

**THE BUILDING OF A MODERN TURKISH CIVILIZATION:  
A STUDY OF KEMAL ATATURK'S VISION AND  
APPROACH TO NATION-BUILDING**

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**'GIVE THANKS TO HIM; BLESS HIS NAME'**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation aims to study Kemal Ataturk's vision and approach in building a modern Turkish civilization. Turkish civilization dates back to ancient history and has seen the rise and fall of many dynasties and their accompanying civilizations. One such civilization was the Ottoman Empire which ruled and dominated Turkey for nearly six centuries, till its collapse in the early 20th century. It represented a nation deeply steeped in religious values and traditions which towards the last century of its decline, sought unsuccessfully to incorporate western ideas of science and technology in an effort to strengthen itself against the encroaching onslaught of the west. After the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate and caliphate, the nation embarked on a programme to build a modern Turkish nation. The leader of this modernization process was Ataturk whose secular reforms were based on the western model and aimed at side-lining religious traditions and practices – these having been blamed for the backwardness of the nation and the loss of its former glory and position in the world. The twin guiding principles of his vision was secularism and westernization, representing a determination to depart from the past and forming the basis of Kemalism. He used education as an agent of secularization and the military, the most modern institution of his time, both as a modernizer and to suppress opposition. Finally, Ataturk's radical reforms were really an extension and an acceleration of pre-existing attempts at reforming Ottoman society.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

- ANZAC** - **Australian and New Zealand Army Corps**
- CUP** - **Committee for Union and Progress**
- DP** - **Democrat Party**
- EU** - **European Union**
- NOP** - **Nation Order Party**
- NSP** - **National Salvation Party**
- RPP** - **Republican People's Party**
- WP** - **Welfare Party**

## **GLOSSARY**

- Caliph** - Islamic spiritual head
- Dervish** - Member of a tarikat
- Hapsburgs** - The Hapsburg dynasty of Austria
- Ghazi** - Muslim hero, fighter or warrior of the Islamic faith
- Grand Vizier** - Head of the ruler's administrative, military and judicial staff
- Janissary** - Salaried infantry soldier
- Madrasah** - Islamic religious school
- Nizam-i-cedid** - 'New Order' reform programme of Selim III. Also name of new western-style army
- Pasha** - A high ranking official
- Rum** - Rome
- Rumelia** - Land of the Romans
- Seyhul Islam** - Chief mufti or head of the religious authority
- Shari'ah** - Islamic canon law
- Shamanism** - Worship of the elements of nature
- Sufi** - Islamic mystic
- Sultan** - Islamic temporal head
- Tanzimat** - 'Reorganization': the period (1839-1867) during which a series of acts and westernizing reforms were introduced to change Ottoman society
- Tarikat** - Islamic mystical order, brotherhood or fraternity
- Osmanli** - Refers to the House of Osman or Ottoman in English
- Ulama** - Teacher of Islamic Law

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