

From Islam To Kufr: Dismantling The Khilafah & Disintegrating The Ummah

INTRODUCTION

The article that follows, is taken from Encyclopaedia Britannica and reproduced here with the aim to point out the following essential facts:

1. The demise of the Khilafah (The Islamic State) signified a practical dissolution of the 'Islamic Order' consequently obliterating any 'real' threat posed by a consolidated Ummah.
2. 'Nationalism' and its inevitable manifestation in the form of 'Nation States' contributed to the division of the Ummah.
3. The idea of 'secularism' and 'sovereignty belongs to the nation' proved to be the cornerstones of the new era in the Muslim World.

TURKISH NATIONALISM

A new sense of Turkish identity began to develop in late 19th century and early 20th century. This new concept was fostered by educational work of the Turkish Society (1908) and the Turkish Hearth (1912). A political twist was given by the adherents of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanianism. Pan-Turkism, which aimed at the- political union of all Turkish-speaking peoples, began among Turks in the Crimea and on the Volga. Its leading exponent was Ismail Bey Gasprinski (Gaspimb; 1851-1914), who attempted to create a common Turkish language. many Pan-Turkists migrated to Ottoman lands, especially after 1905. One of them Yusuf Akcuroaglu, argued in *Uc tarz-l siyaset* (1903; "Three Kinds of Policy") that Turkism provided a better basis for the Ottoman Empire than either Islam or Ottomanism. Pan-Turanianism developed from a now much-disputed 19th century theory of common origin of Turkish, Mongol, Tungus, Finnish, Hungarian, and other languages; in certain very limited circles it looked forward to a great political federation of speakers of these languages, extending from Hungary to Pacific. These ideas, however, found little support within the Ottoman government. The accusation that the Young Turks pursued a deliberate policy of Turkification within the empire so as to alienate non-Turkification within the empire so as to alienate non-Turks and promote the rise of Arab and Albanian nationalism is an oversimplification. The extension of government activity inevitably brought with it the language of government-Turkish. This produced some reaction from speakers of other languages, but evidence suggests that it did not override basic feelings of Muslim solidarity, except among some small minorities. It was among the Christian groups that distinct separatist ideas were developed.

WORLD WAR 1: ALLIED WAR AIMS & THE PROPOSED PEACE SETTLEMENT'

Entente proposals for the partition of Ottoman territories were formulated in a number of wartime agreements. By the Istanbul Agreements (March-April 1915) Russia was promised Istanbul and the Straits; and France, a sphere of influence in Syria and Cilicia. Britain had already annexed Cyprus and declared a protectorate over Egypt. By the Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement (January 3, 1916) the French sphere was confirmed and extended eastward to Mosul in Iraq. A British sphere in Mesopotamia as far north as Baghdad, control of Haifa and Acre, and a linking sphere of influence were recognised. Palestine was to be placed under an international regime. In compensation, the Russian gains were extended (April-May 1916) to include the Ottoman provinces of Trabzon, Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis in Eastern Asia Minor. By the Agreement of St. -Jean-de-Maurienne (April 1917) Italy was promised a large area of south western Anatolia, including Izmir (Smyrna) and further sphere to the north. Britain made various promises of independence to Arab leaders, notably in the Husayn-MacMahon correspondence, 1915-1916, and, in the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917), promised to support the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

The Russian withdrawal in 1917 and post-war bargaining led to some modifications of these agreements, and the Allied terms were not finally presented until 1920. By the Treaty of Sevres (August 10, 1920) the Ottomans retained Istanbul and part of Thrace, but lost the Arab provinces and large area of Asia Minor to a newly created Armenian state with access to the sea, surrendered the Islands of Imroz and Bozcaada to Greece, and accepted arrangements that implied the eventual loss of Izmir to Greece. The Straits were internationalised, and strict European control of Ottoman finances was established. An accompanying tripartite agreement between Britain, France and Italy defined the extensive spheres of influence of the latter two powers. The treaty was ratified only by Greece and was abrogated by the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923) as the result of a determined struggle for independence waged under the leadership of the outstanding Ottoman wartime general Mustafa Kemal, later known as "Ataturk".

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN TURKISH STATE -KEMAL AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1919-1923

Although the legal Ottoman government in Istanbul, under the 36th, and last, Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI Vahideddin (ruled 1918-22) had decided that resistance to Allied demands was impossible, pockets of resistance remained in Asia Minor after the armistice. These included bands of irregulars and deserters, certain intact Ottoman forces, and various societies for the defence of rights. Resistance was stimulated by the Greek occupation of Izmir (May 15, 1919). At this time Mustafa Kemal was sent on an official mission to Eastern Asia Minor, landing at Samsun on May 19. He immediately began to organise resistance, despite official Ottoman opposition. Through the Association for the Defence of the Rights of Eastern Anatolia (founded March 3, 1919), he summoned a congress at Erzurum (July-August), followed by a second congress at Sivas (September) with delegates representing the whole country. A new Association for the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia was established, and an executive committee with Mustafa Kemal as chairman was created to conduct resistance.

The official government yielded to Kemalist pressure. The unpopular grand vizier, Damad Ferid Pasa, resigned and was replaced by the more sympathetic Ali Riza Pasa. Negotiations with the Kemalists were followed by the election of a new parliament, which met in Istanbul in January 1920. A large majority in parliament was opposed to the official government policy and passed the "National Pact," which embodied the political aims of independence roughly within the October 1918 armistice lines and which had been formulated at Erzurum and Sivas. The Allies countered by extending the occupied area of Istanbul (March 16, 1920) and by arresting and deporting many deputies. Damad Ferid became grand vizier again on April 5 and, with religious support, set out to crush the Kemalists.

THE FUNDAMENTAL & ABOLITION OF SULTANATE

The Kemalists were now faced with local risings, official Ottoman forces, and the Greeks. The first necessity was to establish a legitimate basis of action. A parliament (the Grand National Assembly) met at Ankara on April 23 and asserted that the Sultan's government was under infidel control and that it was the duty of Muslims to resist foreign encroachment. In the Fundamental Law of January 20, 1921, the assembly declared that sovereignty belonged to the nation and that the assembly was the "true and only representative of the nation." The name of the state was declared to be "Turkey" (Turkiye); and executive power was entrusted to an executive council, headed by Mustafa Kemal, who could now concentrate on the war.

The result of the war and the peace settlement created a state in which the great majority spoke Turkish. Though there has been a tendency to see this as the almost inevitable consequences of the rise of Turkish and Arab nationalism, it seems in fact to have been the accident of war that broke

off the Arab provinces. Whatever the views of Mustafa Kemal himself, it is clear that the majority of his followers thought of themselves primarily as Muslims; in the elaborate religious ceremony that preceded the opening of the Grand National Assembly there was no word of Turks or Turkey but only of the need to save “religion's last country.” The creation of a sense of Turkish nationhood was the product of a long effort in which Mustafa Kemal played the dominant role.

Construction of a new political system began with the abolition of the Sultanate and the declaration of a republic. Loyalty to the Ottoman dynasty was strong even among Kemalists; but Vahideddin's identification with the Allies weakened his support. An Allied invitation to the Sultan to nominate representatives to Lausanne aided Kemal-a split Turkish delegation would be self-defeating. With a brilliant mixture of threats and persuasion, Kemal was able, therefore, to induce the Assembly to abolish the sultanate (November 1, 1922). Vahideddin left Turkey, and his cousin Abdulmecid (died 1944) was installed as the first and last Ottoman Caliph who was not also Sultan.

DECLARATION OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

The Caliphate was finally abolished on March 3, 1924, and all members of the Ottoman dynasty were expelled from Turkey. Before that the assembly had declared Turkey to be a Republic and had elected Mustafa Kemal as first President (October 29, 1923). A full Republican Constitution was adopted on April 20, 1924; it retained Islam as the State Religion, but in April 1928 this clause was removed and Turkey became a purely Secular Republic.

Ar-Raya Magazine, March 1993