

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM: TURKISH EXPERIENCE

Ergun Özsunay

A. A BRIEF STORY OF SECULARISATION IN TURKEY

Turkey is one of the moslem countries in the world. Over 99 percent of the country's population are muslims. The sunni rite is predominant. It is closely followed by the shi'ite. Christians are few. There are orthodox christians (mostly Greeks), gregorians (mostly Armenians) and Roman catholics. There is also a jewish community. Most Turkish Jews are descendants of the jews expelled from Spain five hundred years ago.

I. Before the foundation of the **Republic of Turkey** (1923), the legal order of the Ottoman Empire was a **religious law** based on Islam. It was called **Shari'a**, holy law of Islam.

Shari'a was a theocratic law and aimed at the regulation of relationships between individuals as well as between individuals and State and State organisations. This part of Shari'a was called **fiqh**.

The **rules of Shari'a** were mandatory, unchanged and absolute.

There were four religious schools in the sunni Islamic world. The legal order of the Ottoman Empire (Shari'a) was based on the opinions and interpretation of the religious school of "**Hanafi**".

The Ottoman Sultans were not only the heads of the Empire, but also a **caliph**, Muhammed's successors as **heads of Islam**. (For details see

Ergun Özsunay, *Legal Science During The Last Century: Turkey, Inchieste Di Diritto Comparato*, 6, *Legal Science During The Last Century*, Padova, 1976, pp.695 et seq.).

II. The first **movement of secularisation** in the Ottoman Empire began after 1839 (Promulgation of the Decree on "**Tanzimat**" [Reforms]). (For details see **Niyazi Berkes**, *Teokrasi ve Laiklik* [Theocracy and Secularism], İstanbul, 1984, pp 29 et seq.; **Faik Bulut**, *Ordu ve Din* [Military and Religion], İstanbul, 1995, pp.21 et seq.).

During the "period of Tanzimat" several western codes, particularly major French laws, were adopted by the Ottoman Empire for **westernization and secularisation of the legal system**.

On the other hand, in the XIXth century, some codifications of national character were achieved. Ottoman's "**Mecelle**" (Mejelle) was the first important codification in the world of Islam covering several fields of law (law of obligations and property, but except family law and inheritance).

Another important enactment was the "**Family Law Decree**" of 1917 which dealt with relationships in the field of family law.

III. After the promulgation of the **Republic in Turkey** (29 October 1923), the process of secularisation was carried out by the founders of the Republic with determination, patience and perseverance .

In the **secularisation process**, the following stages can be observed:

1. First, the **caliphate** was abolished by the **Act, No. 431 on Abrogation of Caliphate** of 03 March 1924 (Hilafetin İlgası ve Hanedan Osmaninin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Memaliki Haricine Çıkartılması Dair Kanun). At the same date, **religious education** was also abolished by the **Act on Unification of Education, No. 430** of 03 March 1924 (Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu).
2. It was followed by the **Act, No. 677** of 30 November 1925 abolishing **dervish lodges and cells** and prohibited use of some titles related to sects (Tekke ve Zaviyelerle Türbelerin Seddine ve Türbedarlıklar ile Bir Takım Unvanların Men ve İlgası Dair Kanun).
3. In the **Constitution of 20 April 1924**, it was stated that the religion of the Turkish State was **Islam** (Art. 2). This provision was abolished by the Act, No. 1222 of 10 April 1928. In 1937, the principle of **secular-**

alism was inserted to the Constitution by the Act, No. 3115.

4. Then, in 1926, the **Swiss Civil Code and Code of Obligations** were adopted totally with some slight amendments and alterations.

Thus, important steps were taken especially in family relationships (equality between man and woman, rights to divorce and parental authority to woman, etc.).

Adoption of Swiss Civil Code and Code of Obligations was followed by the total adoptions of other foreign laws in several fields (Turkish Code of Civil Procedure from Swiss Canton Neuchatel [later several amendments]; Turkish Execution and Bankruptcy Law from Switzerland [later several amendments]; Turkish Penal Code from Italy [later several amendments] Turkey departed definitely the Islamic law family and joined the western legal system. Thus, Islamic law became a part of its "droit ancien". (See **Ergun Özsunay**, op. cit. pp. 699 et seq.; **Ergun Özsunay**, *Karşılaştırmalı Hukuka Giriş* (Introduction to Comparative Law), Istanbul, 1976, pp.270 et seq. Further see **K. Lipstein**, The Reception of Western Law in Turkey, in *Annales de la Faculté de Droit d'Istanbul*, 1956, No. 6, pp. 11-27).

Thus the **principle of secularism** became one of the pillars of modern Turkey.

B. PRINCIPLE OF SECULARISM UNDER THE TURKISH CONSTITUTION

Under the **Turkish Constitution**, No. 2709 of 07 November 1982, the Turkish State is a **republic** (form of State) (Art. 1). The Republic of Turkey is a **democratic, secular and social State** governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concept of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting of human rights; loyal to **nationalism of Atatürk** and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble (Art.2).

One of the basic characteristics of the Republic of Turkey, **secularism** is defined as no interference whatsoever of sacred religious feeling in state affairs and politics in the **Preamble** of the Constitution.

According to the Constitution, the provision establishing the form of the State as republic (Art. 1) and the provision on the **characteristics of**

the Republic (democratic, secular and social State) (Art. 2) may not be amended. Even their amendment may not be proposed (Art. 4).

Under Turkish Constitution the **right to religious freedom** is one of the basic rights. The right to freedom of religion includes the freedom to change one's own religion and the right not to have a religion.

As the other contemporary constitutions, also the Turkish Constitution gurarantees several basic rights and freedoms. Under the Constitution, everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction (Art. 24/I). (Art. 9 of the **European Convention of Human Rights**.)

In Turkey, **instruction in religious culture and moral education** are compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary shools.

Other religious education and instruction are subject to the individual's own desire, and in case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives.

Under the Constitution, every person has the right to form **association** without prior permission (Art.33). Moreover, everyone has the right to **freedom of peaceful assembly** (Art. 34. See Art. 11 of the **European Convention on Human Rights**).

Religious meetings in Turkey are subject to the "freedom of association and assembly". (See **Act on Gatherings and Demonstrations, No. 2911** dated 06 November 1983 and **Act on Associations, No. 2908** of 04 October 1983 [as amended]).

As a reflection of the principle of secularism, "associations which aim even in part at subjugating the State's social, economic or legal foundations to religious rules or which aim at abusing or exploiting in any way the religion or religious feelings so as to gain political or personal benefit or influence" may not be formed (Act of Associations, No. 2908 Art. 5 No. 8). (For details on the law of associations in Turkey see **Ergun Özsunay**, *Medeni Hukukumuzda Tüzel Ki_iler* (Tüzel Ki_ilerin Genel Teorisi-Dernekler-Vak_ılar), [Legal Entities in Our Civil Law (General Theory of Legal Entities-Associations-Foundations)], 2nd edition, Istanbul, 1982).

C. ROOTS AND GROUNDS OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM IN TURKEY

I. The first reactions against secularism

The reaction against Atatürk's Revolution and secular state is not a new "social fact" in Turkey. It has started immediately after the foundation of the Republic (the Sheik Said's rebellion in 1925 and the Menemen rebellion on 23 December 1930 by adherents of the Nak_ıbendi sect). The aim of the religious fanatics was to bring a religious state based on Shari'a. These rebellions were suppressed by the Republic. After 1950, some small scale reactionary movements against the Republic have occurred from time to time as the results of provocations of reactionaries. They never constituted, however, a serious danger against the existence of the Republic as they were not well organized and supported by people. Therefore, they have been easily suppressed by the forces of the Republic.

II. Grounds of present islamic fundamentalism in Turkey

Today, the situation is different. The Republic of Turkey faces a serious fundamentalist movement threatening its existence in its 74 years history.

The concept of "fundamentalism" has several meanings in social and political sciences (see **Faik Bulut**, *_slamc_ Örgütler [Islamic Organizations]*, 2nd edition, Istanbul, 1994, pp 789 et seq.; Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy, Fear of the Modern World*, Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992, pp.160-161). In this paper, "**islamic fundamentalism**" is being used as a radical reactionary movement aiming at undermining the Republic of Turkey and establishing a religious state in Turkey based on Shari'a.

The rise of islamic fundamentalism in Turkey is based on the following grounds:

1. New Turkish individual created as the result of free market economy and liberalism in the oriental sense

The free market economy and wild liberalism (liberalism without rules) applied in Turkey after 1980 by Prime Minister Özal (the so-called "**Özalizm**") have given a new impulse to the Turkish economy for invest-

ment and brought it to the world markets for competition; but created, at the same time, a new Turkish individual. This new Turkish individual follows, in principle, his personal interests. He has been trained as "consumer" and brainwashed incessantly for consumption. His aim is to achieve in business and to become rich in a short time without much effort. He is depoliticized to a certain extent. He is no more a son or daughter of the Republic. He seems as secular individual, enjoys advantages of secularism and the regime of Republic, but is not interested in defending secularism and Republic against their enemies. He is aware of the nation wide reactionary (religious) movements threatening the existence of the Republic, human rights violations, unfair distribution of income etc., but does not contribute personally to the civil organizations defending secularism, the Republic and human rights. He prefers just to observe social and political developments in the country with anxiety as a passive citizen as if an outsider.

This new Turkish individual, passive and indifferent in social and political developments, constitutes a rather suitable social environment for the development of religious fundamentalism.

Therefore, the votes of the very well organized anti-secular **Welfare Party** (WP, Refah Partisi) have increased from 7.2 % in 1987 (votes of National Salvation Party, Milli Selamet Partisi, the predecessor of WP at that date) to 21.38 % in 1995 general election. WP has succeeded to take 19.1 % of votes in the local election in 1994. The so-called program for "**just order**" (adil düzen) of the WP has won success even in great cities. Thus the municipalities of greater Istanbul and Ankara have been won by the WP. (See **Erbil Tu_alp, _eriat_ Beklemenin Dayan_Imaz Hafifli_i** [Unberaeble Lightness of Waiting for Shari'a], in "Cumhuriyet", 22 March 1996, p. 12).

2. Situation of centrist rightist and social democratic parties

In Turkey, three centrist rightist parties exist: **True Path Party** (TPP, Do_ru Yol Partisi), **Motherland Party** (MP, Anavatan Partisi) and **Democratic Party of Turkey** (DPT, Demokrat Türkiye Partisi). All of them are loyal to the Constitution and devoted to a secular and democratic regime in Turkey. Their political programs and aims are more or less

similar. Until now, they could not unify or merge, unfortunately, under a centrist rightist party due to reasons of leadership.

As regards **social democrats**, the same situation can be observed. Two social democratic parties exist side by side addressing to the same circle of people: **Social Democratic Party** (SDP, Sosyal Demokrat Parti) and **Republican People's Party** (RPP, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi). Like rightist parties, social democrats have also failed to unify under a leftist party because of several subjective reasons related to leadership.

For years, continuous political struggle among the parties defending the Republic and secularism in Turkey has created a suitable environment for the improvement of WP. Because of the dispersion of votes, the anti-secular WP has achieved to be the first party in the country. In the last general election held on 24 December 1995, WP has taken 21.30 % of votes. The votes taken by the other parties are as follows: MP 19.65 % ; TPP 19.18 % ; SDP 14.64 %; RPP 10.71 %. The Nationalistic Action Party, (MHP, Milli Hareket Partisi), the radical nationalist party has taken 8.18 % of votes.

These parties have not produced, unfortunately, new programs that would be an alternative to the so-called "just order" program of WP. Further, they could not question sufficiently WP on its long term aims to return to Shari'a.

They have tried to keep WP within the system instead of excluding and isolating it from the system. The former coalition government formed by TPP of Mrs Çiller and WP of Mr. Erbakan has provided the opportunity to WP to place their men at key points in the State. (See **Erbil Tu alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 22 March 1996, p. 12). According to the **Office of General Staff** the number of supporters of WP placed to the posts in the State organs are approximately 170.000 persons. (See Cumhuriyet, 02 August 1997, pp. 1 and 17).

3. Attitude of rightist liberal parties

The centrist rightist parties have an important obstacle in the struggle against islamic fundamentalism practiced by WP. These parties have members in the parliament representing islamic fundamentalism. Therefore, they have been feeling continuously that they have to flirt with

WP for keeping their votes.

Due to this situation, the leaders of the pro-secular parties did not refrain even to contact Mr. Fetullah Gülen, the leader of **Nurculuk sect.** (See **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 28 March 1996, p. 12).

Under the influence of their fundamentalist members, the centrist rightist parties have played an important role in the establishment of innumerable "**imam-preacher schools**" (imam-hatip okulu) where school children are brainwashed and trained as enemies of the Republic under the guise of teaching religion. Thus on the one hand, the **Koran courses** (Kuran kurslar_) (their number approximately 40.000 scattered in the country) run partly by fanatical reactionaries and enemies of the Republic in Turkey and abroad without supervision of the State organs; on the other hand, "**imam-preacher schools**" where usually children of middle and lower classes attend have become the breeding ground of religious fundamentalism and the "back yard" of the WP. (See **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 25 March 1996, p. 12).

4. Planned and organized endeavours of WP for islamization of the regime

It should be noted that WP is the best organized political party in Turkey. Its activities are well coordinated and partly computerized. Its members are in solidarity, ready to obey and carry out the instructions to be given by the high ranks of the party. There is a contradiction, however, between the **aims declared in the program of the party** in accordance with law (see Act on Political Parties, No. 2820 of 22 April 1983, Arts 79 - 89) and the **practice of the party**.

According to the aims of the party declared in its By Laws and in its program named the so-called "**just order**" (adil düzen), the WP gives the impression that it is a conservative political party run for power in the the democratic and secular system in Turkey.

In fact, the practices of WP show that it is against **secularism**. WP has been exploiting religion and religious beliefs for coming to power.

Mr Erbakan, leader of WP, expressed in his speech of 13 April 1994 that Shari'a or the Islamic regime will be brought to Turkey either by

"soft ways" or by "shedding blood". **Mr Tayyip Erdo_an**, major of the greater Istanbul, an ardent and devoted member of WP, declared several times that he is a supporter of Shari'a (20 November 1994) (see **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 25 March 1996, p. 12).

The so-called "**just order**" of WP is against the full membership of Turkey to the EU. Moreover, WP is against NATO and other commitments of the Republic in its foreign policy. It advocates to establish an **Islamic Common Market** and to accept a common **islamic dinar**. National frontiers should be removed between the islamic countries. Social and family life of woman should be arranged in accordance with the rules of Shari'a (obedient to husband, devoted to household). WP seems it has accepted the "**principle of theodemocracy**" used and developed by Mr. Mevdudi, leader of Cemaat-i Islam, under which it is advocated that an islamic party can come to the power by democratic ways in a country where the majority of people are moslems (see **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 25 March 1996, p. 12).

In its ideology, WP is in favor of an "**islamic community**" (ümme), instead of islamic nations (millet). Thus it believes that the "Kurdish problem" can be solved by the law of Allah (Shari'a) (see **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 22 March 1996, p. 12).

In view of WP, the Constitution of the nation should be the Koran. In its "**Consensus Proposal on Amendment of Constitution**" of 09 December 1995 (Anayasa De_i_ikli_i Uzla_ma Teklifi), prepared in the light of the so-called "just order" program, WP proposed the removal of the following provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey:

- the principle of "republic" as the form of the State (Art. 1);
- the characteristics of the Republic (democratic, secular and social State) (Art. 2);
- the principle of indivisible entity of the Turkish State with its territory and nation (Art. 3);
- the provision on the flag, national anthem and capital of the country (Art. 3).

Thus WP has disclosed its real aims not only by words of its leader and its high rank managers; but also by its **Proposals on constitutional amendments** despite the Constitution declares expressly that the provi-

sions relating to the form of the State (Republic), to the characteristics of the Republic and to the integrity of the State, official language, flag, national anthem and capital may not be amended. Even their amendment may not be proposed (Art. 4). Needless to say that all these activities are contrary to **Act on Political Parties, No. 2820** (Arts 79 - 89).

It is clear that these are the preparations for undermining of the Republic and establishing an islamic regime in Turkey (see **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 29 March 1996, p. 12).

Therefore, WP supports incessantly the movement for **wearing headscarf** by girl students at the universities and by nurses university clinics in spite it has been prohibited by law (**Act No. 2547 on Higher Education** as amended several times and lastly by the Act, No.3670 in 1990) for the purpose of protection of the principle of secularism.

Likewise, WP is behind the **military officers or noncomissioned officers** dismissed from the military on the ground of their adherence to **unlawful fundamentalist sects** and activities in these sects.

The decision of the **European Court of Human Rights** dated 01 July 1997 [**Mr. Kalaç vs Turkey**] is related to dismissal of an army officer on the ground of his adherence to fundamentalist **Süleymanç_I_k sect** (tarikât). The **European Court of Human Rights** has dismissed the case and held unanimously on 01 July 1997 that there has been no breach of Art. 9 of the **European Convention on Human Rights**.

5. Contribution of radical nationalism

Radical rightist and racist parties and groups in Turkey enjoy the same methods and tactics used by fundamentalist islamic movement.

In several massacres of leftists and socialists who are regarded by WP and its predecessor the National Salvation Party as agents of communism against Islam, a certain collaboration between radical right and fundamentalist Islam can be observed.

In the 1970's, the killings of socialists and communists at several places in the country were the actions of the **radical rightists** (the so-called "gray wolves"). The **Sivas Massacre** occurred on 02 July 1993 seems also as a typical example of the **collaboration of fundamentalist Islam and the radical nationalism**. In this massacre several inte-

Intellectuals and writers (leftist) attending a meeting at a hotel in Sivas (eastern Anatolia) were burned by radicals upon the provocation of WP's key men in this city .

However, the nationalistic rightist movement represented by the Nationalistic Action Party has turned recently against the islamic fundamentalism and the WP. (See **Erbil Tu_alp**, in "Cumhuriyet", 22 March 1996, p. 12).

6. Support of Islamic corporations, foundations and associations to the islamic fundamentalism

The islamic fundemantalist movement in Turkey is supported financially and spiritually by several **islamic corporations, associations and foundations**.

- a) The recent investigations of the Board of Capital Market (Sermaye Piyasas_Kurulu) have disclosed that approximately 15 % of the yearly net income of the corporations with islamic capital (e.g. Kombassan, _ttifak, _kram, Yimpa_ etc.) is given as donation to imam-preacher schools, Koran courses, associations for construction of mosques and fundamentalist foundations in order to support their activities. (See Cumhuriyet, 04 August 1997, p. 1 and 10).
- b) Further, WP and the religious fundamentalism in Turkey is continuously supported and financed by **innumerable foundations and associations founded for islamic cause by fundamentalists** in Turkey and abroad. (For details see **Faik Bulut**, Ordu ve Din [Military and Religion], pp. 150 et seq.). Particularly, **National Youth Foundation** (Milli Gençlik Vakf_) has very close contacts with WP.
- c) The most remarkable and important supporter of WP is the **National Standpoint Organization of Europe** (NSOE, Avrupa Milli Görü_Te_kilat_).

NSOE was formed in Köln, Germany in 1976 under the German Law on Associations (Vereinsgesetz). It had organic connection with the National Salvation Party, the predecessor of WP before 1980. At present it has close connections with WP as well as with other organizations in islamic countries. WP carries out its relationships in Europe

through NSOE. The general meetings of NSOE are attended by the high rank party members and fundamentalist politicians. NSOE has 487 mosques, 313 places for Koran courses, 30.000 members and approximately 85.000 sympathizers. Its activities are carried out in Berlin by Berlin Islamic Federation (Berlin _slam Federasyonu). (See **Metin Gür**, _ariat ve Refah [Shari'a and Welfare Party], in "Cumhuriyet", 14-18 April 1997 ; **Faik Bulut**, _slamc_ Örgütler [Islamic Organizations], pp. 750 et seq.).

NSOE has assets (buildings and accounts) in Germany and other European countries. It organizes meetings, colloquia and symposia in the European countries where Turkish migrant workers live. In these meetings, the doctrine and practice of islamic fundamentalism (indoc-trination) are taught to participants by the invited fundemantalists and WP's politicians.

NSOE collects, further, money from supporters of religious funda-mentalism abroad. Great amount of cash money is usually sent through reliable courriers to WP and deposited to bank accounts in name of fiduciaries. The most actual case in this respect is the courier "**Mercümek case**" that is at present before the courts.

NSOE organizes also pilgrimage journeys from European cities to Mecca for Turkish migrant workers. Moreover, it has and runs several commercial enterprises and super markets where usually products of islamic firms are sold.

Recent investigations show that NSOE has close contacts with funda-mentalistic organizations like Association for Calling Islam (_slama Ça_r_ Cemiyeti) in Libya , Hizbullah in Iran, Islamic Community (Cemaat-i Islamiyye) in Pakistan, Moslem Brothers (Müslüman Karde_ler) in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine etc. NSOE has been partici-pating in international meetings organized by fundamentalist organi-zations. It has also contacts with diplomatic representatives of funda-mentalistic islamic countries.

d) Among the other fundamentalist organizations and sects founded in Germany by Turks, the following should be cited:

- **DITIP** (Turkish Islam Union for Religious Affairs, Diyanet __leri Türk _slam Birli_i);

- **Islamic Cultural Centers** (_slam Kültür Merkezleri);
- **Turkish-Islam Union** (Türk-_slam Birli_i) [founded by M. Serdar Çelebi] ;

Nak_ibendi Sect (tarikat): It has 800 disciples (mürid) and 1200 sympathizers. It runs 55 dervish convents. (For details on other organizations and sects see **Metin Gür**, in "Cumhuriyet", 14 April 1997, p. 10. Further see **Faik Bulut**, _slamc_ Örgütler [Islamic Organizations], pp. 757 et seq.).

7. Influence and support by fundamentalist islamic regimes

The religious fundamentalism in Turkey is supported ideologically by the fundamentalist islamic countries that aim at to undermine the secular democratic regime in Turkey.

The investigations have shown that Iran, Libya and Saudi Arabia are behind the fundamentalist action in the country.

After the **Imam Khomeini Revolution**, Iran intends to export its theocratic regime to the countries whose populations are moslem. Therefore, the religious fundamentalism in Turkey has been supported and financed by Iran. The investigations show that the "**Ministry for Guiding of Islam**" (_r_ad-_slami Bakanl__) and "Board of Islam" (Encümen-i _slami) in Iran are in charge to support fundamentalism in Turkey and other moslem nations (see **Faik Bulut**, _slamc_ Örgütler [Islamic Organizations], pp. 474 et seq.; Ordu ve Din [Military and Religion], pp. 181-182 and 447 et seq.). The "Jerusalem Night", a meeting organized by the WP's major in Sincan (near Ankara) in the guise of supporting the Phalestine cause on 30 January 1997 was in fact a meeting for Shari'a. It is interesting that the ambassador of Iran participated in this meeting and made a speech relating to the political regime of Turkey. This meeting is one of the typical cases showing the Iranian support to religious fundamentalism in Turkey.

Moreover, it has been disclosed several times that **Libya** made donations to WP to spend in election campaigns.

8. Isolation and exclusion of Turkey by EU

The **double standards applied by EU** with regard to future candidates for membership of EU and the policy of isolation and exclusion of Turkey by some EU members have caused remarkable negative impacts on the secular circles in Turkey. It is clear that islamic fundamentalism is and will be encouraged as long as the policy of exclusion against Turkey is carried out by EU.

Relations between **Turkey and the European Union (EU)** take place within the framework of **Association Agreement**, referred to **Ankara Agreement** signed on 12 September 1963 and effective 01 January 1973. The Ankara Agreement provided the possibility of Turkey's eventual membership in the EU. A **preparatory stage**, during which the Community gave support to Turkey to strengthen its economy, has been followed by a **transitional stage**, aimed at preparing both Turkey and the Community (EU) for eventual customs union.

The transitional stage was ushered by the **Additional Protocol**. Under this, tariffs between Turkey and the Community were to be reduced to zero, over a 12-year period for some goods and a 22-year period for others. Turkey applied for the full membership to the Community (EU) on 14 April 1995. Turkey and the EU signed an Agreement on 06 March in Brussels for the customs union etween Turkey and the EU. It came into force on 01 January 1996.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS: STRUGGLE AGAINST RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

I. As is seen the principle of "**secularism**" is one of the pillars of the Republic of Turkey. Under the principle of "secularism", Turkey constitutes a bridge between the Western World and the Moslem World. Secularism is a "conditio sine qua non" with regard to westernization of the nation and its future.

II. For protection of the principle of secularism and struggle against religious fundamentalism the following measures should be taken:

1. It is clear that the struggle against religious fundamentalism should not be left only to governments. In the Turkish current political system, it

has been observed that religious fundamentalism has flourished particularly during coalition governments in which the islamist party became a partner of the government. Therefore, protection of secularism and struggle against religious fundamentalism are a duty of **all civil organizations** (associations, foundations, trade unions, professional associations, bar associations, universities, etc.). For this purpose, close cooperation and coordination are necessary. A coalition among all secular and democratic civil organizations is a "must" to struggle against religious fundamentalism. At present, there are several attempts to combine all secular forces for the protection of the Republic.

2. One of the aims of religious fundamentalism in Turkey is to penetrate the military and other security forces (police) and to occupy commanding posts.

The military is aware of this strategy. The military regards itself as the heir of the "**Atatürk's Revolution**" (Atatürk Devrimi) and the "guardian" of the Republic as a tradition. Therefore, the Supreme Military Council is determined to dismiss officers and noncommissioned officers who are adherents to unlawful fundamentalist religious sects and other organizations aimed at to undermine the Republic and to establish a religious regime in Turkey. This year, 305 officers and non-commissioned officers, adherents to unlawful sects, have been removed from their posts by the Supreme Military Council on the ground of lack of loyalty to the Republic, namely to **principle of secularism** and breach of military discipline. (See Cumhuriyet, 02 August 1997, pp. 1 and 17; 03 August 1997, pp. 1 and 15).

3. **Unlawful donations and financial aids** to fundamentalist organizations in Turkey by islamic corporations, foundations or associations formed in the country or abroad should definitely be prevented. The assets of islamic corporations should be controlled by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Board of Capital Market and tax authorities. (See Cumhuriyet, 04 August 1997, pp 1 and 10).
4. All **Koran courses** (approximately 40.000) should be put under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education. These courses should be carried out by the Department of Religious Affairs, Prime

Ministry. Establishing Koran courses as boarding-school should not be permitted. In the guise of teaching religion, future enemies of the Republic should not be trained in these schools . (See Cumhuriyet, 21 July 1997, p. 5; Hürriyet, 05 August 1997, p. 34).

5. In Turkey, 71.293 **mosques** exist. Moreover, at present, 2617 mosques are under construction (see Hürriyet, 12 August 1997, p. 34). In Islam, a moslem may worship at any place. To go to mosque for worship is not mandatory. Mosques are places only for worship and prayer. Therefore, actual political issues should not be brought to the mosque. Particularly, after every Friday's common worship, demonstrations for Shari'a should be prevented. Support by political parties to such demonstrations should also be prevented. In this respect, the sanctions of the **Act on Political Parties**, No. 648 should apply (Arts 88 and 98 et seq.).
6. The **imam-preacher schools** that are used as the "back yard" of WP and training places for Islamic militants and future enemies of the Republic should be closed. For this reason, an 8 year incessant secular education should be made compulsory. A draft law for 8 year secular education submitted to the Grand National Assembly by the new coalition government has been adopted by the parliament by 277 votes against 242 on 16 August 1997 in spite of the opposition of TPP and fierce reaction of WP against the draft. The new law was signed by the President and published at the Official Gazette and came into force.

III. As is seen, religious fundamentalism in Turkey has nothing to do with the **freedom of religion and belief**. The freedom of religion and belief guaranteed by the Turkish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights as a part of the current Turkish law is constantly abused by religious fundamentalist circles whose aim is to undermine the Republic of Turkey and to establish a theocratic regime in Turkey.

In spite of the religious fundamentalism in Turkey flourished under the protection of pro-islamist governments and by the support of fundamentalist islamic states, the majority of the Turkish people is determined to maintain the system of secularism and to struggle with the enemies of the Republic.