy adopted by RPP as 'road to communism'. Polarization between Left and Right sharpened.  
*10 October*: Justice Party wins general election, ending period of coalition governments.
- 1966 *20 December*: PM Kosygin of Soviet Union pays state visit to

- Turkey, acknowledging working relations that have developed since 1965.
- 1967 *20/21 April*: Colonels in Greece seize power, overthrowing democratic government; US no longer has to rely on Turkey's bases.  
*5 June*: The Six-Day War between Israel and Arabs ends in an overwhelming Israeli victory.  
*29 November*: War between Turkey and Greece averted after Greek forces withdraw from Turkish villages on Cyprus when faced with threat of Turkish intervention.
- 1968 *29 May*: In France, General de Gaulle dissolves parliament in order to deal with student demonstrations that have paralysed Paris since 13 May. French example influences leftist students in Turkey, who become more militant: they begin to demonstrate against NATO and Turkey's alliance with US.  
*15 July*: Demonstration against US 6th Fleet's visit to Turkey's ports continues throughout the month and often becomes violent.  
*20 August*: Soviet Union occupies Czechoslovakia to put an end to 'Prague Spring'; Soviet action splits the Left in Turkey.
- 1969 *14 January*: US ambassador Robert Komer's car set on fire by students at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, a sign of increasing violence. On the right, Colonel Alparslan Türkeş's neo-Fascist party training so-called 'komandos'.  
*16 February*: 'Bloody Sunday' in Istanbul when demonstration against US 6th Fleet is attacked by rightist militants, assisted by police; two youths killed and about two hundred wounded. Youth violence continues until military intervention on 12 March 1971.
- 1970 *26 January*: Necmettin Erbakan, Independent MP for Konya, founds National Order Party, first party in Turkey committed to political Islam, representing Anatolia's lower middle class, who are suffering because of the rise of large corporations and monopolies in western Turkey.  
*15/16 June*: Massive and bloody workers' demonstration in Istanbul region leads to declaration of martial law.  
*28 August*: The lira is devalued by sixty-six per cent, reflecting the country's economic crisis.  
*28 December*: National Security Council under President Sunay meets to discuss memorandum presented by General Muhsim Batur, Commander of Air Force, warning of unrest in armed forces.
- 1971 *12 March*: Commanders present memorandum to PM Demirel and force him to resign; they take over the reins of government. Turkey ruled by 'above-party' cabinets until election of 1973.

- 1972      27 *April*: Martial law declared in eleven provinces and a reign of terror follows, especially against the Left.  
 14 *May*: İsmet İnönü resigns as RPP's leader after thirty-three years and Bülent Ecevit elected in his place, representing historic change that would revive the fortunes of the party.
- 1973      6 *April*: Retired Admiral Fahri Korutürk elected 6th president after political parties refuse to elect military's candidate.  
 14 *October*: In the general election, no party wins an overall majority; after much bargaining, a coalition agreed between Ecevit's RPP and Erbakan's National Salvation Party, and formed on 25 January 1974. Islamists share political power for first time.
- 1974      15 *July*: Greek National Guard carries out coup against Archbishop Makarios, triggering Turkish intervention as one of guarantor powers. Turkish army expands its control over the island during second military operation in August.  
 17 *September*: Ecevit tenders his resignation, counting on his popularity to win election and form RPP government. Rightist parties refuse to sanction early general election and form their own coalition.
- 1975      13 *February*: In Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots proclaim statehood.  
 31 *March*: First Nationalist Front coalition with Demirel as PM of centre-right, supported by Islamist MSP and neo-fascist MHP; youth violence increases with coalition partners protecting rightist militants.
- 5/6/75      5 *June*: First Nationalist Front coalition collapses.  
 1977      5 *June*: Ecevit's RPP emerges as first party for general election, but with insufficient majority to form successful government alone. His minority fails to obtain vote of confidence on 3 July and Ecevit resigns.  
 21 *July*: Demirel forms second Nationalist Front government, composed of centre-right, Islamists and neo-fascists.  
 31 *December*: Coalition falls as a result of internal contradictions and squabbling between parties.
- 1978      17 *January*: Ecevit forms an unstable coalition with Independents, marred by rampant corruption among Independent ministers; country continues to be plagued with youth violence and instability.  
 2 *October*: The neo-fascist Nationalist Action Party calls for proclamation of martial law, i.e. military intervention to deal with violence.  
 9 *October*: In Ankara, 7 Members of the Workers' Party shot; press constantly report assassinations of liberal academics and perpetrators rarely caught.

- 25 *December*: Press describes attacks on Alevi community by neo-fascist gangs in the province of Kahramanmaraş as civil war; fifteen people die and martial law declared in thirteen provinces.
- 1979 10 *January*: Shah of Iran flees the country in revolution and Ayatullah Khomeini arrives in February to consolidate Islamic revolution. Need for a stable Turkey, which politicians could not provide, becomes more critical for the West.  
14 *October*: PM Ecevit, whose political position weakens as a result of violence and attacks from the Right, loses support in Senate and by-elections and resigns; Demirel forms a minority JP government.
- 1980 2 *January*: Generals call for national unity among parties and issue a guarded warning.  
24 *January*: Government introduces a radical deflationary economic programme, devaluing lira by 33 per cent. Programme is designed to bring Turkey in line with trend towards globalization and be enacted under an authoritarian regime.  
19 *July*: Former PM Nihat Erim, who led a military-backed cabinet in March 1971, assassinated – one of many murders taking place in the country.  
12 *September*: Generals seize power, complaining of anarchy reigning in the country and the need to strengthen state; they establish National Security Council and proclaim martial law.  
21 *September*: Cabinet announced with retired admiral as PM; political life comes to an end and some party leaders detained, later to be arrested, tried and imprisoned.
- 1981 29 *June*: Generals set up constituent assembly to write new, authoritarian constitution to replace liberal constitution of 1961.
- 1982 7 *November*: New constitution put to referendum and accepted by 91.3 per cent of the ballot.  
19 *November*: Kenan Evren becomes 7th president of Republic.
- 1983 3 *March*: Constituent Assembly passes new political parties law and sends it to generals for approval. In May, ‘new parties’ begin to emerge and some are banned by generals because they are judged to be reincarnation of old parties.  
6 *November*: Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party wins general election and presents his government on 13 December; continuing economic policies set in motion on 24 January 1980; Özal continues to rely on martial law to maintain law and order.  
15 *November*: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus established; only recognized by Turkey.
- 1987 6 *September*: Referendum allows banned party leaders to participate in politics again and Demirel and Ecevit take charge, formed by their proxies.

- 29 *November*: Özal calls early general election before his rivals have time to organize; wins with smaller majority and forms his new cabinet on 21 December.
- 1989 26 *March*: Özal's party suffers major defeat in local elections because of corruption and economic policies' unpopularity with both voters and private sector.  
 17 *August*: Chief of General Staff, Necip Torumtay, virtually declares war on Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK), which had launched its insurrection in 1984.  
 31 *October*: Turgut Özal elected 8th president of Turkey, after General Evren's term expired; Yıldırım Akbulut replaces him as PM. He lacks Özal's authority and fortunes of party decline hereafter.  
 18 *December*: Commission of European Community rejects Turkey's application to EC.
- 1990 2 *August*: Iraq invades Kuwait and triggers international crisis. Led by Özal, Turkey joins President Bush's coalition though UN sanctions against Iraq have a disastrous effect on Turkey's economy. Özal nevertheless tries to find Turkey's place in post-cold war world.
- 1991 *April*: Iraqi Kurds flee into Turkey to escape Saddam Hussein's forces after their rebellion collapses, causing major refugee problem in Turkey. Using Turkish bases, US, France, and Britain declare a no-fly zone over northern Iraq.  
 11 *April*: Parliament passes law to combat terrorism; considered undemocratic, it gives government very broad powers of coercion.  
 15 *June*: Mesut Yılmaz elected leader of Motherland Party and forms new cabinet on 23 June; he is expected to give party youthful and modern image.  
 20 *October*: In general election, Süleyman Demirel's centre-right True Path Party wins and he forms coalition with centre-left Social Democrats rather than centre-right Motherland Party.  
 7 *December*: PM Demirel makes important statement that 'Turkey recognizes the Kurdish reality'; his hope is to find political solution to continuing Kurdish rebellion, said to be costing Turkey about US \$7 billion and hundreds of lives each year.
- 1993 17 *April*: President Turgut Özal dies of heart attack at age of 66.  
 16 *May*: Parliament elects Süleyman Demirel as Turkey's ninth president; leaving his party without strong leader!  
 13 *June*: Tansu Çiller elected leader of True Path Party and PM – first woman to lead Turkey, heading coalition with the Social Democrats.

- 27 *November*: Turkey and Israel sign memorandum that includes cooperation in intelligence gathering on Syrian-sponsored terror groups, marking the beginning of broader relationship.
- 1994 26 *March*: Coming third, the Welfare Party, the party of political Islam makes a breakthrough in local elections, its candidates becoming mayors of Istanbul and Ankara.
- 5 *April*: True Path–Social Democrat coalition introduces new ‘stability packet’ in which lira is devalued by 38 per cent with price increases of 100 per cent. Economy going through another crisis. During 1994, inflation rises by a record 148 per cent.
- 14 *July*: Parliament decides to investigate how PM Çiller acquired her wealth, suggesting impropriety; this causes tensions in coalition.
- 1995 1 *January*: Istanbul daily, *Milliyet*, quotes PM Çiller as paraphrasing the famous Kemalist statement, ‘Happy is he who can say he is a Turk’ to ‘Happy is he who can say he is a citizen of Turkey’. Çiller’s words reflect changing character of identity in Turkey.
- 18 *February*: Social Democrat parties – RPP and Social Democratic People’s Party – unite under umbrella of RPP.
- 20 *March*: Turkish army sends 35,000 troops into northern Iraq to destroy PKK bases, escalating conflict with PKK.
- 23 *July*: Parliament passes amendments to 15 articles of constitution, designed to make political life more democratic.
- 20 *September*: Coalition collapses, leading to early election on 24 December.
- 24 *December*: Welfare Party, representing political Islam, wins with 21.38 per cent of vote and 158 seats, insufficient to form government; political crisis follows.
- 1996 1 *January*: Customs union agreement signed with the EU on 6 March comes into effect, marking major transformation in Turkey’s economic policy and another step towards globalization.
- 6 *March*: Motherland–True Path Party coalition (Mother–Path) is formed after weeks of negotiations between parties; but is unstable given hostility between its two leaders, Motherland’s Mesut Yılmaz and TPP’s Çiller.
- 6 *June*: Mesut Yılmaz resigns, again opening way for Necmettin Erbakan, leader of Islamist party, who calls for parliamentary investigation of Çiller’s wealth.
- 29 *June*: Erbakan and Çiller announce formation of coalition between Welfare Party and TPP (Welfare–Path) after both leaders agree to shelve investigations of corruption against each other!

- 3 *November*: An automobile accident, known as 'Susurluk incident', shakes establishment, revealing extent of governmental corruption and role played by so-called 'deep state' in Turkey's political life.
- 1997 28 *February*: National Security Council, dominated by generals, advises Erbakan-led coalition to clamp down on Islamist activity, especially the wearing of headscarves in universities, a decision which comes known as the '28 February Process'.
- 18 *June*: Despite efforts to seem moderate, Erbakan decides to resign, hoping to be replaced by Tansu Çiller as PM and for coalition to continue. But President Demirel appoints Motherland's Mesut Yılmaz to form new coalition, which Yılmaz does with Bülent Ecevit's Democratic left party.
- 1998 16 *January*: Constitutional court orders dissolution of Welfare Party for violating principle of secularism, and bans Necmettin Erbakan from party's leadership for five years. In anticipation, Islamists had already formed Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) on 17 December 1997.
- 21 *April*: In continuing offensive against political Islam, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mayor of Istanbul and member of Virtue Party, is sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment for a speech made in 1997, exploiting Islam and inciting religious hatred.
- 26 *November*: PM Mesut Yılmaz resigns amid charges of mafia connections.
- 1999 11 *January*: Democratic Left Party's leader, Bülent Ecevit forms new cabinet to lead the country to an early general election, to be held in April.
- 15 *February*: Abdullah Öcalan, leader of Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK), is captured in Nairobi and brought back to Turkey, a triumph for Ecevit and an opportunity for government to 'declare victory' over Kurdish rebels; sentenced to death on 29 June, but reprieved due to abolition of death penalty in 2002.
- 18 *April*: General election is won by Ecevit's social democrats and Nationalist Action Party of extreme right, while centre-right parties collapse.
- 2 *May*: New parliament erupts in fury when Islamist MP, Merve Kavakçı enters chamber to take oath of office wearing a navy blue headscarf, the symbol of political Islam; she is later deprived of her parliamentary seat because she omitted to inform ministry of interior that she is also a US citizen.
- 3 *May*: Bülent Ecevit is reappointed PM and on 28 May, presents his coalition with NAP and Motherland Party, a coalition that proves to be surprisingly durable, given its ideological contradictions!

- 17 *August*: Massive earthquake in north-western Turkey undermines people's confidence in state because of its failure to provide relief to millions of victims.
- 13 *October*: European Union Commission recommends that Turkey be considered as candidate for EU; but would have to meet Copenhagen criteria, which include human rights, the protection of minorities and economic reform. A tall order!
- 2000 17 *January*: Dramatic shootout in Istanbul, in which important leaders of Hizbullah movement are shot and captured, leading to nationwide operation against Hizbullah, a body rumoured to be supported by 'deep state' to combat its enemies. Office of General Staff denies press claims that Turkey's armed forces have in any way supported Hizbullah activities against PKK.
- 5 *May*: Ahmet Necdet Sezer, president of Constitutional Court, replaces Demirel as president of Turkey; described as a liberal reformist who supports Turkey's membership of EU.
- 2001 19 *February*: Turkey experiences an economic crisis of major proportions as a result of PM Ecevit's spat with President Sezer over corruption. Stock market plunges, interest rates rise and Central Bank loses one-fifth of its foreign reserves as investors dump liras for dollars and euros.
- 1 *March*: Kemal Derviş from the World Bank is made minister in charge of the economy, an appointment expected to give confidence to foreign investors; he introduces important reforms to bring Turkey's economy in line with global trends.
- 21 *June*: Constitutional court dissolves Virtue Party, describing it as centre of Islamic fundamentalism.
- 21 *July*: Political Islamists form Felicity (*Saadet*) Party as successor to Virtue Party.
- 14 *August*: Moderates from Virtue Party, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, found Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*), claiming to be secular 'Muslim democrats', not successors to former Virtue Party.
- 9 *September*: The events of 9/11 in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, and President Bush's 'war against terrorism' suddenly make Turkey a 'strategic asset', worthy of IMF financial loans. In February 2002, IMF agrees to lend Turkey US \$16 billion over next three years with US \$9 billion to be made available immediately.
- 2002 4 *May*: PM Ecevit hospitalized; his illness creates political crisis, brought on by speculation as to whether he will step down or who should succeed him; stock market is adversely affected.
- 10 *May*: Kemal Derviş reported as saying that early general



election would end uncertainty about Turkey's political future; his words mark the beginning of political manoeuvring that leads to early general election on 3 November.

*29 May:* TÜSİAD places full-page ads in press and calls for urgent reforms: abolition of death penalty, education and broadcasting in Kurdish and bipartisan policy towards EU.

*7 July:* Fearing that his party might be replaced in coalition by True Path Party, NAP's leader and Deputy PM Devlet Bahçeli calls for election on 3 November. While Ecevit and Bahçeli oppose an early election, Derviş and Turkey's big capitalists believe elections would put an end to prevailing uncertainty. Following resignations from Democratic Left Party, coalition loses its majority and on 16 July, Ecevit agrees to lead country to elections in November.

*3 August:* Parliament passes the 'democratic packet' of new laws, designed to meet EU requirements, which is seen as major step on road to EU and critical measure to end economic crisis.

*10 August:* Kemal Derviş resigns from government. Having failed to create a new centre by uniting some parties of centre-left and centre-right, on 21 August, Derviş joins RPP, so destroying any chance the newly founded New Turkey Party might have had of getting into parliament.

*3 November:* General election brings Justice and Development Party to power with 34.3 per cent of ballot and 363 seats, allowing it to form party government for first time since 1987. The RPP, with 19.4 per cent and 178 seats, becomes the opposition, with no other parties managing to clear the 10 per cent electoral barrier.

*16 November:* President Sezer appoints AKP's Abdullah Gül to form government and his cabinet is approved by the president on 18 November; he presents his programme and receives vote of confidence on 28 November.

*19/24 December:* Parliament passes the constitutional amendment permits Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to stand for election, enter parliament, and become prime minister.

2003

*26 January:* Large-scale anti-war demonstrations in Turkey; an estimated 85 to 90 per cent of Turkey's population oppose the coming war.

*1 March:* Parliament votes against the motion to deploy 62,000 US troops in Turkey and open the northern front in Iraq; US-Turkish relations are thrown into confusion.

*9 March:* Recep Tayyip Erdoğan elected to parliament; PM Gül resigns on 11 March and Erdoğan appointed as new prime minister.

*19 March:* President Bush's ultimatum to Saddam Hussein expires and the US-led coalition begins bombing of Baghdad.

## Glossary

<i>Ağa</i>	Commander of the janissaries; also title for landlords, especially in eastern Anatolia and region dominated by Kurdish tribes.
<i>Alaylı</i>	Officer who rose through the ranks in the army of Abdülhamid II.
<i>Alevi</i>	Heterodox offshoot of the Shia movement in Turkey, people who venerate Hazret Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the fourth caliph.
<i>Ayan</i>	Landed, provincial notables in the Ottoman Empire.
<i>Celali</i>	Mercenaries and peasants who rebelled against the Ottoman state in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.
<i>Cemaat</i>	Congregation or community of Muslims.
<i>Dev-Genc</i>	Turkish acronym for the Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey.
<i>Devşirme</i>	Method of collecting Christian youths in the Ottoman Empire for service to the Palace or as soldiers.
<i>Dev-Sol and Dev-Yol</i>	Turkish acronyms for the ‘Revolutionary Left’ and ‘Revolutionary Path’ organizations.
<i>Divan</i>	The government of the Ottoman Empire presided over by the grand vizier.
<i>Ezan</i>	The Muslim call to prayer.
<i>Fetva</i>	A legal opinion delivered by the religious head in the Ottoman Empire, legitimizing actions of the sultan.
<i>Gazi</i>	Title adopted by early Ottoman leader, meaning that they were Muslims fighting for Islam.
<i>Halk</i>	Term for the ‘people’.

<i>Harem</i>	The private quarters of a household where access was restricted usually to family members.
<i>İrade</i>	Sultan's or governmental decree; also 'will' as in 'national will' or <i>milli irade</i> .
<i>Janissaries</i>	Elite infantry usually recruited through the <i>devşirme</i> system.
<i>Jihad</i>	Holy war; but also the individual Muslim's struggle against evil and temptation.
<i>Kadı</i>	A Muslim judge.
<i>Kaza</i>	Administrative unit governed by a <i>kadı</i> .
<i>Kanun</i>	Law passed by the sultan as opposed to a Sharia law. But a <i>kanun</i> was not to violate the Sharia.
<i>Kul</i>	Servitors, usually recruited through the <i>devşirme</i> .
<i>Laiklik</i>	The state's control of religion as opposed to secularism which implies the separation of state and religion.
<i>Medrese</i>	School or college where the <i>ülema</i> were trained in Islamic knowledge. In the late Ottoman Empire <i>Mekteps</i> were established to teach secular subjects.
<i>Meşveret</i>	The principle of consultation in Islam and therefore said to constitute a proto-democratic practice.
<i>Mektepli</i>	An officer who had been trained in the secular academy as opposed to the <i>alaylı</i> who had risen through the ranks.
<i>Millet, Milli, Milliyetçi</i>	Term applied to a religious community but over time came to mean 'nation' ( <i>millet</i> ), 'national' ( <i>milli</i> ) and 'nationalist' ( <i>milliyetçi</i> ).
<i>Milletvekili</i>	Term for member of the assembly in Turkey, elected as 'representative of the nation' and not of his constituency.
<i>Milli irade</i>	'National will' or the 'will of the people'.
<i>Muhtesib</i>	Officer in charge of regulating the market in Ottoman times.
<i>Mufti</i>	Religious official who issued the <i>fetva</i> .
<i>Reis-ul kuttub</i>	Official in charge of foreign affairs in the period after 1826; precursor of the foreign minister.
<i>Ser'asker'</i>	Commander of the army who replaced in 1826 the <i>ağa</i> of the janissaries when the janissaries were destroyed.
<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic law derived from the Quran and the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the juridical commentaries of the ulema.
<i>Shiism</i>	The minority denomination in Islam, the majority being Sunnism. They were the followers of Ali, the fourth caliph.
<i>Sipahis</i>	Ottoman cavalry provided by holders of timars to serve in the sultan's campaigns.
<i>Şeyhülislam</i>	Head of the <i>ülema</i> who after 1826 became part of the sultan's administration.
<i>Timar</i>	A prebend granted by the sultan in return for military service.

<i>Tanzimat</i>	The period of reform, 1839–1876.
<i>Ülema</i>	Doctors of Islamic jurisprudence, the body whose task it was to see that the sultan did not violate the Sharia.
<i>Vakf</i>	Pious foundation or endowment.
<i>Valide sultan</i>	Mother of the reigning sultan who exercised considerable influence on the government in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
<i>Vatan</i>	Country or father/motherland as a source of loyalty and patriotism.



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