

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Turkey, the Melting Pot of the West and East: An Evaluation of the Benefits of Western and Eastern Civilizations for this Adaptive Nation

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Introduction

The Republic of Turkey is located south east of Europe and south west of Asia (the portion of Turkey west of the Bosphorus is geographically part of Europe), bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Georgia, and bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, between Greece and Syria. It has a population of 71,892,808 in July 2008; 99.8% of the people are Muslims with 0.2% Christians and Jews. Moreover, 80% of the population are Turkish and the remaining 20% are Kurdish [1].

This is a nation which has gone through various rise and decline of civilizations, the modernization by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and the advantages of associating with and being influenced by the West. The main objective of this paper is, therefore, to probe into the benefits gained and damages caused by the various civilizations in building modern Turkey as it went through the melting processes of the various eras. The term 'melting pot' does not refer to the changes in ethnic groups as what had happened in the 19th century in the USA and the theory of assimilation and maintaining ethnic identity [2]. However, it refers to the evolving of one civilization into another; that is, the rise and fall of civilizations and their impacts. 'Melting pot' means the experiences and impositions on the society's way of life from the heights of its power until its decline, and thus the absorption of good attributes of past civilizations. This paper will review the Ottoman Empire, the modernization of Turkey, its relevancy in our modern period and the new challenges the country faces.

Spengler's cyclical theory of history posits a civilization like a life span determined by its biological nature[3]. Ibnu Khaldun says that the average life span of a civilization lasts no more than 125 years or three generations [4]. Toynbee,

however, is very surprised that the Ottoman Empire was able to last for six centuries. He credits the empire as an excellent illustration of 'challenge and responses' [5]. Talat Sait Halman describes the adoptive and adaptive receptiveness to changes of the empire [6]. The Ottoman Empire no longer exists; however, scholars persist that the empire occupies a major focus as the long and expansive rule gave way to the path of transformation into modern Turkey [6].

Research Methodology

The study involves the gathering of data on the Ottoman rule, the modernization and the melting pot of Turkey with the absorption of quality of culture, civilization, rule and living from the Islamic and the Western perspectives. It will not touch on the Seljuk rule and the nomadic Oguz from Northern Asia that migrated to the South and West for 2,000 years to this new land known as Turkomans or Turks. It is enough to mention here that chiefly through the Orthodox *sufi* missionaries from Iran and Iraq, the Turks had converted to the Islamic faith. Although they were exposed to Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and other religions, they abandoned their shamanistic beliefs, adopted Arabic, the language of their new religion and incorporated the Islamic way of living and morals to live a sedentary culture [7].

Our analysis of the melting pot in Turkey looks at the meeting point of Islam, the East and the West, and in the melting pot, the mixing of the various civilizations, is the absorption of all that is good from each civilization. An empire like the Ottoman Empire witnessed this and its abandonment of the Islamic values has led to the decay and corrupted attributes. Failure in reforms has also brought the demise of the Empire. This

paper will also analyse its adoption of Western attributes in their newly awakened civilization. The Republic of Turkey succeeds in absorption of quality of both Islam and the West but when men desire for control and power, after some time, it could led to the stagnation of growth and thus, a rejuvenation of good quality is necessary for the nation to progress for the happiness of all its citizens.

The study analyses the historical aspects through the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, Mustapha Kemal Ataturk's reform, its authoritative control by the Republic People's Party and Turkey's struggle for an ideal democracy and survival amidst the progress of other nations in our global environment. The manuscript covers period after period to describe the rise and fall of the era while the good and bad impacts are analytically described.

Ottoman Empire: Expansion, Rise and Fall

The Ottomans originally came from the Kayi tribe of the Turkomans. The founder of the empire, Ertugrul and his followers had served the Seljuks and their auxiliaries against the Byzantines and the Mongols and in return they ruled some territories in Western Anatolia. After his death, his son Osman succeeded him, thus the name "Osmanli" or Ottoman was used in English [5]. Osman (1280-1324) advanced further west into the Byzantine lands through conquests and expansions and finally captured and settled at Yenisehir and began a more established life [5]. His descendants' capture and establishment of Busra as the capital in 1326 marked the emerging of an empire from a nomadic border principality to a real state with a capital, boundary and a 'settled population' [5]. They continued the 'Ghazi' spirit of conquering the lands of non-Muslims of Thrace, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia in Europe in the 14th century and established palaces, mosques and *madrakah* or Islamic schools which became centres of Islamic learning. To establish control, Christian peasants were trans-migrated to Anatolia and Turkomans from Anatolia to conquer Europe[8] Here the melting pot theory refers to the absorption of bravery, justice, confidence and keenness to spread Islam into the life of military men into those of great believers. Without this, it was not possible for a nomadic tribe to settle in a civilized state and expand into an empire.

The Zenith of the empire was the defeat of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453 by Mehmet II (1451-1481), the Conqueror (Fatih). The city was renamed Istanbul. Not satisfied, the Conqueror also captured Greece in 1459 and Serbia, Albania

and other parts of Europe and Asia. One of the identities of the conquered lands or the ruled was the autonomous self-government under religious leaders including the land of minorities like Jews, Armenians, Christians and others [5]. The Ottoman peaked in its power during the reign of Suleyman I, The Magnificent (1520-1566). By this time, Selim I defeated Syria and the Mamluks of Egypt in 1517. The empire extended to as far as the Danube. It had become a naval force in the Mediterranean by the 16th century. Hungary accepted the Ottoman sovereignty in 1553. The Safavids in Iran and Baghdad were defeated and the rest of Iraq taken in 1533. The empire extended its land up to the Persian Gulf [9].

Lewis attributes the rise and strength of the Ottoman to the "able and intelligent" men whose vision of a world empire was matched by great military minds and consolidation capacities. The leaders too were equipped with the high spirits of "Ghazi" (Islamic warrior) and the intense drive to conquer the infidel lands [10] According to the melting pot theory of which the writer advocates in this study, the earlier leaders of the Ottoman were assimilated with the high spirit of spreading Islam and ruled with justice and fairness to all people. It was this great spirit to spread the rule of Islam that made this great Ottoman Empire possible.

It can also be seen that the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was the Caliph. The social policy of the empire was infused by a distinctive religious spirit. In the empire, the autonomy of the conquered lands was ruled according to Shari'ah Law and the Millet or a self-government rule of a religious leader. The *Ulama* or Islamic scholars with the most formal education consisted of the elites [11]. According to the official theology of the Ottoman Empire, the main tasks of the Sultan and the servants were to defend the Muslim community against the outside world and to maintain justice within the empire [5]

However, with a huge empire, bribery, corruption in the purchase of office, favouritism, nepotism and inefficiency crept into the system of administration. While competing for the office of the Sultan and other powerful offices and influences, fratricide and other cruelties occurred. Besides that, the failure to keep up with military techniques of warfare, outdated equipment and training compared with that in Europe and the gradual loss of the spirit of "Ghazi" also caused the problems to intensify. "Incompetents, degenerates, and misfits", largely due to overprotective palace upbringing and a style of living dedicated to extreme luxurious pleasure

brought decline to the Ottoman Empire [12]. While Europe was going through a renaissance or at the throes of Enlightenment, the transformation of those new ideas hardly touched the stagnant mind of the Sultan and his elite civil and religious officers [5]. The inflated bureaucracy and expenses of war increasingly taxed the farmers [5]. The farmers were forced to abandon agriculture due to heavy taxes and outdated production which could not compete with Europe's newly acquired knowhow. New sea route discovery to the east of America had provided the Europeans with an influx of cheap pleasures debased and devalued in the Ottoman coin and currency [5].

The expansion of the territory by the Ottoman Empire was taken as the assimilation of the quality of Islamic values and civilization. On the other hand, the decline of the empire was caused by the abandoning of good Islamic norm. It began with Sultan Selim II, the son and successor of Sulayman, who was known for wine drinking. This was the start of the decline. In 1595, Sultan Mehmed III had slain 19 of his brothers. Upon his death, there were two young sons, Ahmad I and Mustapha. Mustapha was secluded in the harem portion of the palace. He succeeded his brother Ahmad to the throne in 1617. Succession was now not from father to son but the eldest surviving male. New sultans who emerged from their seclusion - the *kafes* - had led an idle life in confinement, attended to by women; they were either sterilized with no child or when a child was born, they were allowed to die, so that in the end, no sultan could have sons until after his accession. The sultan in this condition had already lost his humanity, besides he could not know anything about the administration and military except caring for his own comfortable living [13]. In this case, the sultan abdicated the control of the empire. However, he still was the only legal person to appoint the Viziers to administer the empire. The sultan cared very little and know very little of his potential Viziers and it gave rise for palace cliques and intrigue to advance to public offices. The sultan's mother and women of the heir usually played very important roles. Corruption was rampant. Even the *Ulama* were not knowledgeable as they were ill-trained and ignorant. Without leadership, even the military and navy were not up-to-date to control the territories and the coastlines [5].

While the Ottoman Empire was facing decline in agriculture and industry and was stagnant in efficient administration and military and navy, Venice, Austria, Poland, Russia and Iran, the countries surrounding the Ottoman Empire were far advancing in all fields. At first, the Ottoman

Empire was strong but in 1529, when the armies of the empire advanced to Venice, they were defeated by the Christians. Peter the Great took over Avoz. By the treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, the Ottoman Empire also lost Podolia to Poland, Hungary and Transylvania to Austria and the Morea to Italy. Morea was recovered but not the other territories. The defeat of the Ottoman indicated the decline of the empire and the consolidation of power to surrounding and stronger nations [5]. The defeat showed that the Ottoman Empire no longer held the main power [14].

The decline also indicated the disappearance of the original Islamic values. The practice of fratricide was forbidden in Islam. Learning is obligatory on all Muslims but there was no knowledge acquisition in all fields then. There was competition for top posts in the palace but corruption only reduced efficiency in all administration and increased moral decay in the empire. A protected palace and absolute power of a Sultan with no knowledge as the legal head caused the fall of the empire and civilization. At the point, it included the absence of the spirit of spreading Islam.

By the 18th century, the empire had lost its vitality. It had also lost its territories by cessation [15], renouncement of conquered lands [16], concession of defeats [17] especially in Asia and Africa as they declared independence and broke away from the empire.

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and the Building of a Nation: The Assimilation of Western Quality and Thoughts

Background in Understanding the Absorption of Western Thoughts: Analysis of Turkey's Situation

The arrival of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk to the scene marked another stage of the melting pot of Turkey with Islamic and Western civilizations and absorption of good attributes of Western civilization in the enlightenment of the Renaissance. In the 18th century, the West had already gained many territories in the Eastern region and became powerful military-wise. It was also experiencing encouragement in knowledge learning and improvement in farming technology and industries. The military and navy were more advanced with their technological innovation and became a real threat to the Ottoman Empire. The era of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk in 1920-1930 after the Turkish war of independence was the climax of absorption of Western culture and civilization. This is known as the greatest history

of the world and was a revolution that transformed Turkey into a modern nation [18]. However, this was frequently misinterpreted by the ignorant *Ulama* and scholars in Turkey as going against the Islamic heritage. However, the *Ulama* did not condemn the fratricide of the siblings and relatives of the palace who posed a decline to the empire and made the Sultan ignorant about the efficient administration of the empire. According to the Shari`ah, the killing of innocent people in the fratricide and the successor to the Sultan kept in the harem were forbidden in Islam. Similarly it was *haram* the keeping of the palace with concubines for the successors of the Sultan while their babies were either left to die or the concubines were sterilized. All these were against the norms of Islam and the Shari`ah.

In Surah 5: 32, Al-Qur'an says: If you slew a person-unless it be for murder or for the spread mischief in the land- it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.

Meanwhile in Surah 81: 9, Al-Quran says "For what sin, she was killed [19].

The melting pot of the Islamic and the Western cultures and civilizations did not start from Mustapha Kemal Ataturk; instead the adaptation of quality of Western Renaissance started when the good Islamic features were disappearing and the bad features were creeping into the empire. For example, when Sultan Mehmed III succeeded the throne, the first thing he did was to have 19 of his brothers strangled by mutes, the largest fratricide. Meanwhile, six of the pregnant slaves, their favourites from the harem had been sewn up and thrown into the Bosphorus. Even his own chosen son was put to death for fear of rebel against him. In addition, his mother was also imprisoned [20].

The need for reform started in the 17th century. Initially, it was to strengthen the central government. In the 18th century, the reform was different. It could have been influenced by the French revolution of 1789. The Sultan made several attempts to arrest deterioration and open the door of Turkey to the West. Through diplomatic and cultural contacts, France's superiority and other Western power were demonstrated [21].

In the 18th century, Turkey found reforms and adoption of Westernization were necessary. Westernization of the education, military, legal and political systems was the concern of the reformers. The new order and reforms were the discussion of the people. This was opposed by the

Ulama [22]. A new army was created and in 1839, the ruler officially proclaimed the Gulhane Charter that launched the *Tanzimat* (reforms) to ensure challenge of the West and survival of the nation. Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) was a reformer; he built mosques, palaces, schools, roads, railway lines and telegraphic lines. He also promoted agricultural and industrial enterprises. He supported the Pan-Islamism movement with the hope that he could arrest the disintegrating empire and bolster his position in the Muslim world [23]. He borrowed extensively for the various projects mentioned above and plunged the nation into financial ruin [18]. Desiring democracy, a secret political party named the Committee of Union and Progress was formed. It consisted of intellectuals mainly from among the armies. The young Turks opposed Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Meanwhile, there were wars with Macedonians, Bulgarians and Greeks. With the Western pressure for debt, the Sultan was forced to have a free election. The election highlighted the existence of the Committee of Union and Progress [24]. This was followed by a coup which overthrew the Sultan in 1909. A new Sultan Mehmed replaced Abdul Hamid II but war in Balkan, defeat in the First World War, invasion by the Greeks, loss of territories and the impending dismemberment of the last segments of the empire finally led to the abolishment of the Sultanate and Caliphate and placed the last of the Ottoman sultans into exile in 1924 [18].

The period before Mustapha Kemal Ataturk witnessed the melting pot between "Islam" and the West; the "Islam" being worse off in administration, military and navy and all fields. The West was far more efficient and stronger than the Ottoman Empire. Arabic language was a very important language but was known by a small group of people in the empire. Illiteracy was high. There was urgent need to reform the taxation system and others. Culturally, the need to have European languages to acquire the renaissance quality was necessary. Reforms were needed in all fields; in politics, economics, military, navy, education and others. The acceptance of the Western way was the only solution to the decay of the empire.

The Mustapha Kemal Ataturk Reform

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk was regarded as the father of modernization of Turkey after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. For us, it was the climax of the melting pot of the West and Islam of which he obtained the six principles of republicanism, nationalism, popularism, revolutionism, estatism and secularism [25].

Republicanism is the political system of which the head is not a monarch but a President in an era voted by the people [26]. A similarity could be taken from the French Republic, after the melting pot of Western civilization and Islam. Mustapha Resit Resa, the father of Turkey reform had spoken on this but was accused of anti-Sultanate [27] as the Ottoman Sultan was given full authority on all military and administrative rule. Namik Kemal also wrote in favour of it and as early as 1870, Ali Sauvi, the Ottoman publicist had openly favoured a republic regime [5]. However, the concept of a Muslim republic was not recent for after the First World War, the Ottoman provinces had broken away and formed independent republics [18]. In 1918, Azerbaijan broke away from Russia [28] Turkey was constitutionally declared as a republic in 1923 and is still a republic now. However, the republic arose as a response against the absolute power and authority of the Ottoman Sultan who also acted as a caliph [5].

Second, nationalism was another key concept of Kemalism. The Ottoman Empire was a very extensive area with different tribes and ethnic groups with diversified cultures and languages. When the Sultan as a caliph in the central government was weak and did not care for much, it had disintegrated and fallen apart in the 19th century. It broke away by cessation of land to foreign powers, self-declaration of independence and negotiated settlement. It was at this time, the concept of nationhood was important. Turkey became extinct as an empire and endured as a nation.

Von Grunebaum refers to nationalism as national movements, attitudes and ideologies with characteristics of achieving, maintaining and enhancing their position in the world. To Kemalism, nationalism was aimed mainly at ensuring the cohesion of Turkey Republic and preventing the separatist movements that might threaten the unity of the nation. A nation is defined as “a social and political formation comprising citizens linked together by the community of language, culture and ideal”. Kemalism emphasized on a common language and culture as opposed to Ottoman’s perception of religion. It avoids Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism, the movement based on the glorification of race and attempt to unite people as all the people in Ottoman were diversified from one another. The political leadership for the national movement was forced by two congresses. The first was held in July 1919 at Erzurum in eastern Anatolia and the second was held in the following September in Sivas. The first had

representatives from the eastern provinces only but the second had more representatives from all over Turkey. April 2, 1920 was declared a national holiday, the Children and National Sovereignty day. The people also voted to have a government of great assembly. **Mustapha Kemal Ataturk** was voted as President of the Assembly and presided over a council of ministers. The country was officially called “Turkey”. On November 1, 1922, the assembly ceased the existence of the Sultanate [5].

1920-1922 was the period that broke the government of Great National Assembly of the foreign powers under her territories. Turks and Russia competed for the territory of independent Armenian states and by the end of 1920, they were destroyed and partitioned between them. In 1921, an agreement was signed by them in which the Turk government was recognized. Both France and Italy withdrew from South of Anatolia because of the disillusion of British opposition to the Kemalists. However, the most significant event was the defeat of the Greeks by the army of the Grand National Assembly led by the Commander-in-Chief Mustapha Kemal Ataturk on 26 August 1921. The Commanding General of Greek was arrested on September 9 and the Turkish national enter Izmir triumphantly. Kemal’s forces advanced to the Straits Zone, up to the British lines. The British wisely withheld, by the armistice of Mudanya, signed on October 11, 1921, where all alliance forces agreed to restore Turkish control of Istanbul, Thrace and the Straits [5].

Finally, the treaty of Lausanne was signed on July 24, 1923. Under it, the term of capitulation was abolished. There was no reparation to pay. There was no Armenia and no Kurdistan in the East of Anatolia and Greek on the West. These were the demands of the Turks. The British did not want to give up Mosul to Turkey and so it was given to Iraq by as an award of the League of Nation while Hatay, the district around Iskenderum (Alexandretta) remained under Syria. Nevertheless, Turkey was generally satisfied about the new territory. The conclusion of a genuine peace agreement gave the Nationalist government sufficient prestige and stability. On 13 October 1923, Ankara became the officially capital of Turkey and The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed on 29th October 1923. The National Assembly also elected Mustapha Kemal Ataturk as its first President [5].

The successful conclusion of the peaceful treaty was the result of the melting pot of the East and the West of Turkey and the quick and victorious

adoption of the attributes of the quality culture of the Western renaissance. The defeat of the Anatolian homeland set a new course to turn a new Turkey free from the weak and corrupted Ottoman past and create new Turks for the new era of innovative Turkey.

The success of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and the army in defeating foreign troops was due to the establishment of a trend of westernization of institution, of thoughts and of customs - in that order. The older practices, beliefs and habits of the Ottoman and Islamic civilizations had not disappeared. Some had been modified, more had been challenged. They remained in contest with the new, causing anguish of the soul. At the same time, the Turkey Republic had inherited capable elite of bureaucrats, officers and professional men to guide its destiny, together with experience in parliamentary forms, a complete system of local government, the beginning of a new educational system, westernized law and much else. In the melting pot, Turkey had not lost its values in entirety; the tradition and experience of ruling and decision-making were there to draw upon. Now Turkey is a peaceful state with no interference of foreign power through the signed agreement under her President, Mustapha Kemal Ataturk from 1923-1938 [5].

It was during this era that the introduction of Turk language in schools had increased literacy among the people in Turkey, especially the women. Her westernization and secularization were carried out to the full by the Republican Party. The secular triumph weakened the Islamic complex of the government. The office of Sheikh ul-Islam was abolished. The *uvkat* which administered the pious foundation was abolished and its function was given to a civil officer. All religious courts were closed. Religion should not interfere with the government. The veil known as *fez* covering the faces of women was banned [5].

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, however, was not unopposed. Many people were shocked at the removal or abolishment of the caliph or the Sultanate and the de-establishment of religious institutions. Many of them were western educated and unhappy with uninhibited power of Kemal. Among them were his staunchest supporters in his early nationalist movement like Rauf (Orbay), Ali Fuad (Cebesoy), Kazim Karabekir and Dr Adnan (Advivar) who disagreed with the one man rule. Military officers elected to Assembly must choose either military or political positions. Ali Fuad and Kazim Karabekir resigned from military commands. They resigned from the Republican People Party and later formed the

Progressive Republican Party[5].

Another group that confronted Mustapha Kemal Ataturk was Sheikh Said of the Kurdish group seeking for independence of Kurdish. The assembly restored the Premiership of Ismet and passed an act allowing him to execute Sheikh Said and 40 of his followers. The government harshly dealt with the Kurdish after this. Many of their leaders were executed and 20,000 were banished [11]. Until now, the Kurdish is a minority problem which has not been settled amicably.

In the melting pot of which Islamic and western civilizations met, Mustapha Kemal Ataturk had fully absorbed the advantages of the Western civilization and its republicanism, secularization and westernization to the full. The defeat of the Greeks and the capture of the Greek General gave a new indication to the West and surrounding nations. Turkey is now a force to be reckoned with and not to be looked down upon. The conclusion of the treaty of Lausanne gave Turkey the peace without interference from other external forces and so she can play an important role for internal consolidation of her power and the Republican Progressive Party. The Republican Progressive Party was the sole party for Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and he was the president. The party was a monopoly of power and at the party's congress, it officially declared Turkey as a one-party state. By 1925-1926, laws and tribunals were established to silence all opposition [11]. During the period of the one-party system from 1925-1946, the party was controlled by the Prime Minister, Secretary General and a national committee and they dominated the National State Assembly. State and party were closely interrelated and identified. Every four years, there was a parliament election but all the candidates were drawn up by the party and served at ceremonial functions [5].

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk knew about this and he saw to it that Prime Minister Ismet (Inonu) was no longer his puppet. He approached his old friend, Fethi (Okyar) with an offer to form a new party which was called *Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi* (Free Republican Party). Mustapha Kemal Ataturk ordered a number of his closest collaborators to join the new party. It advocated a liberal economic policy encouraging foreign investment, freedom of speech and direct election. The new party received very enthusiastic support. In the election in October 1930, the newly founded party won 30 out of 512 councils; it caused alarm to the governing party. There were accusations of high treason against the new party whereas the new party accused the governing party of large

scale irregularities and electoral fraud. At this stage, Mustapha told Fethi that he could not be neutral any more as he had promised when he asked Fethi to form the new party. Finally, Fethi after having listened to the President, shut down the Free Republic Party [5]. From then onwards, the Republican Progressive Party (RPP) attempted to consolidate her hold of the people by abolishing the various organizations except those pro-RPP. RPP began to bring direct control of the country's cultural and intellectual life, suppressing those independent social and cultural organizations such as *Turk Ocaklan* (Turkish Hearth) [5] and *Turk Kadınlar Birliği* (Turkish Women Union). In 1925, all newspapers leaning towards liberal and socialism were closed down. The only newspapers were government-controlled except *Tomorrow*, a left-wing controlled by journalists who were friends of Mustapha and Fethi. Even, the Istanbul University lost two thirds of its academicians and only the most dependent Kemalist were allowed to teach [11].

It seems that Mustapha Kemal Atarturk and his RPP were bent on Westernization but the one party rule, the control over social organizations, was not from the West. In this case, the desire to control and rule by RPP was one of the weaknesses of men. The great Turks had learned the quality of Western civilization in the melting pot and applied secularization and westernization in their life, but they could not stop their desire to control their own people and the political power of their country.

Turkey: The Evolution of Democracy and its Problems after 1945

After the Second World War, the government of Turkey under President Ismet Pasha Inonu was very unpopular, hated by the majority of the people. In the rural areas, the increase of electricity was only 0.025% in 1953 while the total production of electricity grew ten folds from 1924-1943. The central rule of Kemalism in the rural areas was effective. The enforcer of government and tax collectors became more hated. Rampant resentment against state rule became a traditional feature. Suppression of faith in Islam and expression of popularism severed the bond between the state and the people. Industrial workers in Turkey were only 330,000 of the 20 million population and the social economic position was very weak. Unionism and strikes were illegal. Discontent among the masses of people was not new. The introduction of the New Wealth tax was not very popular among non-Muslims. The government too had increased the number of army and she also borrowed 16 and 25

million pounds to purchase military equipment. Consequently, the government resorted to printing more currency to settle the problems. This causes inflation and the purchasing power of civil servants dropped by 33% to 75% [5].

The young Turks who formed part of Kemalism were also in conflict with Ismet Inonu's government. The introduction of a new tax on agriculture in January 1945 was not too popular. Wide spread hatred and discontent prevailed against the Republican Progressive Party and the state. Inonu thought about the formation of the Free Republic Party during the time of Ataturk in 1930. He therefore allowed the formation of an opposition party as a safety precaution. The Democrat Party was formed on 7 January 1946 and it was met with enthusiastic responses [5].

In July 1946, an election was held. The Democratic Party won 62 of the 465 seats. The remaining was won by RPP. On 14 May 1950, the Democratic Party won 53.4% of the votes whereas RPP only 39.8%. This signalled the end of RPP rule, a party formed by **Mustapha Kemal Atarturk**. There was another tremendous success for the Democratic Party in the 1954 election. This victory had very much been a personal victory for Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. The people within the party who disagreed with him were expelled. He also started to impose control on the media. In 1957, again the Democratic Party won the election. However, military coup became a constant feature after the first coup in 1960.

Since 1946, Turkey has regularly held free elections. From time to time, the nation has had a two-party political system at times and a multi-party system at others. Turkey has also been marked by a number of military interventions [29]. The public opinion consistently reported that ordinary people have more confidence in the military than in elected individuals [5]. At the same time, many also reject that Islam is against democracy. In fact, many noted that Islam has many facets and tendency, making uni-dimensional characterizations of the religion highly suspect. They also point out that openness, tolerance and progressive innovation are well represented among the religious tradition [30].

After the military coup, many DP leaders were arrested and put to trial; consequently, 123 people were acquitted, 31 sentenced to life imprisonment, 418 got lesser term and 15 sentenced to death. Four of the dead were Bayar, Menderes, Foreign Minister Zorlu, and Finance Minister Polatkan. Despite strong protestations

from the public, Zorlu was hanged on 16 September 1961, Menderez the next day. But in September 1990, Menderez, Zorlu and Polatkan were reinterred at a state funeral [11].

Suleyman Demirel, the Chairman of Justice Party was the man who won in the election in October 1965. For the next five years, he dominated Turkey after forming the cabinet. There was high economic growth and real income went up continuously to almost 20% from 1963-1969. His achievement too was to reconcile the army rules with civilians. His main task was the consolidation of his position. Unlike Menderes, his position was fundamentally different. The new constitution provided check and balance. The independent judiciary included a constitutional court which in many cases protected the rights of individuals. State and TV stations were autonomous and critical of the government as was a large part of the press. The universities too were given autonomy and police cannot enter the campuses unless with the rectors' invitation. Unfortunately, Demirel's actions were met with opposition including from within his own party and he was forced to resign in February 1970 [5].

The third military coup in Turkey which took place on 12 September 1980 had uprooted the political power causing the state organs to stop functioning. The Parliament had been dissolved and immunity of the members had been lifted. Cabinet had been deposed. Prior to this, terrorism was rampant and many people were killed. The victims of violence rose greatly in 1977; 230 was the final count. In December 1978, the case of Kahramanmaras, when the worst in a series of pogroms of Alevites (Turkish Shi'ites), left more than 100 dead. Between 1970-1980, the killings did not exclusively include the reciprocal of rightists and leftists but public figures such as the Deputy Chairman of NAP followed by former Prime Minister Nihat Erim and Kemal Turkler, former President of DISK (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Union) were also killed [5].

The coup had been planned for a year. Undeniably, a list had been prepared. During the first six weeks after the coup, 11,500 people were arrested and by the end of 1980, 30,000; within a year, the number had increased to 122,600. On the one hand, the positive effect was a 90% reduction in the number of politically motivated terrorist attacks. On the other, respectable professors, teachers, journalists, legal politicians and lawyers who expressed vague views could get into trouble. The Human Rights also received reports of wide spread torture during the investigation of detainees. Apart from the large

number of individual cases, a number of mass trials were organized against the *Milli Selamat Partisi*, the *Milliyetçi Harekat Partisi*, the WPT, the DISK, the extreme left-wing organization *Devrimci Sol* and the Kurdish PKK. In most cases, trials were held at the military court following the coup; nearly 3,600 death sentences were pronounced. However, only 15 were actually executed. Meanwhile, a new constitution was drawn up to restore civil life [5].

Turkey and Democracy from 1946-2011

There had been free elections from 1946 to 2011. At first, there were bipartisan elections and then multi-party elections. Military interventions had occurred three times in Turkey. In 1950, the centre-right party defeated the Republican People Party, founded by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk. In 1960, the military coup set up the National Security Council (NSC) which composed of high military and government officers. They were not accountable to voters even though some were elected members. NSC brought in the influence of the military into politics. It could intervene when the party acted in a way injurious to the nation [31].

Following the resumption of partisan politics, the DP and the RPP turned into a multi-partisan system in the 1960s. There was a military ultimatum in 1971. The political landscape turned into the emergence of two parties, the NOP, the pro-Islamic National Order Party and the Ultra National Action Party or NAP. From 1980 to 1983, the military interfered again. The military stipulated that parties that could seize 10% of the vote can be counted in the assembly. This diminished the chances of small parties or small extremist movements [29]. In 1983, the Motherland Party won the election but fragmentation and polarized multi-partisan re-emerged. The Welfare Party, a descendent of the NOP and later changed to a virtual party became dominant and after 1995, established a coalition with the True Path Party led by Tansu Ciller. Some scholars perceived this as the turning point of Turkey's politics [32]. In the election of 1995, the Welfare Party became prominent. Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan became the leader. A new coalition was formed under the supervision of NSC. In 1998, in response to a new ultimatum from the military leader, the cabinet took many measures to curb the influence of Islamic parties and their movements. In 1999, an election indicated the centre right Motherland and Virtue Party was only in the third place. It was behind the Democratic Left Party and the National Action Party of the extreme right [5].

The 2002 election in Turkey indicated only two parties won more than 10% of the votes, these were the *Adalet ve Kalkunma Partisi* or AKP or and the Justice and Development Party, a centre-right political party led by R. Tayyip Erdogan which won 34% of the votes and the Republican People's Party led by Deniz Baykal which won 19% of the votes. In the early general election of 2007, the votes won by the Justice and Development Party increased to 47%, with the number of seats at the Assembly at 371. Then in the election of June 12, 2011, the same party under the same person increased to 49.9% but the seats won were only 327 [33]. Presently, R. Tayyip Erdogan is the Prime Minister and Abdullah Gul is the President.

The Economic of Contemporary Turkey

The economic and political stability had attracted cash rich companies to look for acquisition in Turkey since the ruling party, AKP is all for the liberalization of Turkish economics. Ten billion US dollars were concluded in deals and mergers and acquisition was 25.6 billion USD, up from 1.1 billion USD a decade ago. This is much better than Portugal, Czech Republic and Austria. Emre Yildirim, a director of JP Morgan Chase says that Turkey is growing very fast and a country strategic for economic development. Turkey's gross domestic product or GNP was 8%, slightly behind China in 2011. It also has a growing middle class and attractive characteristics of Western consumer product companies. The total population of 73 million is almost the same size of Europe's largest nation, Germany. The GDP per capita has more than doubled to USD\$10,094 in the last decade, according to World Bank [34].

However, Turkey is not immune to the problem of debts of European nations as 50% of her exports are to Europe. Inflation is also 10% affecting competitiveness with other nations. Still she is a performer of good economics. Despite its large Muslim population, it does not restrict foreign investment. Turkey has been selling government firms to much of Turkey's energy and telecom industries. To lighten the burden on government coffer, Turkish airline which is 49% owned by the government may soon be for sale. It is the policy of AKP or Justice and Development Party as Turkey's government to privatize infrastructure, financial and energy assets. Right now, Turkey is in a much better place to do business than Greece or Spain [35].

Conclusion

Turkey is the meeting point of Islam, East and West. It is the melting pot of which various

civilizations such as Islam, Western and secular and others have been applied and practiced, allowing us to witness its weaknesses and strengths. Turkey is lucky also to have had an Islamic empire which laid down a vast territory and defeat of Christianity. At first, the Osmanli spread its territories with the aim of Islamic evangelism. However, from the 18th century onwards, the stagnant empire with no improvement in military and navy coupled with a weak reformation internally brought its fall and demise.

Mustapha Kemal Ataturk brought great changes though nationalism, republicanism, secularization and westernization. Prior to his modernization of Turkey, he was the Commander-in-Chief that defeated the Greeks and arrested the Greek General. This won him the respect and confidence from all within the Turkish nation and the fear of Western nations like France, Britain and Russia. All these nations regarded the Ottoman Empire as a sick dog and were ready to grab her territories by all means. It was the defeat of the Greeks that caused them not to interfere in Turkey and let the reformation be carried out smoothly in education, the adoption of the Westernized way and the improvement of the military and the navy. *Tanzimat* or reformation was carried to the full until the abolishment of the Ottoman Sultan who was the caliph, the *madrasah*, Islamic colleges, the ban of the *tarikats* and replacement of Arabic language by the Turkish language. It was true when he was President of the Republic People Party, literacy rate had risen and women were more liberated.

We can see the melting pot theory of various civilizations during Ataturk's era and his absorption was only in the westernization of the nation and the rejection of Islam. Perhaps, the various institutions or establishments of Islam in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries were so deeply corrupted that they had blinded the reformists in Turkey. At that time, it was a norm to compete for the throne in the palace, and fight to be a vizier, the most important post, and the desire and competition to get power in various provinces. All sort of ways were employed including killing to destroy the rivals.

We need to evaluate Mustapha Kemal Ataturk's achievements and failures. His modernization of Turkey was a great success. However, the failure and end of the Ottoman Empire was due to a long civilization which failed in all fields to emulate the the good attributes of Islam. The empire's first desire to spread Islam was lost totally in its later period. Learning is obligatory not only for

traditional Islamic knowledge but also for all knowledge of science, military and others. The Ottoman never succeeded in acquiring Islam and modern knowledge for all of its diversified people. Illiteracy rate was very high in the later part of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, it was the failure of the Ottoman Empire to bring real Islam in their ruling and all fields that brought its demise. Without the reformation of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, it is likely that Turkey, the remnant of the Ottoman Empire would be sliced by the foreign powers of Britain, France and Russia which all the time desired to expand their territory of influence.

Another point of dispute was the ruling of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk in the later part of his life. The Republic People Party ruled in a totalitarian way that cannot be criticised. It tolerated no opposition or voices in the one party system. This was against Westernization and in the west, after the French revolution of 1789, Europe had adopted the liberalized party system. For this Mustapha Kemal Ataturk invited his friend, Fethi (Okyar) to form the Free Republican Party to challenge his own Republic People Party. However, only after one election, there was an outcry from the Republic People Party so he told his friend to shut down the party.

As for the evolution of democracy, Turkey needs to rethink her constitution. The present constitution is the result of a military coup in September 1980 which was confirmed by a referendum of a big majority. Today's Turkey is different from the Turkey before the military coup of 1980. There is no political violence and murder like before. Besides, the National Security Council controlled by high military seemed to be unnecessary. It only gave a bad name to democracy in Turkey. Some people addressed the democracy as an unconsolidated democracy, [36] electoral democracy or incomplete democracy [37].

As for the future political and economic prospects of Turkey, Turkey has a high economic growth and with the present ruling party of Justice and Development which broke the record in three general elections, it should be able to sail happily into the future with confidence. However, Turkey should observe the weaknesses caused by Western civilization in other countries considered as melting pots like Greece, Italy and Spain which have huge unfavourable deficits in their accumulated national budgets and thus Turkey should avoid falling into a similar position. Avoiding huge spending in the budget may delay growth but it is a healthy growth that would not get the nation into an unhappy crisis.

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