



Investigation of the cultural effect of the recent amendments in the populace of Turkey from 1923 to 1952

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ABSTRACT

Ottoman Empire was formed in the early thirteenth century by a tribal head named Uthman who was of the Turks living I Anatolia. This government, which was formed based on the conquests, had been the cause of anxiety of European for centuries and this anxiety was real because the Ottoman government had conquered by that time, using Turkish tribes and using warrior tradition (fighting with the pagan), all Balkan peninsula and vast sections of the eastern Europe but with the advent of new centuries, the Europeans gradually gained power and passed the Ottoman in power. The Ottomans who noticed the accomplishments of the Europeans compensated their lagging behind by doing new amendments in the mode of the Europeans. These amendment started seriously in the Ottoman Empire from the early nineteenth century and were followed until the of the age of this empire. These amendments have been followed in the modern Turkey with much intensity.

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Introduction

Ottoman Empire was formed in the early thirteenth century by a tribal head named Uthman who was of the Turks living I Anatolia. This government, which was formed based on the conquests, had been the cause of anxiety of European for centuries and this anxiety was real because the Ottoman government had conquered by that time, using Turkish tribes and using warrior tradition (fighting with the pagan), all Balkan peninsula and vast sections of the eastern Europe but with the advent of new centuries, the Europeans gradually gained power and passed the Ottoman in power. The Ottomans who noticed the accomplishments of the Europeans compensated their lagging behind by doing new amendments in the mode of the Europeans. These amendment started seriously in the Ottoman Empire from the early nineteenth century and were followed until the of the age of this empire. These amendments have been followed in the modern Turkey with much intensity.

Here we attempt to investigate the effects of these amendments on the populace from the fall of the Ottomans (1923), resulted from the defeat in the First World War to 1952.

Quality of New Amendments

“My friends, those who conquer solely by sword are doomed to fall by those who conquer by the ploughshare and finally give their place to them. This is what went with Ottoman Empire.”

Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) (Lewis, 1372: 642)

The new republic that came into being in 1923 with the fall of the reign of Ottoman only had a name of republic and in fact it was a mono party regime and a dictatorship and had a more realistic vision compared to the reign of ottoman. Although this government had a smaller geographic area compared with that of the ottomans, this scope was socially more cohesive because most of the had been Turkish and less than %2 were non-Muslim. Still, they had inherited a destructed land. But there came no hesitation in their determination and they quickly put their feet in the path of doing amendments to part away from

their past. The complete investigation of these amendments is not included in our discussion. We just deal to the ones in which the fast impacts and affects of populace are obvious.

Perhaps the most important aspect in the new amendments was their conflict with Islam. And maybe these measures had been a reaction to the defeat of centuries of religious wars and backwatering as a result of the measures of religious heads and especially the defeat of the last religious war (World War I) that had imposed the most damage on the Turks in the ottoman history.

There had been little opposition from the side of people with these amendments that would be cleared away soon by the government. On the other hand, government made a real change in the financial status of the villagers by practicing some monopolies that undoubtedly led to the absorption of their loyalty—that were more than %85 of the population of country—or at least led to their silence at the time of social storms (Lewis, 1372: 644).

Monopolies, in addition to the fact that they had been one of the most beneficial public sources of income in Turkey, had been used as a regulator of agricultural and industrial product prices in the market in a way that some the products was purchased from the farmer and was used in state factories. In this way, the farmer was free from the danger of instability of market and also exploitation by wholesalers and on the other side, the monopoly toll is added to the price of in the factories and the products are sold. For this purpose, there came an office of monopolies that helped farmers by distribution of scientifically prepared seeds and sometimes with bestowing loans to farmers (Pole Ro, 1352: 82).

Of the most important problems that the country was grappling with was illiteracy. At the beginning of the revolution, almost no one of the villagers, who were more than %85 of the population of country, were not able to read and write (Pole Ro, 1352: 49, 67). The government quickly did some amendments about this which was effective in the public education both

quantitatively and qualitatively. Religious schools were eliminated and, according to the first republic fundamental law in 1924, all the educational centers came under the control of government (Shadan, 1373: 141) and also compulsoriness of elementary education that had previously been legislated (1869) in ottoman period was practically practiced in this time (Parvand, 1373: 145). The forbiddance of the entrance of mohajabe girls to elementary schools was of the collection of the laws legislated in 1925 (Parvand, 1373: 119).

Of other activities of the Turkish government was ending the regiments of feudalist advantages in remote area of Anatolia. Legislation of the Swiss agrarian government in 1926 ended the regiments of feudalism but the juristic ending was not enough and this condition still existed in some parts of the country especially in South and east and the regime of Kemal narrowly succeeded in its attempts against such powers (Lewis, 1372: 641-45).

It can be said about the economic demarche of the government that economic crisis of the west had led to a pessimism to capitalism in the early years of the republic and effected some samples of USSR governmental economy to be accepted and this was the first factor that led to the development of the government's control and castration of private industry. The second factor about this was that the thought 'the government takes the responsibility' was a simple and familiar idea in a country like Turkey that was completely in line with the ancestral traditions and the habits of leaders and followers. In the view of regime, leadership and control of the economic life was completely normal. Economic development was important in a way that it should not be given to unfaithful businessmen and ignorant people (Lewis, 1372: 647-48). In this regard, the government was introduced as manufacturer from 1933 and in fact the basis of governmental economy was established and after that governmental banks got the main helm of industry, though in some cases foreign investment was allowed (Pole Ro, 1352: 95) and it was like this that as someone called Izzat Pashah said nationalists movement was "not like democracy nor like socialism. We should be proud that we are not comparable because we are like ourselves" (Lewis, 1372: 641).

The majority of the income if Turkey was from agriculture (Pole Ro, 1352: 80) and the government had been trying to develop crops and the words of Atatürk that was quoted at the beginning demonstrates this attention and endeavor, but the main obstacle for the development of agriculture was the weak poeopetion of the locals that had been intensified by the immigration of non-Muslims (Lamush, 1316: 408) and due to this simple sociologic reason that the number of people was not enough for overcoming natural elements, the development had low level (Kuzer, 1388: 258).

Amendatory measure of Atatürk were followed after his death in 1938 until 1945 almost with the same intensity but after 1945 this program was a little wavered because from those years the tendency towards a multi party and democracy system was gradually formed after which consequence different parties and even the reigning party contest with each other for preparing the needs of the populace who had been mostly villagers and illiterate. The result of such contest was expression of religious demand of people after which some movements were done by the government for satisfying these demand and this meant something that was against the wishes of Atatürk.

The Effect of Religion-Effacement Measures of Atatürk on the Populace

Religion-effacement measures of Atatürk did not brought about those great results that were expected because of two major reasons. The first reason was the lack of constancy in Atatürk's measures after 1945 since 22 years is a very short time for such great change (Religion effacement). The shortness of this period can be considered as the reasons of lack of proper success in the process of religion effacement in the society of Turkey. The second reason was in fact a sociologic reason. As sociologists believe, two factors that lead two the improvement of the element of religion in a society is poverty and ignorance. In this regard, it can be said that Atatürk's measures could not destroy the roots of poverty and ignorance in Turkish society; thus, according to this analysis, it was natural that loyalty to religion be kept among people. Even in 1935, only %20 of Turkish people could read and write (Parvand, 1373: 143) and even until 1952 populace of nation were living in a low level (Pole Ro, 1352: 74).

The Effects of Atatürk's Measures in Improvement of People's Esprit of Democracy

Although Atatürk's regime had been a dictatorship, this tyranny was brought him because of the emergency and he himself wished that one day the Turkish nation be ready for having a democracy and it was in line with this thought his successor and friend Ismet İnönü permitted the activity of parties from 1945 and even in 1950 gave power to the contesting party in a completely peaceful way.

But it should be said that even in these years the Turkish nation did not have enough support for having a democracy and later instabilities in the country truly shows this reality. The main reason of this was the fact that Atatürk's revolution brough cultural changes for the cities of Turkey but it did not have any effects of the cultures of villages (Lewiss, 1372: 660) and in fact it could not make villagers participate in the country measures because the regime of Kemal was not that successful in the agrarian amendment measures that could culturally pave the way for the participation of the villagers. Thus, the feelings of dominion and belonging, and personal right were still so weak in villages.¹ On the other hand, due to the fact that the economy was governmental and there was a lack of participation in private economy, cultural background of the participation of people had not been appropriate.²

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¹ This analysis is based on the analysis of *Why Iran Backwatered and the West Promoted* by Kazim Alamdari.

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