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The Editorial Office of the *IRCICA Journal* is based at the headquarters of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) in İstanbul.

*IRCICA Journal* publishes articles on all aspects of Islamic civilisation, such as the history of culture, art, science, philosophy, literature, traditional handicrafts and archaeology. *IRCICA Journal* aims to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of Islamic civilisation, comprising of its written, architectural, cultural and artistic forms.

*IRCICA Journal* welcomes previously unpublished manuscripts on manifestations of Islamic civilisation in different regions within and outside the Muslim world including the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia. The intellectual outputs are hoped to serve the needs of researchers specializing in the fields of history, cultural studies, sociology, architecture, international relations and anthropology. *IRCICA Journal* considers all manuscripts on the strict condition that they have been submitted only to *IRCICA Journal*, that they have not been published already, nor are they under consideration for publication or in press elsewhere.

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References of the materials used in the articles should also be attached to the end of the articles. Surnames of the authors should be used before names.

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Prof. Güzel Sayfullina is an expert on musicology in general and Islamic arts and music in particular. She has been a lecturer at the Universities of Utrecht, Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands. She is the author of three books on these subjects in Russian including "Music of Holy Word: Recital of the Koran in the Traditional Tatar Muslim Culture" (1999), "Baghishlau/ Dedications in the Folk Culture of Tatar Muslims" (2005), "The Categories of Traditional Tatar Music: An Annotated Glossary" (2009). She also wrote various academic articles on such issues as the "Minaret and Azan"; "The Problem of Islam and Music in the History of Tatar Public Thought"; "Sound Art in the Traditional Tatar Muslim Culture"; "Tatar Muslim Artistic Culture: Problems of Study on the Border of the 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries"; "Musical Culture of the Tatar Muslims".

Tayyar Altıkulaç, Ph.D.

Former President of Directorate of Religious Affairs and Former Member of  
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Tayyar Altıkulaç, Ph.D. graduated from the Higher Islamic Institute of Istanbul, Turkey in 1963. He served as a lecturer in İstanbul and Kayseri Higher Islamic Institutes between 1965 and 1971. In the meantime, he studied the Arabic language at the University of Baghdad in Iraq. He received his Ph.D. in the field of tafseer (commentary on the Qur'an). He was appointed as the Vice-President of Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1971 and served in this post and later as the General Director of Religious Education at the Ministry of Education in Turkey until 1978. He was appointed as the President of Directorate of Religious Affairs in 1978 and voluntarily retired from this post in 1986. He was given an Honorary Professorship by the Azerbaijan National Creative Academy. Altıkulaç gave lectures at the Faculty of Theology at Marmara University and Baku State University in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, he directed the Centre for Islamic Studies ISAM of the Turkish Religious Foundation. He was elected as a member of parliament in the general elections in 1995 and 2002 and chaired the Commission on National Education, Culture and Sports in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. He is the founder and Chair of the Board of Trustees of İstanbul 29 May University, a foundation university. Published works of Tayyar Altıkulaç include "Abu Shame al-Makdisî val Murshidu'l-vacîz" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Beirut, 1975; Ankara 1986); "Our Holy Scripture Hz. Qur'an" (Ankara, 1982); "Tajweed al-Qur'ân" (Ankara, 1981); "Zehebî ve Ma'rifet al-Qurra" (I-IV, İstanbul 1995; Riyad 2003); "Al-Mushaf Al-Sharif attributed to Othman bin Affan" (Topkapı Palace Museum Copy) (IRCICA, İstanbul, 2007); "Al-Mushaf Al-Sharif attributed to Othman bin Affan" (The Copy in the Museum of Turkish-Islamic Works), ISAM, İstanbul 2007); "Al-Mushaf Al-Sharif attributed to Othman bin Affan R.A." (I-II, the Copy of Cairo el-Meshhed al Hüseyinî), (IRCICA, İstanbul, 2009); "Al-Mushaf Al-Sharif attributed to Ali bin Ebi Talip" (San'â Copy) (IRCICA, İstanbul, 2011).

Fazıl Bayat, Prof.

IRCICA

Prof. Fazıl Bayat received his Ph.D. in Islamic history from the University of Ankara in Turkey (1975) and the full professor rank from the University of Baghdad in 1989. His research interests are Turkish history, Ottoman State, the history of Arabs in the Ottoman State, Ottoman administrative system and Ottoman documentation. He served as a lecturer at the University of Baghdad, Iraq (1978-1996); Al-ul-Bayt University, Jordan (1996-2002); and the University of Jordan (2002 - 2007). He is currently employed as a researcher at the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) in Istanbul. Prof. Bayat published more than twenty books and tens of academic articles (including the following in the Arabic language):

"Glossary of Political, Economic, Legal and Military Terms", Baghdad, 1990; "Studies on the History of the Arabs in the Ottoman period: a New Vision in the Light of the Ottoman Documents and Sources", Dar al Madar al Islami: Beirut, 2003; "Bilad al-Sham in the Light of Sultani Orders according to Muhimme Records", the History of Bilad al-Sham Committee, University of Jordan: Amman, 2005; "The Ottoman State in the Arab Field: An Historical Study on the Administrative Situations in the light of Ottoman Documents and Sources up until mid-nineteenth century", Beirut, 2007; "Baghdad in the Ottoman Archives", IRCICA: Istanbul, 2008; "Arab Countries in the Ottoman Documents", IRCICA, Vol. I and II, Istanbul 2010 - 2011; "Education in the Eastern Arab Provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the light of the Documents from the Ottoman Ministry of Education" (under preparation).



## Editorial

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As the cultural subsidiary of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, it is with a great sense of humility and satisfaction that the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) presents *IRCICA Journal* to the attention of world community of scholars on Islamic history, civilisation, arts and culture. Over the course of its institutional existence since the early 1980s, IRCICA has been acknowledged as a renowned and vibrant international research centre focusing on the study of various aspects of Islamic civilisation and history. Meanwhile, it has formed an extensive international community of scholars on its officially mandated subjects and disciplines across the globe by organizing numerous symposia, congresses, exhibitions, competitions and publishing major reference books in various languages. It was time that this extensive academic community acquired a platform for open-ended discourse on a regular and voluntary basis, and *IRCICA Journal* is expected to provide this platform. Besides specifically targeted research produced for international conferences with a thematic or regional focus, *IRCICA Journal* is aimed at promoting original research on a variety of topics related to Islamic history and civilisation.

In this respect, the publication of *IRCICA Journal* as a peer-reviewed academic periodical including scholarly articles in English, French and Arabic (the official languages of the Centre) constitutes a real milestone that is expected to take the institutional impact of IRCICA on studies of Islamic civilisation to another level. With the kind contributions of our distinguished editorial and international advisory boards, we aim to establish *IRCICA Journal* as one of the most prestigious and highly regarded professional journals in its respective field. *IRCICA Journal* will publish academic articles on all aspects of Islamic civilisation such as archaeology and the history of culture, art, science, philosophy, literature and traditional handicrafts. It will strive to unravel the tangible and intangible aspects of Islamic civilisation including its written, architectural and cultural heritage in various regions including

the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. We sincerely hope that the intellectual reflections of the *IRCICA Journal* would serve the needs of scholars specializing in history, history of science, cultural studies, sociology, architecture, international relations, anthropology and related disciplines.

As far as the contents of this inaugural issue are concerned, we are delighted to present six illuminating articles to the attention of scholars and researchers concentrating on Islamic history and civilisation. Four of these articles are written by distinguished authors in English and two of them are written in Arabic. In the first article, Dr. Alberto Becherelli from Sapienza University in Italy gives an illuminating account of the Balkan Wars in the light of the official historical records of the Italian Army General Staff (Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, AUSSME). This archival study makes an original contribution to the literature by elaborating on the documents produced, collected and preserved by the military attachés associated with the branches of the Colonial Office of the Italian General Staff in Sofia, Belgrade, Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris concerning the period from 1903 to 1914.

The second article by Prof. Kazi Safiur Rahaman from the University of Kolkata in India, also presents an archival study concerning the public sentiments of Bengali Muslims between 1908 and 1924 to support the survival of the Ottoman Empire as the home of the Islamic Caliphate in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the success of Turkey's War of Independence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It specifically evaluates the activities of the 'Khilafat' and 'Non-cooperation' movements in Bengal aimed at the provision of public, financial and spiritual support that the Muslim communities of the Indian subcontinent provided to the late Ottoman Empire and the young Turkish Republic as they were perceived to represent the dignity and honour of all Muslims in the world.

The third article written by our Managing Editor and the Former Director of the National Institute for Historical and Cultural Research in Pakistan, Prof. Khurram Qadir, concentrates

on the impact of cultural forces of ethnicity and governance on legal reforms in the Ottoman Empire. He presents a concise overview of their evolution over the course of several centuries and evaluates their reflections on the formulation of the First and Second Ottoman Constitutions. The main argument centers around the idea that the Ottoman Empire was inclined to a brand of Ottomanism and a form of Islamism from its inception, and the two strains remained parallel during most of its history. When the modernization pressures originating from the Western world triggered the process which resulted in the formulation of constitutions based on the European model, these founding forces deeply influenced the content and character of these documents. This crucial article highlights the socio-political attachment of the Turks to Ottomanism and Islamism in the formulation of the First Constitution and investigates the remote dynamics which motivated the changes in the Second Constitution.

The fourth article by Prof. Güzel Sayfulina from Leiden University in the Netherlands concentrates on the impact of Yasawiya traditions in the folk culture of the Volga Muslims towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main focus of the article is placed on the popular tradition that reflect Khodja Ahmad Yasawi as a "waliyullah" and an important link in the chain of other respected figures, as well as the literary trends connected to him such as "Hikmets" (wise words). Different oral and written texts were used in this analysis acquired through field trips to villages of Tatarstan in the 1990s and the 2000s. The author successfully demonstrates the elements of religious practice which carried traces of the Yasawi tradition; observes changes in its functioning over time; and comments on its overall contribution to the wider understanding of modern Tatar culture.

In addition to four substantive articles in the English section mentioned above, we have two crucial articles in the Arabic section of the *IRCICA Journal*. The first of these articles placed is written by Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç, the Former Director of Religious Affairs and a former Member of Parliament in Turkey and a leading authority on the Qur'anic manuscripts. By presenting a comprehensive

survey on the issue of orthography in the manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an, Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç studies the development of written literature in Arabic and surveys the debates on the evolution of orthography in the manuscripts. He aptly evaluates the claims that the orthography of the Holy Qur'an is also revealed in the original manuscripts and the issue of following the orthography seen in the manuscript of the Holy Qur'an attributed to Othman bin Affan (Rasm al Othmani). Dr Tayyar Altıkulaç proposes the organisation of several international congresses and symposia to enable coordination among Islamic countries for the use of a common orthography in the Qur'anic manuscripts.

The second article in the Arabic section is written by Prof. Fazıl Bayat of İRCICA and it makes an original contribution to the literature by focusing on the development of higher education institutions in the Eastern Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Building upon the rich reservoir of untapped information in historical documents in the Ottoman archives, Prof. Bayat studies the extension of higher education institutions from İstanbul to the wider territories of the eastern Arab provinces. In this context, Prof. Bayat successfully illustrates how higher education institutions were opened in al-Quds, Madina al Munavvara and Baghdad in the light of the pan-Islamic approach adopted by Ottoman administration against destructive currents of nationalism. He emphasizes that these were accompanied by a medical school in Damascus and military academies in Damascus and Baghdad. It is clear from this study that, despite the negative impact of the First World War, the Ottoman administration made strong efforts to disseminate higher education in the peripheral areas of the Empire including the eastern Arab provinces. Written in line with more extensive studies of Prof. Bayat on Ottoman higher education system, this study is expected to make a substantial contribution to the literature on higher education policy of the Ottoman state in the Arab provinces.

*İRCICA Journal* is meant to bring a wide research canvas concerning all aspects of Islamic history and civilisation into sharp focus. As such, the editors are faced with a very challenging

task in achieving balance between the wide geographic scope and range of subjects that are supposed to be included in the journal. As for the first issue, we were faced with a particularly difficult task because it was supposed to set the tone for the later issues and could not possibly include the wide topical cross-section that should in due course determine our community of readers and contributors. The hard work of our editors enabled to keep the scope of the topics and approaches contained in the journal as wide as practically possible.

In the light of the substantial contributions included in the first issue of *IRCICA Journal*, we would like to request the kind support of distinguished scholars from different academic disciplines, countries and persuasions as readers, contributors and reviewers to uphold the high scholarly standards expected from IRCICA as an international organisation. While launching the inaugural issue of *IRCICA Journal*, we would like to invite the members of global academic community to kindly deliver their scholarly contributions to the editors.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our pride and satisfaction for launching this academic journal on behalf of IRCICA and express our expectation that the *IRCICA Journal* will remain as one of the leading international academic platforms for studies on Islamic history and civilisation for many years to come.

Halit Eren, Ph.D.  
Director General, IRCICA



# The Balkan Wars in the Records of the Italian Army General Staff

Alberto Becherelli\*

**Abstract.** *The Balkans have always been an important cultural and commercial area for Italian foreign policy and during the Balkan Wars Italy closely followed events in the region. The Archive of the Historical Office of the Italian Army General Staff (Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, AUSSME) includes crucial reports about the Balkan Wars reflecting the perceptions of Italian military attachés in Sofia, Belgrade, Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris. This study presents an archival study based on the documents produced, collected and preserved by the military attachés associated with the Colonial Office (created in 1903) of the Italian Army General Staff concerning the period from 1903 to 1914. The primary information contained in the study is crucial as the Colonial Office provided a fundamental source of documentation for Italian political and military interests giving valuable records about the events that have been of great importance to the European Great Powers and the entire European continent, as a prelude to the First World War.*

**Keywords.** Balkan Wars, Italian foreign policy, European Great Powers, Ottoman Empire.

The Balkans have always been an important cultural and commercial area for Italian foreign policy and during the Balkan Wars Italy closely followed events in the region. The Archive of the Historical Office of the Italian Army General Staff (Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, AUSSME)

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contains reports about the Balkan Wars written by Italian military attachés from Sofia, Belgrade, Vienna, Berlin, London and Paris (Records: G-24, *Correspondence of the Army General Staff*; G-29, *Military Attachés*; G-33, *Army General Staff – Colonial Office – Balkan states*).<sup>1</sup> During the 1980s these documents, for the most part neglected by Italian historiography, were studied for the first time by Antonello Biagini, Professor of History of Eastern Europe at the Department of History, Cultures, Religions of Sapienza, University of Rome, who wrote *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche (Italy and the Balkan Wars)*, published in Rome by the Italian Army General Staff in 1990 and republished in 2012, on the Centenary of the Balkan Wars.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century the Balkans were an area of particular interest for Italian foreign policy. On the other hand, for the Balkan political elites Italy was a model for the achievement of national unity and an example to be followed by the emerging nation-states. In the period between the Berlin Congress and the First World War the Italian officers (military personnel, members

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<sup>1</sup> AUSSME, G-24, *Corpo di Stato Maggiore. Corrispondenza*; G-29, *Addetti Militari*; G-33, *Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore – Riparto Operazioni – Scacchiere meridionale, poi Ufficio coloniale, former Carteggio SME, Scacchiere orientale. Ufficio coloniale. Stati Esteri. Stati balcanici*. See also: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito Ufficio Storico, *Manuale delle ricerche nell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito*, Rome: 2004; R. Gustapane, *Inventario G-33: Ufficio Coloniale del Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore*, in Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, *Bollettino dell'Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico*, Anno V, Numero 9, Gennaio-Giugno 2005, pp. 37-337; I. Mandolesi, E. Mazzina, E. Tedoldi, *Inventario delle carte di Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore: fondo G-24 vari uffici (1860-1915), fondo G-22 Scacchiere Orientale (1864-1943), F-4 Ufficio Servizi (1885-1919)*, in Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, *Bollettino dell'Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico*, Gennaio/Dicembre 2010, Anno X, n. 19-20, pp. 47-487.

<sup>2</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito Ufficio Storico, 1990 (new edition Rome: Nuova Cultura, 2012). On the Balkan Wars see also: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, Washington DC: The Endowment, 1914; E.C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912-13*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1969; R.C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913*, New York: Routledge, 2000; J.G. Schurman, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913*, New York: Cosimo, 2005.

of the commission for the demarcation of borders, experts and delegates at the international conferences, and staff employed by foreign armies) were particularly active in issues of the Balkan region, offering their technical and organizational expertise in the process of political settlement, that was difficult due to the strong opposition by different nationalities.

This historical period saw the final decline of the great multinational empires, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, and the consequent emergence of nation-states. Especially the weakening of the Sublime Porte set the stage for the birth and development of the new Balkan nation-states, through a process that led from gradual autonomy to full independence. The linguistic, cultural and religious factors played an important role and were often a source of conflict and hostility, taken advantage of by the European powers for their political and economic interests. The rediscovery of historical and national traditions and heritage was supported and encouraged by the spread of the ideals set forth by the French Revolution and disseminated thanks to the thoughts of philosophers and intellectuals from the Romantic era, that first inspired cultural and then political awakenings. Numerous movements and rebellions followed and after the European Revolutions of 1848-1849 in Central and Eastern Europe (known in some countries as the *Spring of Nations* or the *Spring of People*, *Primavera dei popoli*) political elites became even more involved in the affirmation of their nationality, freedom and independence.<sup>3</sup>

In this situation, the primary interest of the "young" Italian

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<sup>3</sup> On South-eastern and Central Europe in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of nationalities, see R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans*, London: Constable, 1917; Id., *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*, New York: Constable, 1969; A. Tamborra, *L'Europa centro-orientale nei secoli XIX-XX (1800-1920)*, Milano: Vallardi, 1971; E. Niederhauser, *The Rise of Nationality in Eastern Europe*, Budapest: Corvina books, 1981; P.F. Sugar, *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Europe*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1997. On the Ottoman Empire, see J.P.B. Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*, New York: Morrow Quill, 1977; S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, I-II, Cambridge: University Press, 1976-1977.

government was to maintain friendly relations with the European Great Powers for future and more fruitful alliances, such as the Triple Alliance after 1882.<sup>4</sup> The main Italian goal was to fit into the international space and participate in the division of the spheres of influence along with other European countries. Italian objectives included the old ambition of gaining supremacy over the Mediterranean area, which meant having a colony in the North African coast and a policy of expansion in the Balkan Peninsula. The *Eastern Question* in Italy was mostly followed by military attachés,<sup>5</sup> but Italian officers were also often engaged directly in the field, in such specific cases as the *Macedonian question*.

In 1903, following the Macedonian riots in February and August, the situation in the region worsened and as a consequence the *Mürzsteg Reform Plan* was signed. In addition to the appointment of Austro-Hungarian and Russian delegates for the implementation of the reforms, led by the Ottoman Inspector General Hilmi Pasha, the agreement also included the reorganization of the Ottoman *gendarmerie* in Macedonia under the command of foreign officers. In return for the Italian government's support for the reforms, an Italian officer was appointed as the Head of the Military Commission charged with reorganizing the Ottoman *gendarmerie* and in January 1904 this position was given to General Emilio De Giorgis. De Giorgis encountered many difficulties in terms of international relations as well as his dealings inside the Ottoman Empire. Despite the obvious Italian diplomatic success, Italian military officers did not hide their doubts and concerns about the effectiveness of the proposed reforms.

Moreover in 1907, the Colonel of Carabinieri Achille Tomassi

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<sup>4</sup> On Italy and the Triple Alliance, see L. Chiala, *La Triplice e la Duplice Alleanza, 1881-1897*, Turin: Roux Frassati e co., 1898; L. Salvatorelli, *La Triplice alleanza: storia diplomatica, 1877-1912*, Milan: ISPI, 1939; F. Minniti, *Esercito e politica da porta Pia alla Triplice alleanza*, Bologna: il Mulino, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> See A. Biagini, *La questione d'Oriente del 1875-1878 nei documenti dell'U.S. dello SME*, in *Memorie Storiche Militari*, 1978, pp. 353-387; id., *Momenti di storia balcanica*, Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito Ufficio Storico, 1981.

was also appointed for the reorganization of the *gendarmérie* in the *vilayet* of Ajdin. After the death of General de Giorgis in 1908, General Mario Nicolis di Robilant replaced him. Di Robilant's activities continued throughout 1909-1910, despite the revolutionary events that brought to power the Young Turks. In his reports he wrote about the difficulties of his task, especially concerning relations with the Turkish authorities, which were not always on good terms. Finally, General Robilant received orders from the Italian government on September 27, 1911 to repatriate all the Italian officers due to the worsening of relations between Italy and Turkey and the Italian *ultimatum* to Turkey. On the day of the declaration of war, 28<sup>th</sup> of September, the Italian military delegation left Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

The Italians' military victories over the Ottoman Empire motivated the joint attack of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece in October 1912. As known, from this moment on the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was considered only a matter of time, followed by multiple and closely connected events between the end of 1912 and August 1913. These events changed the borders of states and the balance of influence in the Balkans and then provoked the First World War.

At this point, important sources of information are the reports of the Italian military attachés who were residents in major European capitals such as Berlin, St. Petersburg, Paris, London, Vienna, Sofia, Belgrade, Bucharest. All these capitals, like Rome,

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<sup>6</sup> See A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche* (2012), pp. 67-74. On the reorganization of the Ottoman *gendarmérie* see also: A. Biagini, *Italia e Turchia (1904-1911): gli ufficiali italiani e la riorganizzazione della gendarmeria macedone*, in *Memorie Storiche Militari*, 1977, pp. 207-228; AUSSME, G-29, Addetti Militari (*Military Attachés*), Turchia, b. 108, *Riorganizzazione della gendarmeria ottomana*, 19 aprile 1911. Records in G-29 are divided by states and contain reports, accounts and correspondence relating to the military-political situation and the organization of the armed forces of some foreign countries. Of particular interest are the documents under the heading "Turkey" (1875-1944) in the period of the War in Libya and the Balkan wars.

were interested in the Eastern Question and the Balkans Wars.<sup>7</sup> The role of military attachés was established by a royal decree in 1870. The military attachés, appointed by the Italian Minister of War on the proposal of the Army General Staff, were staff officers sent to the Italian diplomatic missions abroad to represent the Italian Army at the Ministries of War of the host states, to assist the Italian diplomatic representatives in military matters and to inform the Army General Staff of the main military events abroad (including military laws, war budgets, military maneuvers, etc.). Their tenure in office lasted from 4 to 6 years, unless the Chief of the Army General Staff did decide otherwise, and during their missions attachés worked for Italian delegations. In 1890, Major Marini was the first Italian military attaché in Istanbul in charge of military events in Greek and Turkish territories.<sup>8</sup>

The reports, sent from military attachés to the Army General Staff in Rome from October 1912 to August 1913 contained daily information, news, rumors and more or less reliable predictions about the events concerning the Balkan Wars, mostly focusing on military operations and the Peace Conference in London. Although based mainly on the analysis of military issues, these reports were in some cases more important than the diplomatic documents because they give a more objective interpretation of national and territorial issues in the early twentieth century between the Balkan

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<sup>7</sup> See AUSSME, G-24, Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Corrispondenza (*Correspondence of the Army General Staff*), G-24.6, b. 10, 79, ex b. 64, fasc. 1-19, categoria V, *Addetti militari*, 1912-1914. In particular G-24.6, b. 10, 79.2, ex b. 64, fasc. 1, *Addetto Militare a Costantinopoli*, 1912 ottobre -1912 dicembre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.3, ex b. 64, fasc. 2, *Addetto Militare a Londra*, 1912 gennaio - 1912 novembre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.4, ex b. 64, fasc. 3, *Ufficiale in missione a Bucarest*, 1912 - ottobre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.5, ex b. 64, fasc. 4, *Addetto Militare a Berlino*, 1913 marzo - 1913 ottobre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.6, ex b. 64, fasc. 5, *Addetto Militare a Costantinopoli*, 1913 gennaio - 1913 ottobre; G-24.6 b. 10, 79.8, ex b. 64, fasc. 7, *Addetto Militare a Bucarest*, 1913 aprile - 1913 dicembre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.9, ex b. 64, fasc. 8, *Addetto Militare a Londra*, 1913 febbraio - 1913 ottobre; G-24.6, b. 10, 79.10, ex b. 64, fasc. 9, *Addetto Militare a Belgrado*, 1913 agosto - 1913 dicembre.

<sup>8</sup> R. Gustapane, *Inventario G-33*, p. 45.

states.<sup>9</sup> Besides having been written from the perspective of the Italian political and military interests, the reports also showed the feelings, beliefs and interests of the European states where Italian military attachés resided. In these reports, it is possible to follow the course of the events of the Balkan Wars, although in this study only a fraction of them are presented.

The reports of the Italian military attaché in Paris, Lieutenant Colonel Zaccone, from the last months of 1912, described the military mobilization in Bulgaria – including almost a total of 600,000 men – and the agreement between the four Balkan states – Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece, that formed the Balkan League. He wrote to the French authorities who thought that the armed conflict in the Balkans could have been avoided. This was an unpleasant surprise due to the large French investments in the Orient and the fact that the conflict could worsen Austro-Russian rivalry. Zaccone wrote that Bulgaria supported Macedonia's autonomy and the war could have been avoided only if Turkey had permitted it.<sup>10</sup>

In London, Lieutenant Colonel Ugo Bagnani wrote about the international political situation of the period, but in the last three months of the 1912 he focused on the military situation in the Balkans. His reports were mainly based on the information from the press and political circles in London and were often sent together with articles chosen from the English press. At the beginning of the war, the English press, for example, overestimated the size of the Turkish Army, considering that it numbered one million and two hundred thousand men, while according to the Italian military attaché the real Turkish force was only three hundred thousand men, which was less than the number of soldiers of the Balkan League armies.

Although the information was sometimes contradictory,

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<sup>9</sup> On the military attachés, see also A. Biagini, *Addetti militari*, in *Storia Militare 1796-1975*, edited by Comitato tecnico Società di Storia Militare, Rome: 1990, pp. 15-21.

<sup>10</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, p. 86.

Bagnani sent the reports to Rome, where they were analysed and compared with other observations. In the wake of the Balkan conflict, Bagnani stated that between the five nations ready for war only the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria were able to use airplanes. In another report from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1912, he communicated information about the most important military officers in several armies involved. He gave short biographies of the Ottoman, Serbian and Bulgarian officers. Among the Ottomans were Ferik Abdullah Pasha, Pertev Pasha, Nazim Pasha; among the Serbs were King Petar, Generals Radomir Putnik, Stepa Stepanović and Goiković, Colonels Bojović, Borjanović, Mekeilvić, Poilnović, Marinović; among the Bulgarians Tsar Ferdinand, Generals Fičev, Nazluncov, Vasil Kutinčev, Nikola Ivanov.<sup>11</sup> According to Bagnani's reports, the reasons for the war were the consequences of the controversial politics of the Young Turks and the occupation of Libya by Italy, which showed the military weakness of the Ottoman Empire.

The Italians' decisive military victories over the Ottomans, including the swift occupation of the Dodecanese Islands, motivated the Balkan states for war against the Ottomans. They incidentally gave Turkey an ultimatum – which demanded an autonomous Macedonia and threatened with war should it be rejected. As Bagnani wrote, the widely diffused opinion was that Bulgaria, due to the perfect organization and high morale of its soldiers, would win the war. It was very well known that Bulgaria was militarily considered to be the most powerful of the four Balkan states with a large, well-trained and well-equipped army. Due to this opinion – Bagnani affirmed – Bulgarians were called the Japanese of the Balkans.<sup>12</sup> Above all, Bagnani focused on Bulgaria's main war aims: Thrace and Macedonia. Other reports he and other Italian attachés wrote concerned the declaration of war by Montenegro to the Ottoman Empire, as well as the

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<sup>11</sup> AUSSME, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.3, *Addetto Militare a Londra*, 1912 January-November, Bagnani, London, 5<sup>th</sup> October 1912.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, Bagnani, London, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1912.

military operations and the mobilization of the Serbian army in the direction of Skopje.

While Bagnani also sent news from London about the ultimatum of Greece to the Ottomans and the Greek annexation of Crete, other series of reports came from Colonel Calderoni from Berlin, who gave detailed information about the military mobilization of the states involved and war operations in Thrace and Macedonia. Although Germany was silent about the issues in the Balkans, Calderoni had no doubt that Germany would enter the conflict, militarily or politically, if its interests proved to be jeopardized. Germany, like Austria-Hungary, wanted to keep the way to Asia Minor free, a rich region where Germany planned to invest capital and export goods from its production sectors.<sup>13</sup>

Since the Ottoman Empire did not respond to the ultimatum of the Balkan states, it indirectly declared war on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, while international diplomacy was trying to confine the conflict to the Balkan area. The international opinion about the "invincible" Ottomans changed progressively due to the Balkan League's advance in the war. The Great Powers began to understand that they were no longer possible to maintain the status quo in the region. Besides that, if Rumania had joined the Balkan League, the Ottoman Empire could have already collapsed. One report stated that "the small Balkan nations are showing to Europe what Europe had to understand a long time ago".<sup>14</sup>

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October the Serbian Army occupied Skopje and Mitrovica, while part of the Bulgarian Army in Vardar Valley joined the Serbian troops and the Greeks continued to advance in Thessaly and Epirus. The information given to the Italian government in Rome by the military attachés included first evaluations that mentioned the possibility of a Turkish defeat. According to the reports, a possible defeat would be caused by the

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<sup>13</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, p. 102.

<sup>14</sup> AUSSME, G-29, b. 109, *Relazione sulla situazione politica internazionale inviata dall'addetto militare a Londra al Capo di Stato Maggiore italiano*, 28 ottobre 1912.

inefficiency of the supplies, corruption in the Turkish military hierarchy and the fact that the Bulgarian Army outnumbered its Ottoman counterpart. After being defeated in Skopje the Turkish Army in Macedonia retreated towards Thessaloniki and Monastir (Bitola), where it was surrounded.<sup>15</sup>

At the beginning of November, the most important information sent by military attachés sent to Rome concerned the war operation on the east of Edirne. The Bulgarian Army surrounded Edirne, the Serbian troops continued to advance in the Macedonian region and in Kosovo they occupied Prizren. Except Monastir, almost all other principle locations in Macedonia came under Serbian administration, while Greeks advanced in the direction of Thessaloniki.<sup>16</sup> At the same time military attachés continued to send information about the concerns of Great Powers to strike an agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary, the two powers interested in gaining supremacy over the Balkan region. Both of them did not want the expansion of the influence of the other in the area and for their interests were supporting one of the Balkan states: Russia, for example, supported the enlargement of Serbia, while Austria was against Pan-Slavism. Reactions of the other European Great Powers were diverse: although France did not want to see the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Paris supported the victories of the Bulgarian and Serbian Armies due to the connection between the French Army and the Serbian and Bulgarian officers who were trained in French military schools. On the other hand, Germany seemed to support the Ottomans, above all for the same reason because Turkish officers were trained by their German counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

Italian military attachés described the events in the theaters of war in the following fashion: Thessaloniki was isolated, the

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<sup>15</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>16</sup> AUSSME, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.3, *Addetto Militare a Londra*, 1912 January-November, Bagnani, London, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> November 1912.

<sup>17</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 109-118.

railway of Monastir was under Greek control, Bulgarians occupied Strumica and Serbs after Tetovo continued to go in the direction of Gostivar.<sup>18</sup> In November, the Balkan League defeated the Ottomans in Europe. During six weeks of war, the small Balkan states almost destroyed the Ottoman army and its headquarters in Kirk Kilisse (Kirkklareli), Thessaloniki, Monastir and Skopje came into the hands of the Balkan allies. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December an armistice between Ottomans, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro was reached and on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December London peace negotiations started, following the declaration of independence by Albania on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1912.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, Bagnani sent important information regarding the Peace Conference in London to Rome. According to him, the views expressed in the Conference represented the decisions of the politicians and the public opinion of European countries but did not resolve many questions in the Balkans, such as the Albanian independence, the Serbian access to the Adriatic Sea, freedom of the Bosphorus, the future of the Aegean Islands and the issue of Edirne. His evaluation, above all, focused on the discussions about borders between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Bagnani met Turkish delegates Reşit Pasha and Nizam Pasha in the middle of January who raised criticisms that the diplomatic actions of the Great Powers and of the Balkan states were inefficient in resolving the above mentioned issues. On the other hand, the military attaché in Sofia, Lieutenant Colonel Errico Merrone, explained the views of the Bulgarian side. Bulgaria was ready to restart the war because this was seen as the only way to conquer the territories that the Balkan states required from the Ottomans. In Bulgaria, the acceptance of an armistice was regarded as a mistake, because it represented the will of the Great Powers and was favorable to Serbia.<sup>19</sup>

Relations between the Balkan allies worsened, above all,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 122-123.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 140-150.

concerning the partition of Macedonia. According to the agreement between Sofia and Belgrade dated 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1912, most of North Macedonia was supposed to go to Bulgaria. However, after the war Serbia kept part of the territory including Monastir. This became an issue of disagreement between the two allies. The military attaché in Sofia, Merrone, agreed that the reason for Bulgarian-Serbian disagreement was Serbia's unwillingness to respect the early agreement for the division of the region. On the other hand, the Macedonian question also created a split between Bulgaria and Greece for the control of Thessaloniki, which was occupied by the Greek forces and not by the Bulgarians. These issues provoked a series of small armed conflicts in the occupied territories between Bulgaria on one side and Serbs and Greeks on the other. Serbia and Greece signed an alliance against Sofia on the 1st of June 1913 and at the end of the month; Montenegro also sided with Serbia against Bulgaria.

Moreover, relations between Bulgaria and Romania worsened due to the issue of Dobruja and the possession of the fortress of Silistra, which Bulgaria promised to Romania in lieu of its neutrality before the War. The Romanian-Bulgarian question was followed in Rome thanks to the reports of the military attaché in Bucharest, Isidoro Zampolli, who wrote a detailed report about the Romanian Army,<sup>20</sup> believing that Bulgaria and Romania would soon come into armed conflict.

In the Ottoman Empire, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1913, the Young Turks, led by Enver Pasha, made a coup d'état, overthrowing the government of Kâmil Pasha and placing Mahmud Şevket Pasha in power. One of the main reasons for the coup d'état was their disapproval of the government's decision to give Edirne and the

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<sup>20</sup> See *ibid*, G-33, b. 28, fasc. 253, Addetto militare temporaneo in Romania, ten. col. Isidoro Zampolli, al comandante in 2<sup>a</sup> del Corpo di Stato Maggiore e al capo di Stato Maggiore, rapporti 1912 nov. 4-1913 feb. 10; *id.*, b. 29, fasc. 267, Romania. Rapporti dell'addetto militare sulla situazione politico-militare, ten. col. Zampolli, cap. Luciano Ferigo, al comandante in 2<sup>a</sup> del Corpo di stato maggiore, 1912 dic. 22-1913 nov. 12; *id.*, fasc. 268, Romania. Telegrammi dell'addetto militare, ten. col. Isidoro Zampolli, al Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, 1913 gen. 17-lug. 16.

Aegean Islands to the Balkan League. The protesters accused Kâmil Pasha of being a traitor to the nation, because he was willing to sign a peace treaty with the Balkan League that was too burdensome for the Ottoman Empire. However, this change of government brought back the question of Edirne and the danger of a new war. The military attachés were very critical toward the new government, Enver Pasha as the new Minister of War and other individuals in power, due to the fear that they could lead a new wave of political and military uprisings in the empire. The Italian military attaché in Istanbul, Ernesto Mombelli, in a number of reports wrote about Enver Pasha, describing him as an ambitious and energetic man, who often acted without much reflection. But according to him, Enver Pasha was unmistakably a great patriot facing a grave military crisis of the Empire. The difficulty, Mombelli wrote, was that the Turkish troops were not strong enough to start a counter-offensive, in the form of a military action against the Balkan states. They were badly equipped, lacking supplies, discipline and cohesion between officers and the soldiers. Mombelli followed the Turkish issue very closely, since it was very important to the Italian government for the control of Libya.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, Edirne was still under the siege of the Bulgarian Army and the mediation of the Great Powers was even more necessary. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, the Balkan allies agreed to conclude peace according to the conditions established in London. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March the Ambassadors in London agreed upon the following conditions for peace:

1. The borders between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire were to be established on the line between Enos, Ergene and Midia;
2. The Ottomans had to cede Crete;

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<sup>21</sup> See AUSSME, G-29, b. 109, *Colpo di Stato a Costantinopoli*, 24 gennaio 1913; id., *Nomina di Enver Pasha Bey a ministro della guerra, colloquio con l'addetto militare italiano*, 17-21 gennaio 1913; id., *Informazioni sulla popolazione di Costantinopoli dopo gli avvenimenti politici-militari*, 29 gennaio 1913.

3. The Great Powers had to settle the issue of Albanian borders;
4. The Ottomans did not have to pay war compensations.

Despite the agreement, the conflict between the Balkan allies intensified between March and June 1913. Serbs wanted Bulgaria to recognize their possession of the territories that they occupied in Macedonia including Monastir and Prilep. In exchange for this, they were aiding Bulgarians in Edirne and the Montenegrins in Scutari, while on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May Joannina was conquered by Greece, which ended the conflict between Greeks and the Ottomans.<sup>22</sup>

In June 1913 the military attachés were sending detailed reports about the armies of the Balkan allies. The conflicts also continued despite the fact that the countries involved officially did not declare war, due to the fear of appearing as the initiators of new hostilities in the eyes of the Great Powers that were still working for a peaceful compromise. Finally, Bulgaria officially declared war on Greece and Serbia. At this point, the military attaché in Bucarest, Zampolli, sent to Rome a report claiming that Romania will also join the war against Bulgaria.<sup>23</sup>

This happened on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, in a very critical moment for Bulgaria, which was losing the war against the Serbs and the Greeks – Romania declared war on Bulgaria.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the Ottomans were leading a separate offensive on Bulgaria. On

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<sup>22</sup> A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, p. 170. On Serbian aid to the Montenegrins in Scutari see AUSSME, G-33, b. 16, fasc. 198, Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore – Riparto Operazioni – Ufficio Coloniale, *Avvenimenti balcanici*, Bollettino giornaliero d'informazione, 1912 ott. 1 – 1914 ott., *Dislocazione delle truppe serbo-montenegrine attorno a Scutari (primi di aprile 1913)*.

<sup>23</sup> AUSSME, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.8, ex b. 64, fasc. 7, *Addetto Militare a Bucarest*, 1913 April-December, Zampolli, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1913; *ibidem*, G-33, b. 28, fasc. 257, Bulgaria 1913. Informazioni politico militari, 1913 mag. 4 - nov. 21; *id.*, fasc. 261, Bulgaria, Rapporti dell'addetto militare sulla situazione politico-militare, ten. col. Merrone, al comandante in 2<sup>a</sup> del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, 1913 gen. 8 - ott. 15.

<sup>24</sup> See *ibid.*, G-33, b. 29, fasc. 267, Romania. Rapporti dell'addetto militare sulla situazione politico-militare, ten. col. Zampolli, cap. Luciano Ferigo, al comandante in 2<sup>a</sup> del Corpo di stato maggiore, 1912 dic. 22-1913 nov. 12; *id.*, fasc. 268, Romania. Telegrammi dell'addetto militare, ten. col. Isidoro Zampolli, 1913 gen. 17-lug. 16.

the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, the Turkish troops moved to liberate the territories given by the London Treaty to the Bulgarians. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Turkish divisions arrived in Kirk Kilitse and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they entered Edirne. This was, according to Mombelli, the most important opportunity for the Ottomans to take back the territories lost in the First Balkan War. The military attaché in Istanbul also emphasized Bulgaria's mistake to undervalue the capacity of the Ottoman Army.<sup>25</sup> At the end, Bulgaria's only solution was to accept the mediation of Russia and sign the armistice on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July.

On the 1st of August, the Conference of Bucharest on the new Balkan borders began under the supervision of the Great Powers and ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. It was followed by the Istanbul Treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria signed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1913. Accordingly, Bulgaria lost most of the territories gained in the First Balkan War; Southern Dobrudja went to Romania while most of Macedonia and Eastern Thrace went to the Ottomans. Bulgaria kept Western Thrace, its Aegean access with the port of Dedeagac and part of Macedonia. Greece had to evacuate Western Thrace and Pirin Macedonia (to Bulgaria) and give Northern Epirus (to Albania), keeping only Serres and Kavala. Serbia gained Northern Macedonia and Italy kept the Dodecanese Islands which it had occupied during the Italian-Turkish War of 1911 over Libya. Albania's independence was also officially recognized.

## Conclusion

The Balkan Wars began with a strong alliance among the Balkan states, but ended with violent conflicts among them.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.6, ex b. 64, fasc. 5, *Addetto Militare a Costantinopoli*, 1913 January-October, Mombelli, Constantinople, 20 July 1913; *ibidem*, G-33, b. 30, fasc. 272, *Turchia* 1913. *Rapporti dell'addetto militare*, ten. col. Ernesto Mombelli, al comandante in 2<sup>a</sup> del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, 1913 gen. 18-ott. 1; *id.*, *Turchia*. *Telegrammi dell'addetto militare*, Ernesto Mombelli, al comando del Corpo di stato maggiore, 1913 mar. 21-set. 29.

Macedonia was the target of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, while Romania entered in the Second Balkan War for Dobruja. Within one month from July to August 1913 the new anti-Bulgarian coalition brought the signing of the Peace of Bucharest by Bulgaria. Regarding the Balkan region during the period from 1903 to 1914, the most important Italian institution that have produced, collected and preserved the documents of the military attachés, was the Colonial Office (created in 1903) of the Italian Army General Staff. The Colonial Office, in addition to performing functions of coordination between the Italian colonial troops and the Army General Staff, had the task to plan possible Italian military operations in territories within and outside of Europe and to collect information of military interest for war operations and defence of national borders. Above all, the Colonial Office provided a fundamental source of documentation for Italian political and military interests giving valuable records about the events that have been of great importance to the European Great Powers and the entire European continent, as a prelude to the First World War.

# **Political Activities and Popular Outcry on the Turkish Question in Muslim Bengal (1908-1924): an Archival Report**

Kazi Sufior Rahaman\*

**Abstract.** *This study presents an analysis on the “politics of romanticism” among the Bengali Muslims concerning the survival of the Ottoman Empire as the home of the Islamic Caliphate in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the success of Turkey’s War of Independence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Muslims of Bengal (including Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal) who formed the single largest Muslim ethnic group in the world after the Arab societies were very active in pan-Islamic politics through the ‘Khilafat’ and ‘Non-cooperation’ movements. Especially during the heady days of the ‘Khilafat movement’ in Bengal, Muslims occupied centre stage and formed a mass movement supporting the preservation of the Ottoman Caliphate against the attacks of the Western Powers. The study gives illuminating examples from the sort of public, financial and spiritual support that the Muslim communities and intellectuals of the Indian subcontinent provided to the late Ottoman Empire and the young Turkish Republic as they were perceived to represent the dignity and honour of the whole Muslims in the world. In so doing, the study forms crucial linkages between the Khilafat movement and the seeds of Indian independence which occurred decades later.*

**Keywords.** Muslims in Bengal, Ottoman Empire, Khilafat movement, politics of romanticism.

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The Muslims of Bengal (including Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal) form the single largest Muslim ethnic group in the World after the Arabs. The largest concentration of Muslims and their socio-economic and political conditions in the early twentieth century served the "politics of romanticism" among the Bengali Muslims. This trend was, however, most strongly visible in pan-Islamic politics and, more particularly, during the 'Khilafat' and the 'Non-cooperation' movements. During the heady days of the 'Khilafat movement' in Bengal, Muslims came to occupy centre stage and the movement turned into a mass movement. The masses had taken some serious initiatives in anger and protest.

The general impression among the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent was that the Western Powers were waging a war against Islam throughout the world in order to rob it of all its power and influence. The Ottoman Empire was the only Muslim power that had maintained a semblance of authority and the Muslims of India wanted to save the Islamic political power from extinction at a time when the Muslims of the subcontinent had no sovereign ruler of their own. When the Ottoman Empire fell into any sort of trouble they would give expression to their fears and anxieties, while offering various types of assistance. In the same way, they conveyed their congratulations and communicated their joyful feelings when they heard good news concerning the Ottoman Empire.

Since 1877, the Bengali Muslim literature and press have occasionally published reports of Turkish affairs in their own ideological-political interest. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Bengali Muslims offered cordial support to the Ottoman Sultan as Khalifatul Muslimin (Caliph of Muslim). The Treaty of San Stefano (1877) which showed disrespect to the Ottoman Sultan evoked deep antipathy in the Bengali Muslim Press. On June 15, 1877 Muhammad Akbar appealed to Bengali Muslims through the newspapers to send financial support in order to help the innumerable Turkish widows and orphans whose husbands or fathers had fallen in the

First World War.<sup>1</sup> C.E. Buckland testified that religious services were held in some of the Calcutta mosques and subscriptions were raised for the same purpose.<sup>2</sup> Sultan Abdulhamid II, after the defeat to Russia in 1878, attempted to take advantage of the sympathy of the Muslim world and sent emissaries to Egypt, India, Afghanistan, Java and China to remind the Muslims of those countries the fact that there was still a Caliph in Islam. The Albert Hall speech of Jamaluddin Afghani in Calcutta (today's Kolkata) in the year 1882 and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1897 also helped a great deal in the process of disseminating pan-Islamic ideas among Muslims of Bengal.

Islam Pracharak, Pracharak and Lahari published articles on the Turks and the Ottoman Empire. Both the Islam Pracharak and Pracharak came out with special issues to commemorate the anniversary of the accession of Sultan Abdulhamid II to the throne and Maniruzzaman Islamabadi wrote a book on the subject. The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 greatly disturbed the minds of educated Bengali Muslims. In May 1913, the Ottoman Empire was driven out of Europe and the Great Powers did nothing to prevent it. The Mussalman wrote in an exclamatory sentence that the attitude of the Great Powers clearly demonstrated to the world that the principle of 'might is right' was still determining the policy of those nations. The Mussalman published in five weekly issues the text of 'Come over into Macedonia and help us'-a pamphlet on Bulgarian atrocities issued from Istanbul.<sup>3</sup> In July 1913, the British Indian government prohibited the publication of the copies of that pamphlet. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1913 at a meeting in Calcutta the participants expressed their joy for the brilliant march of Enver Pasha and the recapture of Edirne and, for this action; the Ottoman Sultan and the Ottoman Nation were enthusiastically applauded. In view of the rumours concerning

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<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Nurul Islam, *Muslim Bangla Sahitya*, Dacca, 1969, p.26.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenants-Governor*, vol. 2, 1901, p. 691.

<sup>3</sup> *The Mussalman*, May 5, 23, June 6, 13, 20, 1913.

the coercion of the Ottomans by the Great Powers, the meeting hoped that Great Britain would respect not only her earlier 'declaration of neutrality' but also the 'feelings and sentiments of the Indian Muslims'.<sup>4</sup> In September, the offices of *The Mussalman* were searched and seven of its issues were forfeited and seized because of the publication of the text of the said pamphlet.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, in August 1914, the First World War broke out, and the Ottoman Empire took the side of Germany. As a precautionary measure, the Government of British India arrested and interned a large number of prominent pan-Islamic leaders and, because of an editorial entitled 'England, Turkey and Indian Mussalman' the editor, Maulavi Mujibur Rahman, was served notice with an order to introduce fresh security measures and the pre-censorship of editorials. He continued to publish the news weekly, keeping editorial column blank as a mark of protest against the government action, until the government finally withdrew the order.<sup>6</sup> The Ottoman sympathisers of Bengal raised funds in the name of the 'Ottoman Red Crescent Society', the funds raised were to be spent on the wounded and Ottoman war victims.<sup>7</sup> A delegation of the Medical Mission was sent from Bengal, led by Ismail Hossain Siraji, to aid the Ottoman soldiers with moral and material support. On his return, he wrote about his experiences in the Ottoman Empire in a book in Bengali entitled 'Travels in Turkey' published in 1913. In this book Siraji depicted the tragic condition of the Ottoman army engaged in the Balkan Wars and the shabby treatment meted out to Turkey by the Western powers.

In March 1919, a Central Khilafat Committee was formed in

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<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, August 8, 1913.

<sup>5</sup> Abul Fazal, *Sangbadik Mujibur Rahman*, Dacca, 1967, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *The Mussalman*, Dec 6, 1926, p. 6, (20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue).

<sup>7</sup> Even the students raised funds. As for example, the boarders of Carmichael Hostel of Calcutta University, having cancelled their Grand Eid feast, collected money for that purpose and sent it to Turkey. Not only had that hosteller offered spontaneously one-month scholarship and also sent tiffin money for the same purpose. See Ibrahim Khan, *Batayan* (window), Dacca, 1967, p. 282.

Bombay. A few months later, Maulavi Abdul Rahman Dinajpuri and Maulana Akram Khan took the initiative and finally organised a Khilafat Committee in Calcutta. Soon some affiliated branches were opened in different parts of Bengal.

However, the Muslims of India launched 'an extraterritorial loyalty and community' movement called 'Tehrik-i-Khilafat'. It was designed to put pressure on the British Government (a) to preserve the 1914 boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, (b) to preserve intact the spiritual and temporal authority of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of Islam and (c) to protect the Muslim holy places. At a meeting of the All India Khilafat Committee at Lucknow on 21 September 1919 it was decided to observe Khilafat Day all over India on 17 October by praying and participating in a general strike. At the same time Muslims all over India were asked to contribute a day's income to the Khilafat Fund. In Bengal, response to the call for a strike marked a turning point in the process of the politicization of the Bengali Muslims. Post-Juma prayers and public meetings were held and fasting observed in Calcutta, Dacca, Chittagong, Chandpur Gaibandha, Jessore Barisal, Bogra Feni and many other parts of Bengal.<sup>8</sup> The Muslims were not at all happy with the internal politics of the British Government<sup>9</sup> and strong rumours that the British Government was involved in the conspiracy against Islam added fuel to the fire.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Mussalman*, Oct 24, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> The Great War affected Muslims who had been suffering from the price rises of essential commodities and the ravages of the great influenza epidemic. The Muslims of East Bengal were angry with the British government because of the cancellation of the orderly partition of Bengal in 1912.

<sup>10</sup> Specific propaganda was deluged with a flood of speeches made by the Khilafat Movement. It was at first given out that the British had bombarded the holy places in Mecca. However, this story was gradually improved upon in various ways. Abdul Rahman, Secretary of the Coomilla Khilafat Conference, gave a speech in April declaring that the British had not only demolished the Prophet's tomb but also relieved themselves on the Koran and converted the Muslim burial ground into a latrine (p.183). Similarly in July, Abdurrazzak announced that the following occurred in a speech by Lord Kitchener: 'If I am a true officer of the British

The 'All India Khilafat Committee' met in Delhi in November 1919 and took the decision that anti-peace celebrations be observed religiously to foil the peace celebration arrangements of the government. This view was recently expressed by Kenneth McPherson that the British Government had passed plans to check anti-peace celebrations among the Muslims of rural Bengal.<sup>11</sup> The Khilafatists distributed manifestos, leaflets and handbills to Bengali Muslims citing the Holy Koran with a request to abstain from participation in the festivals (14-17 Dec, 1919) celebrating the end of the First World War. They pointed out that the Ottoman Empire had been defeated as well as humiliated as a result of her participation in the War and had suffered great losses.<sup>12</sup> The Mussalman and Muhammadi published fiery editorials in English and Bengali respectively in support of non-participation in peace celebrations by the Muslims of Bengal. Public meetings were held

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Government, if I am really a noble Englishman, then I shall erect a wine shop in that very Mecca facing which the Muslims of the World say their prayers' (p.183). Early in 1920 and again in 1921 rumours were sedulously circulated to the effect that the government had ordered the transfer of the Muslim holy day from Friday to Sunday, the substitution of the name of the King-Emperor for that of the Khalif in the khutba and the proscription of the Koran (p. 211). As an instance of the most extravagant of the claims, we may take a statement of Hakim Abu Yusuf Isfahani made in May 1923. Speaking in Calcutta he said: "There is an open place surrounded by a wall in London which is called "Hedjaz", and in which there is an artificial hill resembling the sacred place "Arafat" where "Hajj" takes place every year, and people go there for target practice and amuse themselves by saying they are destroying Islam." (p. 211). In March, Maulana Muhammad Ismail said in a speech at Noakhali that the English had violated ten thousand Muslim women in Angora and Smyrna and infants had been torn from the arms of their mothers and bayoneted. See, Mushirul Hasan and Margrit Pernau, *Regionalizing Pan-Islamism*, Delhi, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> K. McPherson, *Muslim Microcosm: Calcutta Muslims 1918-1935*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p.58.

<sup>12</sup> I. B. Weekly report, dated 3.12.1919. This *fatwa* was widely circulated among all classes of Muslims throughout Bengal: "No Mussalman can take part in the Peace Celebrations and any Mussalman found taking part in them will be deemed as a *kafer* (infidel)." The following notice was found on the Notice Board of the Baker Hostel in Calcutta: "No peace in aching hearts. Sweets mean plain jokes. Do not volunteer. Oh God, God! Save us from Mir Jaffars."

in most of the districts of Bengal on the question of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Resignations from the local Peace Celebration Committees were also organized.<sup>13</sup> In some places, in Howrah and Noakhali for instance, groups of Muslim youths paraded through the main thoroughfares wearing black ribbons round their arms and carrying black flags. Occasionally they held street corner meetings, urging people not to take part in the celebration activities.<sup>14</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December a fatwa was issued to proclaim from the pulpits of the mosques on Friday<sup>15</sup> how and why participation in the Peace Celebration was a sacrilege for the Mussalmans.<sup>16</sup>

The feeling of the common Bengali Muslims and their participation in anti-peace celebration movements is worthy of note. Muslim students of Barisal, Chandpur and Ramganj pulled down the decorations of the peace celebrations as well as the Union Jack put up for the occasion.<sup>17</sup> The spontaneous response of the general public was remarkable.<sup>18</sup> The Mussalman called upon the

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<sup>13</sup> In Bengal 26 members of the Ulema issued a *fatwa* forbidding Muslim participation in the Peace Celebration. See *The Mussalman*, January 9, 1920, p.4. In one such leaflet Maulana Akram Khan, quoting the Koran, declared that are those who love people of another religion are *munafiq* (hypocrites) and are betraying Islam.

<sup>14</sup> Freedom Movement papers, paper No. 75.

<sup>15</sup> *The Mussalman*, November 28, 1919, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 7 December 1919, The Burdwan Muhammedan Association organized a mass meeting where Abul Kasem argued that the Prime Minister distinctly said that the Great War was not a religious war and no power would interfere with the religion of another. Relying on this promise, the Muslims of Bengal helped the government with men and money but no sooner had the war terminated and the Ottoman Sultan in Turkey was defeated than the British were trying to establish British supremacy over Islam. See I.B. weekly police report, Burdwan, dated, 9.12.1919.

<sup>17</sup> G. B. Home (pol) confidential Police Report, File No-472 of 1919.

<sup>18</sup> At Chatkhil High School, *Noakhali* sweets meant for distribution among the boys of the school were thrown away. At *Murshidabad*, Muslim students of Raghunathganj, Lalgola, Kandi etc. refused, of their own free will, to accept sweets distributed to them by the local Peace Celebration Committee. The volunteer group formed by

Muslims to teach a lesson to those 'who, however vain- glorious or however purse-proud' must be made to feel that there was 'such a thing as public opinion' in the country and that they could not 'with impunity ignore or trifle with that opinion'.<sup>19</sup> In the first week of January 1920 the Reuter's news on the fate of the Ottoman Empire was published. The Moslem Hitaishi in utter anguish asked, 'are righteousness and justice vanishing from the earth'?<sup>20</sup>

Abul Kalam Azad and other national leaders reached Calcutta in the last week of February 1920 with the intention of organising demonstrations in the Khilafat cause. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1920 a Bengal Khilafat Conference was held in the Town Hall of Calcutta to deliver a counter blast to the anti-Ottoman campaign in England. In a high-powered gathering the committee resolved that Muslims should renounce loyalty to Great Britain if the decisions of the Caliph were not observed.<sup>21</sup> Some of the resolutions passed in the conference, including a boycott of the Legislative Council and all kinds of British goods, as well as the surrender of British titles and offices, were widely anticipated as part of the non-cooperation programme. The conference unanimously decided that

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the *Faridpur* town *Anjuman-i Islamia* actively opposed Muslim participation in the peace celebration and the distribution of sweets in the *Chawk-Bazar* Mosque. Shopkeepers in the *Bangabazar* of *Faridpur* kept their shops closed. In *Tangile*, printers refused to print the peace celebration programme and there was so much feeling there that few or none turned up even at the alms distribution centre opened by the local authority as part of the celebration program. At *Chittagonj*, peace celebration efforts flopped so completely that local authorities were forced to cancel all other connected programs. In *Bankura*, the Head Master of a local High School read out a leaflet entitled 'Participation in the Peace Celebration is An Act of Sacrilege.' In Calcutta the exhibition and fair organized by the celebration committee was thinly attended. Muslim shopkeepers in Calcutta refused to illuminate their shops while local Muslims organized an anti-peace celebration demonstration. See Chandiprasad Sarkar, *The Bengali Muslims*, Calcutta 1991, pp. 87-88; Kazi Sufior Rahaman, 'Wahabi British Relations', *Institute of Bangladesh Studies Journal*, issue XI, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> *The Mussalman*, January 9, 1920.

<sup>20</sup> *Moslem Hitaishi*, January 9, 1920.

<sup>21</sup> G. B. Home (pol) confidential Police Report, File 106/1920, s1, n.1.

Bengal would observe 19 March 1920 as the second 'Khilafat Day' by organising a hartal (general strike) while, in the meanwhile, telegrams were sent to the Prime Minister and the Viceroy protesting against dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>22</sup>

A strike committee of twelve was formed in Calcutta to organise a province-wide movement. On the eve of the Khilafat Day they printed strike placards entitled 'Response to the Call of Allah' which were displayed in almost all towns and cities.<sup>23</sup> Even local meetings were preceded by the distribution of leaflets and the display of placards.<sup>24</sup> Leading Muslim personalities of the province were contacted telegraphically to work up agitation in their respective localities in favour of the strike.<sup>25</sup> The ulama and religious leaders were mobilised to remind the rural population of their religious obligation to observe the day. Local branches of the Anjuman-i Ulama-i Bangla were instructed to explain to the people the significance of the Second Khilafat Day on March 19, 1920.<sup>26</sup>

Amidst all this unrest and discord the Khilafat Committee observed the Third Khilafat Day on 1 August (Sunday) in the same year with the same agenda. Attempts were made to rouse mass enthusiasm by issuing leaflets and posters and despatching telegrams and emissaries to urban and rural localities. One such leaflet entitled 'response to the call of the day' infringed the Press Act in insisting that no one should enlist as a soldier and was promptly proscribed.<sup>27</sup> The security deposits of the Muhammadi

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<sup>22</sup> I.B. Weekly Report, dated, 1.11.1919. Ekramul Huq of Murshidabad, Muhammad Rosan, Intaz Ali, Panchu Sheikh of Maymansingh, Abdul Huq of Kishoregunj, and Asrafuddin Ali of Katiadi, Kudratullah, Enaitullah, Kebratullah and Asadullah from Sarisabali, and many others sent telegrams to the Prime Minister. A sample copy of a telegram was also published in the *Muhammadi* on 29 August 1919.

<sup>23</sup> G.B. Home (pol) confidential Police Report, File106/1920, Sl.21.

<sup>24</sup> *Op.cit.* S.I No 39 D O No 5261, Bogra, Feb 20, 1920.

<sup>25</sup> *Op.cit.* S.I No 1 D O No 3043D, March 9, 1920.

<sup>26</sup> *Op.cit.* appendix part 11, p.8.

<sup>27</sup> G, I. Home (Pol) secret deposit (printed) Prog.

and *Nayayug* (New Age) were forfeited for having published that leaflet.<sup>28</sup> In the campaign, the boycott of foreign goods was given priority. Injunctions from the Koran were evoked in support of the boycott. Just on the eve of the strike, Muhammadi (July 30, 1920) sought to rouse Muslim mass sentiment by an inflammatory editorial which stated: "Look at their lolling tongues soaked in blood. That blood is your brother's blood, your sister's blood...Until now we have been only weeping. But we shall weep no longer".

The Secretary of the Central Khilafat Committee issued a notice to all concerned calling them to celebrate Ankara Victory Day on 17 September (Sunday) 1922 for the commemoration of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha's victory over the enemy. Syed Majid Baksh, Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee issued instructions to celebrate Ankara regime's victory by illuminating mosques and private houses on Sunday 17 September. In addition, he called for special prayers to be held for Ankara's final victory at 9 pm. Wahed Hossain Asstt, Secretary of the Calcutta Khilafat Committee, mentioned in a letter that the spontaneous demonstrations and sincere prayers on Sunday clearly showed that great enthusiasm prevailed in Calcutta for the Khilafat movement.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *Khilafat Bulletin*, Bombay, Muhammad Ishaque, Secretary of the Calcutta Khilafat Committee, expressed his desire that the people of Calcutta should present, on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta and its suburbs, an aeroplane to the victorious army of Mustafa Kemal Pasha as a token of appreciation for the work undertaken for Islam.<sup>30</sup> The Muslim working class responded to the strike in different ways. In the Kharagpur Railway workshop only 250 workers out of 10,000 had shown up for work.<sup>31</sup> Many of the transport workers did not turn up on that day and in the absence of the stevedores

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> I.B.confidential report,SB/1276/1922, p.273.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> G.B. (pol) File No106/1920, weekly police report March 10, 1920.

the business of the Calcutta port came to a standstill. The workers in cottage industries and mill owners gave wholehearted support to the Khilafatists. The Khilafat leadership called for an organized boycott. Ismail Hossain Siraji and some of his friends evoked the swadeshi spirit among the Muslim youth and started a limited company under the name of Anjuman-i- Majdran or the Association of Labourers for the sale of swadeshi goods. In various parts of East Bengal the farmers refused to pay local rents.<sup>32</sup> In Comilla, a large number of jute cultivators took the oath not to cultivate jute and indigo.<sup>33</sup> General workers, steamer-transport workers and coolies (labourers) called a strike for higher pay.<sup>34</sup> The economic grievances of the masses were thus linked up with the grievances of the Khilafat.

On the arrival of the Prince of Wales in Calcutta in December 1921 there was a 'carnival of arrests' and some of the administrators willingly resigned from their posts.<sup>35</sup> A great meeting was held in the town of Sirajganj under the leadership of Ismail Hossain Siraji. A special prayer was offered for the success of the Ottomans

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<sup>32</sup> I.B. weekly report 24 April 1920.

<sup>33</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika* 16.11.1920.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Khawaja Abdul Karim of the Dacca Nawab family resigned from his Honourary Magistracy and returned his *Durbar* invitation card to the Government. Maulvi Muhammad Kazem Ali of Chittagong renounced his Honourary Magistracy and returned his Certificate of Honour and Coronation *Durbar* Medal. Syed Abdus Samad (advocate) of Berhampore, Syed Abdul Majid (advocate) of Rampurhat and Muhammad Samsuddin (advocate) of Calcutta High Court, stopped practice. He also resigned from his membership of the District Board of Nadia. Maulvi Najmuddin Ahmad, a retired Deputy Magistrate, tendered his resignation from the post of Honourary Presidency Magistrate; Calcutta. Maulvi Muhammad Abdus Samad of Burdwan resigned from his nominated membership of the Katwa Local Board. Maulvi Abdul Karim, A.K.Fazlul Huq, Syed Sultan Ali, Muhammad Mosiah, Moudud Rahman, Wahed Hussain Azizul Huq, Tamizuddin Ahamed, Ekramul Huq Abdur Rashid Khan, Muhammad Khan, Syed Majid Baksh – all of whom had stood for election to the reformed council — withdrew their candidatures in accord with the resolution. Nawab Habibullah of Dacca withdrew his candidature for Indian Legislative Assembly from the Dacca Muslim constituency.

in the war with a large jamaat. Thus, in several public meetings heartfelt congratulations were offered to Mustafa Kemal Pasha for his brilliant success in the fight against the Greek army.

The process of revitalization of the Khilafat organisation received a new impetus from the news of Kemal Pasha's victories over the Greek army. By October 1921, there were approximately 347 Khilafat Committees in Bengal with a membership of 16,680 and 27 khilafat corps with 3010 members.<sup>36</sup> The office bearers and full-time volunteers were paid Rs.30/per month and most of them were released as detainees. It is hugely significant that the strong supporters of the movement abided by the organisational decision in offering their government services for Ankara and joining as volunteers in the service of the Khilafat. Muhammad Hussain Kadri of Salar, Murshidabad, a topographical surveyor, resigned from his post on 24 May 1922 and became a full-time member of the Khilafat services.<sup>37</sup> Preachers of Turkish propaganda were appointed on monthly salaries to counter British propaganda. The Calcutta Khilafat committee, for example, appointed Muhammad Inayatullah for the purpose. He received a salary of Rs.30/per month from the Calcutta office. Their activities were generally confined to supervisory activities, such as arranging meetings, organising mass sentiment, mobilising propaganda work and taking account of the branch Khilafat committees of Bengal.<sup>38</sup> It was claimed by the leadership that a large body of Khilafat volunteers was active in different parts of rural Bengal.<sup>39</sup> The use of patriotic songs was another technique adopted to create mass enthusiasm. Printed leaflets were distributed containing Iqbal's song 'Hindustan Hamara' (India belongs to us) and 'Rise, O Mussalman to the call of Allah'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> GBIB, confidential, File No: 121/1922, weekly report, 29/10/1921.

<sup>37</sup> I.B.confidential report, SB/1276/1922

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> G.B. (pol) confidential. File No 106/1920, SL 23.

<sup>40</sup> Freedom Movement papers, paper No. 77.

A meeting of the Khilafat secretariat committee was held in Calcutta on 20 January 1922 to discuss ways of collecting the largest possible sum for the government in Ankara. At this meeting, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Banu Begum, mother of Muhammad Ali, were present as guest members. Begum made an extensive tour through Chittagong, Dacca, Noakhali, Faridpur etc. in aid of the Ankara fund. All volunteers were ordered to organise meetings and processions for the same purpose. Some of them wore the Khilafat dress and went round Bengal villages collecting funds for the Khilafat cause and created considerable stir among the rural Muslims. They collected money from Islamic funds such as zakat, usur, etc. and with the same object they sold Khilafat bonds as Muslim unity bonds and Islamic unity bonds in Calcutta and in different provincial towns of Bengal like Bolpur, Krishnagar etc. The bond resembled the paper money of the time and was known as a Khilafat Committee Note.<sup>41</sup>



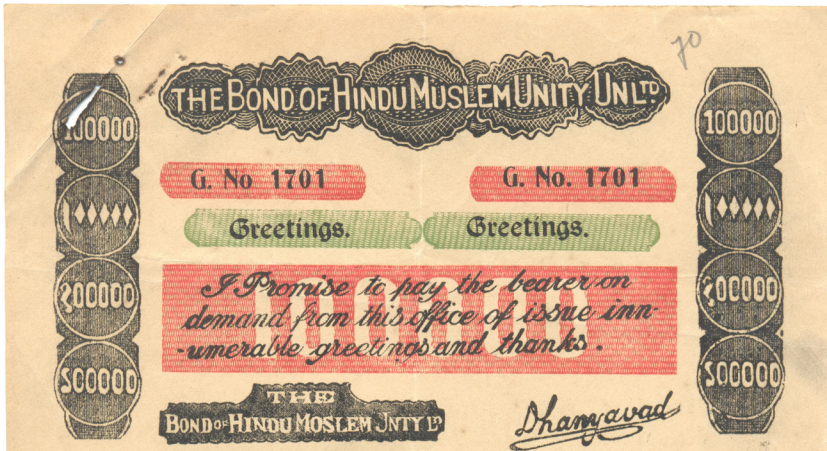
**Picture 1**

Seal (with Number) of the Bengal Khilafat Committee

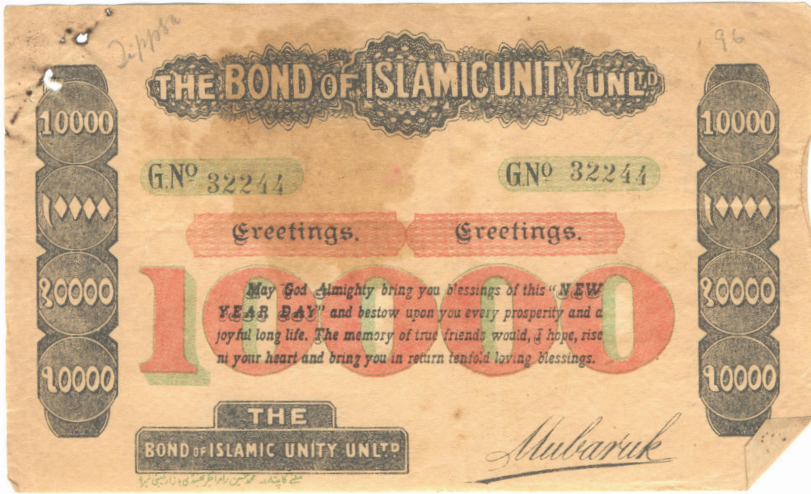
<sup>41</sup> S.B. confidential Report File No 382/1920.



Picture 2  
The Reverse Side of the Rupee



Picture 3  
The Bond of Hindu Muslim Unity



Picture 4  
Khilafat Bond for Islamic Unity



Picture 5  
The Bond of Islamic Unity

Ismail Hossain Siraji moved a resolution to send thousands of mujahedins to Ankara from India to fight on the Turkish side.<sup>42</sup> A Women's Association was formed to raise funds from the women for Khilafat activities in Bengal. The wife of Khodja Allauddin, private secretary of the Nawab of Dacca, became secretary of the Women's Association. On 29 April 1922, the women of the Ahsan Manzil held a meeting at which it was decided that they should all contribute some rice by the 'Musthi Bhiksha' (handfuls of rice for beggars) system. They sold it at five seers per rupee and the money was sent to the secretary of the Khilafat Committee. It was resolved that they would communicate this decision to the women of the villages through the local Khilafat Committee.<sup>43</sup> The deposition of the Sultan and the deprivation of the Khalifa of his temporal power by the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara caused much discussion amongst the Muslims of Bengal.<sup>44</sup> The clash came in March 1924 when the Republican administration decided to abolish the Caliphate.

The people of Bengal, along with the rest of South Asia, were deeply influenced by the ideas and achievements of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal. He was seen as one of those rare charismatic political leaders whose unparalleled struggle and exploits and historical and moral influence have transcended the boundaries of his own country and become an international phenomenon. The victory of the Turkish army against the Greek army in at the battle of Sakarya in 1921 was a moral victory for the Muslim world, which

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<sup>42</sup> I.B confidential, File No: SB/1276/1922, Letter of Siraji.

<sup>43</sup> IB confidential weekly district report, No: 141/1922, 6 May Dacca.

<sup>44</sup> The moderates were inclined to believe that the Turkish Parliament in Ankara was responsible for the decision. They had erred in not asking the opinion of other Muslims before taking such an extreme decision. They also believed that the Bolsheviks had influenced the Turkish government. The extremists were somewhat divided in their opinions. Some refused to accept the news, which had come out through British news agencies. Others argued that what Kemal Pasha had done was quite right from the religious point of view. They also believed that Kemal Pasha would not do anything to alienate himself and his government from the sympathy of the Muslim World. See: I.B. police report, File No 362/22.

began to realise that the Oriental nations could stand their ground in a duel with Europe. Beyond the borders of his homeland Kemal Pasha was revered as one of the first successful anti-imperialist leaders of the Third World, as a statesman who deeply believed in and contributed to world peace and one of the outstanding pioneers in the liberation movement of the 20th century.

The new trend among the Bengali Muslims during this period was to read with avid interest essays and poems with an anti-British flavour, expressing sorrow over the loss of power by Muslims at different periods of history at the hands of the imperialist Western powers. It was in this psychologically and emotionally receptive state of mind and feelings that the Muslims of Bengal became aware of the nationalist movement in Turkey and its leader Mustafa Kemal. The Bengali Muslim literary figures expressed their discontent through their writings and the people at large warmly received them. In Bengal, poems, verses and newspaper articles were important media through which mass enthusiasm was aroused in favour of political and other issues.

The deep and penetrating influence of Mustafa Kemal's revolutionary ideas and concept of nationalism had bequeathed a permanent legacy giving a new direction in the field of Bengali literature and ushering in a new era. He was regarded as a legendary hero to whom glowing tributes were paid in prose and verse. Mustafa Kemal's activities had a profound impact on the thought processes of the Muslim leaders. Among others, the great Bengali Muslim leader Abul Kasem Fazlul Haqq took an effective part in the Indian Khilafat Movement (1918-1920) and was a great admirer of Turkey and its leader Mustafa Kemal. Other prominent Bengali Muslim intellectuals who popularised the cause of Turkey and the achievements of Mustafa Kemal in Bengal was Maulana Akram Khan, a distinguished theologian and an outstanding journalist. Mustafa Kemal's resounding victory over the Greek army inspired no less a person than the revolutionary Bengali Muslim poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, to produce famous political poems like the 'Rana Bheri' (trumper call to battle) and the more

popular 'Kamal Pasha',<sup>45</sup> published in September and October 1921 respectively. Kazi Nazrul Islam was positively influenced by Mustafa Kemal and his ideas during the early years of his literary career.<sup>46</sup> The soldier-poet Nazrul discovered in "Commander Kemal" his cherished Hero whom he later immortalised in his poem 'Vidrohi' (an eternal rebel) "a symbol of an uncompromising fighter who would not lay down his sword until he had attained final victory". He wondered why the reforms in Turkey could not be replicated in India and Bengal.

Writers of poetry and prose were joined by historians, journalists and political leaders in playing a major role in propagating the achievements of Mustafa Kemal among the Muslims of Bengal. As a pioneer of anti-colonialism and nationalism Mustafa Kemal became an "iconic hero" to the people of the subcontinent. This made a powerful emotional appeal to the Muslims of Bengal and helped to infuse a new spirit of hope in the community. The popularity of Mustafa Kemal in Bengal can be easily understood from the fact that the news of the sad passing away of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (10 November 1938) was published in all contemporary newspapers and journals and the death was universally mourned by the enlightened, educated and masses alike. The popular daily newspaper Azad came out with banner headlines on 11 November 1938 saying, "The world's greatest statesman and the maker of modern Turkey, Ghazi Kemal Ataturk has passed away". In its issue on 19 Nov. 1938 the paper published detailed accounts of the "Kemal Day" observed on 18 November in Calcutta and in different regions of the Bengal province. The Day

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<sup>45</sup> The poet wrote "*Kamal tune kamal kiya bhai.*" The meaning of the line is that Kamal is a symbol of success or perfection. After the poem, 'kamal' became an idiom in the Bengali language.

<sup>46</sup> Kazi Nazrul Islam referred to the spirit of Kemal Pasha and wrote in Dhumketu (comet): "Kemal, being a Muslim, realized that neither the Khilafat nor the country could be saved just by wearing beards, eating beef or performing Raza, Namaz... Religious hypocrisy cannot save Islam." Dhumketu, editorial - 'KAMAL' Aswin 30, 1329 (Bengali year)

of Mourning was observed by holding condolence meetings and offering funeral prayers in the mosques. Popular newspapers and journals like the Dhaka Prakash, Mashik Muhhamadi, Saugat, and others published editorials, numerous articles, essays and poems through which the Bengali Muslims and the Non-Muslims paid their homage to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

The great Bengali poet and Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, was a devout supporter of the Turks. During the Balkan Wars the poet wrote, "The choice of the Turks" in *Comred*, edited by Muhammad Ali.<sup>47</sup> The poet was deeply grieved by the death of Ataturk and he paid the highest tribute to the departed at the condolence meeting he organized at his own university. The poet remarks that "Turkey was once called the 'sick man of Europe' until Mustafa Kemal came and set before us an example of a new Asia where a living present recalls the glories of the past...To his own people he was a great deliverer; to us he should remain a great example."<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

Among the landmarks of the long and arduous struggle of the Indian Muslims for freedom, the rise of the Khilafat movement (1918-1924) stands out as one of the most significant political events. It was designed ostensibly to save the Ottoman Empire from dismemberment following the First World War, while at the same time it was a conscious attempt to promote Muslim political interests in India. The movement was powerfully anti-colonial and the leaders used religion as a means, as did numerous Hindu extremists in the history of the Indian Nationalist movement. The struggles for Khilafat and for India's independence and inter-communal solidarity were inseparable. Pan-Islamism was merged with Indian nationalism to obtain freedom for India. The

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<sup>47</sup> Ibrahim Khan, *op. cit.*, p.396.

<sup>48</sup> The Daily Star, vol. 5, No 169, November 2004.

leadership of the movement came from a cross-section of Indian society and included in its ranks both the western-educated and the alumni of the traditional madrasas. The participants belonged to all strata of the Muslim community. In addition, M.K. Gandhi and his Indian National Congress provided useful sustenance by bringing in the Hindus to join forces. The networks of the movement were local mosques and madrasas, while the vernacular press and the branches of various Anjumans came in quite useful. The Movement fired the imagination of the young and old, men and women, and compelled even the ulama to come out of their 'hujras' and the wealthy from their portals to join the masses. It was the first countrywide agitation of the Indian Muslims with a central organization to guide its course. It transformed the psyche of the people, trained them in political agitation and taught them how to press for their demands. During this period, this spontaneous organization was more popular and powerful than the All India Muslim League which was back in operation. Never since the War of Independence of 1857 had the Muslims of India been roused so much and called upon to make so many sacrifices.

# Seeds of Ottomanism and Islamism: Fruits of Secularism & Democracy

Khurram Qadir\*

**Abstract.** *The Ottoman Empire was, from its very inception, inclined to a brand of Ottomanism and a form of Islamism. However the two strains remained parallel during most of the history of the Empire, for about four hundred years. When, finally, the dynamics of the modern West initiated the process which resulted in the formulation of constitutions on the European model, these two forces, which had by now become deeply entrenched in Ottoman culture, influenced the content of these documents to varying degrees. Some of the cultural forces of ethnicity and governance that had evolved over the centuries could not be overlooked while formulating the new constitution. However, some cultural forces had acquired a negative and repugnant connotation for the Turkish people and could not be included in a Constitution being prepared even in the second Constitutional Period. This paper identifies the origin and evolution of these concepts in the Ottoman Empire during its period of expansion and highlights the socio-political relationship of the Turks with them in the formulation of the First Constitution. It goes on to study the dynamics which motivated the changes in 1909 through the content of these documents. In order to identify how we may assess if the thrust of these forces was positive or negative the content and intent of the documents under review is analyzed at the end of the study. Thus it deals with remote dynamics leading to the constitutional articles of 1876 and 1909.*

**Keywords.** Ottomanism, Islamism, secularism, democracy, Constitution, political culture, pragmatism.

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The Ottoman Empire was an unusual and somewhat paradoxical state produced by the Turks whose pragmatism was unique in the annals of history. Whereas almost all the Turkish states before the Ottomans used the languages in vogue within their domain, preferring as official the one used by their predecessors or by the majority of their subjects, the Ottomans chose to patronize Turkish. This was one sign of Turkism in the Ottoman state. As with all other Turkish states, the Ottomans chose to rely on the sipahis and mounted Turkish soldiers for expanding their state. Thus they began their conquests with traditional Turkic tribalism, which formed another aspect of Turkism within the Ottoman Empire. Despite two major thrusts towards ethnicity, the Ottoman state was soon to acquire an anti-ethnic administrative slant which should be construed as Ottomanism. Supply of *ghilman* from Europe and an innovative administration developed for the *yenicheri*<sup>1</sup> system led to a state which placed the Turkish sipahis at a disadvantage with respect to the Janissary corps.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p. 11. Halil Inalcik believes that the *Janissary* system emerged as a result of the prisoners of war taken at the conquest of Adrianople. It is possible that the *Yenicheri* came into being very early in Ottoman history, before the death of Alauddin Pasha, brother of Ertughral, c.1330, or at the latest in the time of Murad 1362. It is also conceivable that whereas Alauddin created the *Yenicheri*, it was only under Murad that the system of converting them into *Janissaries* and *sanjaq beys* was formalized. One of the reasons put forward by those who are dismissive of the possibility that the Ottomans could, at this early point in their state, visualize the complex system is that it fails to take into account that the Turks had experienced the institution of *ghilman* for centuries and had themselves been converted *ghilman* in many states in which they had risen to power. In fact, not only were these institutions well developed in the polity to which the Ottomans were heir, but their track record also shows that this group of Turks was more innovative and pragmatic than most other groups from their race who had gained imperial status.

<sup>2</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *the Ottoman State and its Place in World History*, Leiden, 1974, p. 23. Toynbee points out that while the Ottomans retained the institution of *devshirme* for about 300 years, in 1669 a new institution was created for the Christian subjects who did not become Muslims. This is about the time that the *Sipahi* reaction to the privileges of the *Janissary* began to create problems.

In a similar paradox, we find Ottoman Islamism to be, simultaneously, more Islamic as well as more secular than that of any other Turkish Islamism. Most Turkish Muslim states did not begin as ghazi states; rather they acquired the Muslim political mandate of ghazwa as and when required by state needs for expansion or from the aspiration of the rulers. However, the other states retained the implicit obligations of an Islamic government<sup>3</sup> vis-à-vis civil administration while the Ottomans opted for a sort of secular innovation by allowing non-Muslim communities to govern themselves in accordance with their own traditions.

Perhaps the reason for these anomalies lay in the unique experience of the followers of Suleiman Khan, or in the strategic location of the original domain of Ertughral. We could seek the answer in Usman Ghazi's<sup>4</sup> need to maintain viable interstate balance in dealings with other Ghazi principalities on the one hand and Christian states to the north, particularly the Byzantines, on the other. Another source of cross-cultural influences may be the early inclusion of Byzantine princesses in the Ottoman harem. The origin of these paradoxes may possibly be attributed to a complex interplay of the factors enumerated above. Whatever the source which led to these anomalies, the end result was that the Ottomans were ethno-centric and xenocentric at the same time.<sup>5</sup> The ethnicity had Ottoman un-

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<sup>3</sup> E. Mercil, ed., *A Short History of Turkish-Islamic States*, tr. Ahmet Edip Uysal, Ankara, 1994, has given a survey of the histories of other Turkish states which amply depicts these trends.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman State*, London, 1968, p.23 and passim, is an example of scholarship which lends credence to the militant Islamism of the Ottomans. The story of a dream of historic importance and the blessings of the holy man is a common medieval "occurrence" and is often the spiritual supplement to temporal aspirations. Similarly, a spiritual experience has proved more practicable when material gain is imminent as a consequence; the same appears to apply to Usman Khan's enterprise. Other incidents, like the difference of opinion with Dundar [Gibbon, p.50] suggest that Usman Khan had an assertive and aggressive personality, the kind that is needed for the ambitions of an empire builder.

<sup>5</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *The Ottoman State and its Place in World History*, Leiden, 1974, Introduction, p. 2. Ottomans were able to integrate peacefully more than 60 linguistic and ethnic groups during the course of history. William H. McNeill, "The

dertones within the general ethnicity of Turkism. Simultaneously, the Ottoman ruling class identified totally with Islam, yet was thoroughly open to norms of other creeds and communities.

Suleiman's community of Turks may have tarried for several centuries in regions influenced by Persian culture before they marched westward. Nonetheless they seem to have arrived in Anatolia untouched by Iranian traditions. Unlike most of their fellow Turks, even when they reached Anatolia and the Seljuq Empire, the acculturation of the Ottomans was less intense, slower and more superficial than the Ghaznavids, Seljuqs and Memlukes, who not only became Persianized in statecraft but also as individuals<sup>6</sup> and contributed freely to the enhancement of Persian language and culture. The Ottomans, perhaps because of limited exposure to high society and the sudden opportunity in the decaying fabric of the Seljuq state at the frontier, were free from much of this cultural baggage and wealth.

Strategic peculiarities of time and space allowed the followers of Suleiman Shah to evade the more violent phase of the crusading scourge on the one hand and the Mongoloid one on the other. The larger and more powerful states like Tekke and Mentеше took the brunt of the backlash of a power vacuum caused by the fragmentation of the Seljuq Empire.<sup>7</sup> This two-phase transition

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Ottoman Empire in History", in the same volume, pp. 34-47, refers (p. 35) to the Ottoman Empire as "poly-lingual" and "poly-ethnic".

<sup>6</sup> Hakkı D. Yıldız and Erdogan Mercil, "State Organization and Culture in Turkish-Islamic States" in E. Mercil, ed., *A Short History of Turkish-Islamic States*, tr. Ahmet Edip Uysal, Ankara, 1994, pp. 329-386. In this section the state organization is discussed of seven Turkish states which could have provided a model for the Ottomans. A comparison between these administrative norms and those of the Ottomans would show the quantity and quality of Ottoman administrative innovation. This innovative genius is inherently Turkish and, in the opinion of this researcher, derives from a lack of Persianization.

<sup>7</sup> Erdoğan Mercil, "The Anatolian Principalities" in E. Mercil, ed., *A Short History of Turkish-Islamic States*, tr. Ahmet Edip Uysal, Ankara, 1994, pp.185-210 gives a brief history of the Anatolian Turkish states contemporary with the Ottomans in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

from the Seljuq to the Ottoman state facilitated the expansion of the latter within a relatively stable state system. On the one hand this secured the survival of the Ottoman state; on the other it enhanced the ghazi spirit as a kind of sub-conscious counter-crusade. It is possible that herein lay the root of the "secularized Islamism"<sup>8</sup> of the Ottomans. Ironically, the first victims of the Ottoman expansion were the Byzantines, co-victims with the Seljuqs, of the ravages wrought in Anatolia by the Crusaders.

A similar irony of fate saw an interregnum in Ottoman fortunes when the Tartar heirs to the Mongols extinguished the brilliant career of Bayazid. The Tartars had been converted to Islam and Timur may have considered himself no less a ghazi than Bayazid.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the competition to the south and east was Muslim while that to the north and west was Christian enhanced the ambivalent, secular Islamism<sup>10</sup> of the Ottoman Empire builders and, consequently, the political ethos of their state.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *The Ottoman State and its Place in World History*, Leiden, 1974, p. 1. Although the Islamic nature of secularism is apparent from the fact that, while the Ottomans gave "official recognition to all three monotheistic religions", it also maintained a distinction between them.

<sup>9</sup> William H. McNeill, "The Ottoman Empire in History", in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 34-47, p.36, has pointed out that the Ottoman Empire also proved to be a model for the Safavis and Mughals who had, by the 1520's, gained control of almost all the land ruled by the Muslims through history.

<sup>10</sup> Hakkı D. Yıldız, "The Turks' Adoption of Islam", in E. Mercil, ed., *A Short History of Turkish-Islamic States*, tr. Ahmet Edip Uysal, Ankara, 1994, pp. 29-45, p. 42 has developed a case to suggest that Islam was closer to the culture of the Turks than other religions with which they came in contact in the early phase of their empire building. Many centuries earlier Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, *Tarikh Fakhrud-din Mubarakshah*, ed. E. Denison Ross, London, 1927, had suggested that the Turks were unique converts to Islam in as much as they neither reneged nor hankered after their homeland and proved tireless champions of their new faith. He also suggested that the Turks were better appreciated when they had left their homeland. It is possible that the particular blend of militancy and civilisation that was the hallmark of the Muslim world from the third Muslim century onward was most suited for the Turks and particularly the Ottomans.

<sup>11</sup> M. A. Cook, ed., in his introduction to *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 1-10, p. 2, has emphasized the ambivalent character of the

The primary object of this study is to look into the roots of this political culture and into the ethos that pervaded the evolution of Ottoman institutions in their state<sup>12</sup> through the first three centuries of its existence. This will help us to identify the social backlash that came from the Sipahis in particular and the Turks in general. This community was most affected by the secularism and xenocentrism of the Ottoman state. As a result, when the expansion of the Ottomans finally slowed down before coming to a halt, the sipahis made a push to acquire the privileges that had heretofore been reserved for the Yenicheri. From about the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Turks began steadily to reclaim their ethnic and Islamic privileges. Thus the Turkism/Ottomanism and Islamism that, though active, had taken a back seat to xenic and secular trends, now superseded them. Just as this Islamic-Turkism was a reaction to the supremacy of xenic-secularism, the Tanzimat and the Young Turks were parts of a counter-reaction.

The westernization of the Ottomans was partially a consequence of the European cultural crusade. Christian Europe experienced an inferiority complex when Muslims conquered Andalusia during the eighth century AD. While its first attempt to restore self-confidence and dignity had been the proselytizing surge to the north, Christianity's second effort was the Crusade. During this time, Byzantine rulers were hard put to hold on to Constantinople, whereas central Europe was feeling the threat of Muslim penetration into the Balkans and later along the Danube. In this climate, the

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Ottoman state to highlight the fact that it did not have a single Turkish nation and was not heir to the Christian Roman Empire. Inadvertently he also seems to have testified to the non-ethnic and secular stance of the Ottomans.

<sup>12</sup> Keeping in view the complexity of this import and export of influences between Europe and Levantine Islam, the secondary objective of this paper is to create a consciousness of the fact that the designation of Occident and Orient is not pertinent, especially in this present context. A corollary of this hypothesis is that whereas the expansion of the Muslim state resulted in the so-called 'oriental' export of views and values, the export of a Christian-European culture and institutions brought about an expansion of dominance of Germanic peoples and states under the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks leading to colonialism.

Turks were bringing a growing enlightenment to Europe. It may be too chauvinistic to claim that the anti-theocratic polity of Islam gave rise to the Protestant concept of the primacy of scripture over a theocratic church but it is certain that the reformation and counter-reformation were influenced by Islamic values.

The present study is based on the hypothesis that much of what was brought to the Ottomans as modernism from Europe was the result of Ottoman experiments in institution building. We will present a rationalization through a division into five sections: first, Ottoman modernism of 1300 to 1600; second, a century of reaction when the administration had to take a step backwards; third, a century when the Ottomans became recipients of a secondary modernism from Europe; fourth, the conflict between the local and foreign strains of modernism, a feature of the Ottoman Empire at the end of this period; the fifth and last being the analysis of the constitutional articles of 1876 and 1909.

The centre-stage of human history till the rise of the Greek city states had been occupied by the Fertile Crescent, but the Hittites had claimed a place of eminence for Anatolia which became a bone of contention between the Greeks and the Persians. It has, from that day, been the lynchpin for the history around the Mediterranean. That is to say, Anatolia holds the key to the combined historical heritage of all three continents<sup>13</sup> which comprise the Old World. The Sea of Marmara, bounded by the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, has been a centre of civilisation for more than two thousand years of history, from Byzantium

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<sup>13</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *The Ottoman State and its Place in World History*, Leiden, 1974, p. 2, points out that thirty six modern states in three continents formed part of the Ottoman Empire. Probably a greater number were included in the Roman Empire, where the passage to Africa may have as easily been by sea or by the straits of Gibraltar, but the hold over Anatolia made it possible for Roman traditions to survive the death of the Roman state and even the defunct Roman civilisation. Thus the area of modern Turkey has held together the thread of world history through three out of six millennia of recorded human history. The author takes issue with the concept of continents in a work under preparation but the concept has been used here due to its currency in the geography of the modern age to date.

to Istanbul. This was the passage through which the wisdom of the Muslims passed to Europe. Neither the Italian traders of the Mediterranean nor the Moorish conquerors of Spain were able to make as material a contribution to Christian civilisation in Europe during medieval times.

The Anatolian Seljuqs started the interaction which was supplemented by the Crusaders, but it was the Ottomans who opened the gate between Christian Europe and Muslim Asia.<sup>14</sup> What is remarkable is that, from the start, the Ottomans had a modern outlook. As they conquered İstanbul, they steadily increased in power. However, while they established new systems such as the *yuruk* settlements through *surgun* in *timar*<sup>15</sup> lands, the Ottomans did not take on the privilege of dictating norms to their subjects. Perhaps this was because theirs was a humble beginning which made slow yet steady progress.

The French, less than the British, asserted their right to define normative politics till Napoleonic times. Thereafter it was the British leadership which was the arbiter of right and wrong in global political norms. Initially it was legitimacy and balance of power, as chartered by Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna. However, three democratic upheavals of public opinion in Europe forced Metternich and his British cohorts to acknowledge the forces of democracy as the paramount index of normative politics for the future.<sup>16</sup> Britain had heretofore been unwilling to subjugate legitimacy to democracy or the balance of power to secularism. However, it now became the champion of the

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<sup>14</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 1, starts off with the mutual relationship of the history of Europe and the Ottoman state, a theme he continues to develop throughout his discourse.

<sup>15</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire", in M. A. Cook ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 10-53, p.36. *Timars* were land grants to *sipahis*, *surgun* was an old system of population transfer or exile which was applied to nomad Turks referred to as *Yuruk*.

<sup>16</sup> Although any history of nineteenth century Europe will attest to this British experience, for a compact statement of facts we may refer to H. A. L. Fisher, *History of Europe*, London, 1936.

democratic secularism which had been the cardinal sin of the French people at the time of their great revolution.

The Ottomans had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, become convinced of their role as followers in the intellectual race of political norms. Though they had inspired the European religious tolerance that emerged at the end of the reformation, the capitulations seemed a novel European innovation.<sup>17</sup> In a similar case of national amnesia they seemed to forget their own modes of assessing public opinion, ensuring public participation and maintaining a modicum of accountability as well as a system for the redress of grievances. If we deconstruct democracy into its components without being committed to the form of a parliament or the generalized rights of representation given to it, we find that it consists of elements which had existed in one form or another within the Ottoman state.<sup>18</sup> However, when first France and then Britain claimed that the Ottoman Empire lacked democratic norms, the Turks succumbed to their criticism.

It is this reappraisal of the role and mode of public participation in affairs of state that lie at the heart of the constitutional struggle during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. The lip service to democracy in the shape of the First Constitution and the failed

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<sup>17</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 51-58, p.56. Selim had renewed the Memluk capitulations to France in 1517 but the first official Ottoman capitulation to the French is dated 1569. Now other western nations had to trade under the French flag. Favoured trading status or *Imtiazat* had been a Memluk practice for some time and was used by the Ottomans to good effect for nearly three centuries before it started creating problems for them.

<sup>18</sup> C. M. Kortepeter, in his comment on Halil Inalcik, "The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 51-58, in the same volume highlights on p. 59. that the Ottomans had a "feedback" capacity for redress of social grievances. He believes that these practices of the Muslims, which took the form of *Imtiaz* [capitulation] to societies other than the Muslim, were "politically crippling but morally praiseworthy", resulting in the inability to absorb them within the 'Ottoman polity'. This aspect needs considerable focus to see how the Ottoman *Imtiaz* in socio-political dealings led to the concept of secularism in Europe and how the *Imtiazat* of trade led from bullionism to mercantilism.

effort to pander to public opinion that led to the formulation of the Second Constitution is a focal issue of this study.<sup>19</sup> The content analysis of the text of the Second Constitution will be preceded by an overview of three stages of evolution in the political culture of Ottoman Turkey in both contexts, that of the Ottomans and that of the world they belonged to. It will also be prefixed with some generalizations regarding Islamism and Turkish ethnicity.

### **Ottoman Political Culture and Evolution of Institutions (1300-1600 AD)**

The international currents that dominated the first phase of evolution in the Ottoman state came from the Christians of Europe and the Mongols/Tartars who were sweeping through Asia, wave upon wave, first northeast to southwest and then due west. A century of these pressures had preceded the Ottoman state and returned to bedevil the rising Ottoman tide at the end of its first century of steady growth. An interregnum followed by half a century of stabilization led on to a phase of 150 years of steady growth. Three centuries of history thus brings us to the zenith of the Ottoman power which had radiated almost evenly to the north in Europe. Its expansion into Anatolia and into its south had been quite symmetrical. However, its southwestward passage into Africa was, due to geographic factors, linear like the Roman Empire before it. Its northward growth was the main source of xenic blood as the Asiatic and African expansion brought the Ottomans in contact with other races that had cohabited with the Turks throughout history. While democratic norms were struggling for supremacy in Europe and scientific thought was finding its feet, the paradoxical yin and yang of xenocentric and ethnic priorities appear to have enjoyed an alternating supremacy in the Ottoman state.

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<sup>19</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977. Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the stages through which the Empire passed in the reign of Abdulhamid II.

The evolution of Ottoman culture during the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Hijra centuries may be divided into three stages of about one century each. During the first century, issues of political culture were determined by matters of administration and concerns of interstate policy. Emerging as a state from Ertughral's descent and having been stationed on the northern marches<sup>20</sup> the Ottomans were destined to become ghazis. Surrounded by larger ghazi states with settled populations and urban centers, the Ottomans [whose nomadic past was not so distant] were able to attract Yuruk groups from other marches.<sup>21</sup> They thus had a subject population with a very high potential of militancy. Hardy nomads and ghazis who had little desire to settle in urban regions found their way into the service of Uthman Khan and Ertughral. Having had neither a long stay in Iran nor exposure to the Seljuq court the Ottomans lacked familiarity with the established administrative norms of Muslim states. Their administration was, consequently, more innovative and pragmatic in its approach.

Ethnicity in the Ottoman state was not purely racial or tribal, Turkish and non-Turkish warriors accepted the leadership of Uthman to become Ottomans. It is also more than likely that the Ghazis who joined Uthman included several non-Turks, but once absorbed within the comity they became Turk<sup>22</sup> and Ottoman<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> V. L. Manage, *Neshri's History of the Ottomans*, London, 1964, gives a brief survey of the possible sources of early Ottoman history of the first two centuries; the source material is essentially sketchy.

<sup>21</sup> Inalcik, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire" *op. cit.*, p.14 refers to the *ghazis* who joined Uthman Khan, since these *ghazis* would generally not be from among the urbanized Turks. It seems likely that the bulk of those who flocked to the Ottoman camp would be recently arrived and semi-settled nomads like the leader they chose to join.

<sup>22</sup> H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman State*, London, 1968, p. 29, reports that in 1785 the Ottoman usage of the word Turk was derogatory. However, we also know that the *Sipahis* were by and large Turks. This is the typical Ottoman paradox of ethnicity coupled with anti-ethnic norms.

<sup>23</sup> The term Ottoman should thus, except in the case of the Sultan's family and its lineage from Uthman Khan, be taken to mean belonging to the state ruled by the

like the others. The beyliks [leading to the concept of Sanjaq bey and Beglarbey] were a continuation of the Seljuq practice, as was the system of the marches while the system of the timar may have roots in pre-Seljuq times.<sup>24</sup> It has been suggested that the Roman practice of extending citizenship to non-Romans also found its way into Ottoman policy,<sup>25</sup> one response to this coming from J. W. Barker in the same volume.<sup>26</sup> The concept of ghazi was derived from the Muslim sharia with its cultural transmission via the madrasas as well as other Muslim practices. The Ottomans borrowed freely from almost all civilisations that preceded them. The Islamism of the Ottomans was, naturally, based on Sharia but not all soldiers had a deep commitment to the cause of Islam. However, all had chosen the activist life of the marches which, in the case of a Muslim state with a frontier facing a non-Muslim, automatically transformed them into ghazis. In principle, the life of a ghazi should be governed by sharia alone but, in fact, the life of the neo-convert ghazis differed little from that of any other soldier of the marches,<sup>27</sup> or, for that matter, from his life as a soldier before conversion.

Among the early administrative systems of the Ottomans was the concept of Sanjaq bey, which developed into a delicate three-dimensional balance between timardar, Qhazi and Sanjaq bey. This was to be disturbed after 1600 with the functions of a timar holding

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Ottomans irrespective of the Turk or non-Turk, Muslim or non-Muslim origin of a person or socio-cultural norm.

<sup>24</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, "The Stages of Ottoman History: A Structural Comparative Approach" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 79-99, p. 88, but "in the Ottoman state the *timars* emerged as a well organized and fully developed socio-economic system integrated into the state structure."

<sup>25</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Ottoman Empire's Place in World History" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 15-27, p. 23.

<sup>26</sup> The comment follows the article *loc. cit.* on pp. 28-33 and suggests that neither were the Ottomans the only successors of Byzantium, nor perhaps was Byzantine culture the only model for the Ottomans to follow.

<sup>27</sup> Inalcik, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire" *op. cit.*, p.16 draws parallels between the *ghazi*, the *akritai* of the Byzantines and the *alperen* of the traditional Turks.

sipahi (for example tax collection and land administration) coming to be performed by the ayans. In the larger context this was part of an overall attrition of the administration, but the Ottomans had a remarkable tenacity and capacity for readjustment<sup>28</sup>. Just as the competitive selection of Sultans gave way to biradarkushi<sup>29</sup> which in its turn was supplanted by the kafe<sup>30</sup> system, the Ghazi gave way to the sipahi who in turn yielded to<sup>31</sup> the eshraf. In the choice of Sultans, however, the Ottomans limited themselves to a single racial group, i.e. the Ottoman blood, and in this the Empire maintained pure male lineage throughout the course of six centuries.

By the middle of the second Ottoman century, the ghilman had begun to join the ranks of the sipahis, especially the descendents<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> H. A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman State*, London, 1968, p. 70 says that the first legislation of the Ottomans is attributed to Orkhan Ghazi's brother. He is however, disinclined to believe this to be true. Be it as it may, the innovation itself is remarkable. He also mentions that Ottomans practiced "complete religious toleration." Why it is not possible to think of this as the inspiration for secularism is a mystery.

<sup>29</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Reigns of Bayezid II and Selim I, 1481-1520, in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 54-78, p.55 refers to Sultan Muhammad Fateh's legitimization of the practice of eliminating possible rivals to the throne.

<sup>30</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p.98, mentions that as a result of this system the mother of the Sultan became very important.

<sup>31</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p. 114 uses the term *eshraf* for the new middle class but Kemal H. Karpat, "The Stages of Ottoman History: A Structural Comparative Approach" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 79-99 is of the view that this group emerged when *timar* lands lost their old utility and were given to state dignitaries.

<sup>32</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p. 114 mentions that in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries "a large part of the timar-holding cavalry was, like the *Janissary* corps, composed of slaves." However, V. J. Parry, "The Reign of Sulaiman the Magnificent, 1520 -66" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 79-102, is of the opinion that till the reign of Suleiman, the Sipahis were mainly

of the Yenicheri. Heretofore, more often than not, the sipahis were almost exclusively Turks. Thus the line of ethnic segregation was first crossed by the progeny of the Yenicheri who could no longer be conveniently or exclusively placed on one or the other side of the ethnic divide. It is also possible that the meaning of the term "akinji" underwent some transformation during this phase in order to adapt the ethnic restructuring of the ghazis to the needs of the new organization. This caused a reaction from Sipahis in the third Ottoman century. On the one hand timar and sipahi systems were undermined by societal and ethnic restructuring and on the other by small firearms technology. As conquests ground to a halt, the supply of new timar lands as well as the availability of Yenicheri troops began to dry up. This dual process brought about reactions which were both ethnic and religious in origin.

The history of Ottoman administrative practices is a fascinating study in pragmatism and innovation; however, it is not germane here. Over a period of three centuries these processes led to a heightening of Islamism in theory and to lower standards for society in practice. These processes also brought with them divisiveness due to ethnicity in place of the collaborative and competitive racial relations in the past, particularly among Muslims. The inherent strength of the complex administrative system delayed the decline<sup>33</sup> of the Empire for nearly two centuries but the internal administrative and political decline had already begun, leading to the second phase of ethno-religious evolution. Feudal Europe had begun to give way to the cultural awakening of the Renaissance. The Italians, who led the way, were divided into small states and relied on the Ottomans to provide a diplomatic focus for civilized states<sup>34</sup>

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Turks. Since Inalcik has given the details of the composition of Timar grants, it is more reasonable to assume that *ghilman* or their children formed the bulk of the sipahis of the Timar by the middle of the sixteenth century.

<sup>33</sup> The sequence of evolution is presented in tabular form in appendix "A".

<sup>34</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 51-58, p.51, has referred to the researches on

while French interaction with the Ottomans also had undertones of subordination.

It may be asserted that at the midpoint of its existence, the interstate prestige of the Ottoman Empire was at its height. The traditional European paramountcy of the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope set the stage for Ottoman centrality in the Mediterranean region and the south of Europe. Similarly, the Ottoman interest in supporting the Calvinists during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, along with their own possessions in Eastern Europe, made them the principal actors in that arena as well.<sup>35</sup> Eurocentric historiography tends to gloss over this fact while emphasizing the role of the 19<sup>th</sup> century concept of the "sick man of Europe". In fact, however, it was the Ottomans who dominated the interstate history of Europe between 1500 and 1700. The first part of this study dealt with the trends which set the stage for Turkish centrality in European politics through its role both as leader and later as follower. The phase of xenic tendencies up to 1600,<sup>36</sup> which was both formative and innovative, was followed until 1800 by an ethnic reaction, followed in turn by a counter-reaction in the form of the Tanzimat.<sup>37</sup>

The scheme of periodization in the present study is based on

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Italian archival material regarding the Ottoman role.

<sup>35</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 51-58, p.53.

<sup>36</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, "The Stages of Ottoman History: A Structural Comparative Approach" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 79-99, divides Ottoman history into four stages as against the traditional three phases of expansion, stagnation and decline. Karpat's scheme seems the more reasonable of the two.

<sup>37</sup> Kemal A. Faruki, *The Evolution of Islamic Constitutional Theory and Practice*, Karachi, 1971, p. 139, gives a fairly extensive account of the stages of Ottoman constitutional evolution. Unlike Karpat, ed. *op.cit.*, he does not dismiss the *Tanzimat* as non-modern but he does identify them as ineffective. In this article, as we have not accepted the thesis that modernism came to the Ottomans from Europe but rather was inherent in them, the *Tanzimat* are placed in the intermediate position between a normative evolution that was more Ottoman in essence and one that was more West European in tenor.

a more complex system which takes into account the trajectory of evolution of different systems within the Ottoman Empire. It is assumed that time units of 5-10; 30-50; 90-100 and 150 years determine a set of small and large movements within systems as these are the common timeframes within which human beings can influence systems. The Ottoman Empire is, in the experience of this author as a teacher of history, one unit of history which provides the most pristine example of the 50, 100 & 150 year timeframe of change. It is a history which displays the sequence of systemic evolution as:

1. military administration;
2. inter-state expansionist politics and intrastate administration;
3. intrastate politics and social organization; and
4. cultural refinement.

In its first fifty years, the entire contribution of the Ottomans can be summed up in the elementary level of military administration. This was enhanced in the next two phases of fifty years each to reach a quantitative optimum and a qualitative ideal by the time of Sultan Muhammad Fateh. In the second phase of fifty years [1350 to 1400], interstate expansion became a meaningful part of Ottoman activities and intrastate administration became a serious concern for the rulers. Again two more fifty year phases brought these activities to the height of their success. Intrastate politics & social organization appear to have become important during the post-interregnum phase [1430's onward] and continued till the age of Sultan Suleiman. Similarly, cultural refinement became obvious from the time of Sultan Bayazid II and reached its zenith after 1600. It is at about this time that the developments which had peaked in about 1450 began their phase of decline and were followed by the sequential decline in interstate expansion [peaked about 1500], social organization [1550] and culture [1600].

## Social backlash: the *Sipahis* and Revival of Turkic Paramountcy

The *Sipahis* as a class were closest to the Janissary corps in the competition for privileges<sup>38</sup> and the xenocentric privileges of the *Yenicheri* became a sore point with them when the Ottoman expansion finally slowed down.<sup>39</sup> With typical pragmatism, when the Ottoman Sultans realized that reduction in conquest and excessive wars needed some other sources of troops to supplement the Janissary, they found the solution in *culcardasi*.<sup>40</sup> Economic pressure due to a greatly changed international environment did not make things any better. The *sipahis* now made a push to acquire the privileges that had heretofore been reserved for the *Yenicheri*.<sup>41</sup> From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards the Turks steadily

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<sup>38</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p.140 treats the conditions of urban life, the *imaret* system and the guilds. These people were not directly affected by the political overthrow of the military classes but by the mid 1700s the struggle began to affect the social fabric as a whole and consequently contributed to the social decline of the 1800s.

<sup>39</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Successors of Sulaiman, 1566-1617" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp.103-133. The peace of 1606 between Austria and the Ottoman Empire seems to mark the exhaustion of the patience of the *Sipahis*. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p. 83 notes that the number of *Janissaries* rose from 12,789 in 1568 to 37,624 in 1609. This threefold increase in the rival corps while the *Sipahis* were the ones who controlled the entire countryside along with several other factors would be responsible for having finally galvanized the reaction from the Turks.

<sup>40</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Successors of Sulaiman, 1566-1617" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp.103-133, p.122. The brothers of the *ghilman* were from the Muslim subjects of the Sultan. That the non-*ghilman* Muslims should share the privileges of the *Janissary* while the Turk-Muslim *sipahis*, who had contributed so much, should be denied would have been the most galling aspect.

<sup>41</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Successors of Sulaiman, 1566-1617" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp.103-133, p.129, the revolt led by Kara Yazidi and Deli Hasan is one of the events leading to the inclusion of the Turks in the privileges reserved for the *Janissary*, such as the coveted posts of *Sanjaq beg* and *beglarbey*.

began to reclaim their ethnicity<sup>42</sup> and, particularly after the reign of Sultan Murad IV, their Islamic privileges.<sup>43</sup>

However, the emergence of a revived Islamism within the Ottoman Empire was due not only to the sipahis. European states had, once again, revived the crusading spirit to combat the Ottomans.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the Shia-Sunni divide was giving rise to sectarian zeal both in Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey.<sup>45</sup> In sharp contrast with the conquests in the first and second Ottoman centuries, the conquests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries took place mainly in Asia and Africa.

By the time the Ottoman advance had finally been halted, the global scene had changed quite drastically.<sup>46</sup> Feudal Europe had undergone an immense transformation during the age of discovery, with changing lines of communication, a renaissance and a reformation. The French, like the Mughals, now had a passion for gardens; Germans and East Europeans contested Papal practices; Spaniards and Englishmen contested the supremacy of the open seas and the Spanish Main was lost to Spain. American

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<sup>42</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Period of Murad 1617- 48" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 133-156, p.142, Abaza Muhammad's action against the *Janissary* in 1622 and that of Abaza Hasan in 1658 are cases in point for the acquisition of ethnic privileges.

<sup>43</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York, 1976, Vol. I, p. 154, has identified the Bektashi order which, though founded during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, became popular only with the *Janissary* corps. As noted herein, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a crossing of the divide from both the sipahi and the *Janissary* corps. It is probably this Turkicised *Janissary* which was drawn to the Sufi order. In any event, the growth in popularity of the Sufis indicates the rising Islamism of these Ottomans.

<sup>44</sup> V. J. Parry, "The Period of Murad 1617- 48" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 133-156, p.152, the knights of St. John and St. Stephen etc.

<sup>45</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, tr. Itzkowitz and Imber, London, 1973, p.196.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Issawi, "The Ottoman Empire in the European Economy, 1600-1914. Some Observations and Many Questions" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 107-117, traces the difference made by trade and the changes in trade routes.

colonization had shifted from the southern to the northern continent. Galileo, like Copernicus, had been and gone and Newton was at hand to allow science to initiate the age of industry, discovery and colonization. In Muslim countries, the blossoming of culture was bearing ripe fruit but science and technology were withering. Small isolated states had again given way to large ones, this time three in number, Mughal, Safavi and Ottoman.

For a century and a half, the Ottoman administration, under some powerful Sultans and the Koprulu Viziers, was able to maintain at least a modicum of administrative control and political dominance as well as an international presence in the European theatre. The inevitable decline was to come after the middle of the eighteenth century, the road to this decline being paved with a rising religious and ethnic division which had not existed prior to the seventeenth century<sup>47</sup>. Both military wings of the Ottomans, Janissary and sipahi [of non-Muslim and Muslim origin and synonymous with Turk and non-Turk in the past], now contributed to anarchy and facilitated disintegration in society.

Though the reason for the military anarchy is to be found in economic and political mismanagement, the consequences were normative and socio-psychological. The inherent human trait of reverting to long forgotten or abandoned cultural roots is to be seen in Ottoman Turkey. It is important to remember that it was Rumeli which had supplied the bulk of the Yenicheri, while the majority of sipahis in the early days came from Anatolia. It is also worth noting that the Ottomans had conquered much of Rumeli before Anatolian expansion became a significant part of their domain. Since their European recession took place while Anatolia was becoming more significant and aggressive in claiming primacy within the empire, Anatolian roots came to dominate the direction of social change.

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<sup>47</sup> A. N. Kurat and J. S. Bromley, "The Retreat of the Turks, 1683-1730" in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 178-221, p.180, brings to light differences between the older Ottoman regions of Anatolia and Rumeli and the newer ones in the east, west, south and north.

Unlike the situation in Rumeli, in Anatolia the Ottomans were neither the first Muslims nor the first Turkish settlers. The Seljuqs did not have quite the same level of xenic or secular approach as the Ottomans and it was the Konya model<sup>48</sup> rather than the Istanbul model that the Sipahis tended to revert to in their several attempts to gain ascendancy over the Sultan during their many rebellions. In the seventeenth century, Mustafa Naima repeated the concepts propounded by Tusi and Ghazali, which suggests that it was not until this time that Ottoman sources began once again to hearken to pre-Ottoman themes.<sup>49</sup> In secondary sources Ottoman institutions are generally regarded as having come to a watershed in the middle period of the Ottoman Empire. A survey of Ottoman institutions and practices will make it obvious that before 1600 AD very few were founded on Muslim jurisprudence.<sup>50</sup>

However, institutional developments after 1600 are, as alleged, more "traditional" in their tone and intent.<sup>51</sup> Whereas the competition in Europe had acquired the modernism of the earlier Ottomans, that in Asia and Africa tended to remain more traditional. As Europe surpassed the Turks in economic, military and technological matters, the Ottomans regressed in social organization of their own accord. The influence of the ulema is obvious from about the start of this phase, when the

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<sup>48</sup> Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, London, 1971, p.200, shows how the Ottoman state began to come out of the Seljuq shadows in art and architecture within the first half century of its existence.

<sup>49</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York, 1976, Vol. I, p. 112, suggests that the Ottoman state was based on the Sassanid pattern, a view that is strongly opposed in this article.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118, while the palace and tax structure bears a general resemblance with oriental courts, and to that extent may derive from Sassanid as well as Greeco-Roman origins, the *sanjaq*, the *timar* and the *Janissary* were all Ottoman innovations on forms, which preceded the extensive palace and tax structures in the Ottoman state during its infancy.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, part II of this volume consists of three chapters, each of which has a reference to traditional reforms.

enthronement and deposition of Sultan Muhammad IV<sup>52</sup> were both introduced by a fatwa. Before this, the service of the muftis did not seem to be required for installing or deposing sultans, the political and military elite deeming themselves quite competent to do so. While the Ottomans were able to make use of the efficiency and rigor of the administrative machinery to control anarchy from time to time during a period of about two hundred years, the need to obtain religious sanction for such actions, in one form or other, continued to undermine the "secularism" practiced by the Ottomans in the past.

As early as 1700, the Ottomans had begun to search for means of self improvement in the light of European developments. Hussein Pasha, a member of the famous Köprülü family, who became vizier before the turn of the century, was a member of the Mevlevi dervish order. While reverting to tax administration in the typical style of his family, he organized the navy on European lines.<sup>53</sup> Typically Ottoman, he combined in his own personality an Islamist Sufi, a visionary modernist and a pragmatic administrator. His pragmatism, like that of the Empire, was, however, weak and could not save him from the effect of internal politics. What is worthy of note is that the counter-reaction to Islamism had already begun. A rebellion of the soldiers led to the Sheikh-ul-Islam and the Sultan being named as the cause of unrest.<sup>54</sup>

During the eighteenth century the emulation of European customs and systems continued to be promoted by one school

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p.203 and p.219.

<sup>53</sup> Rhodes Murphy, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*, London, 1999, p.87, the Ottomans were generally more concerned with their own traditional equipment and military management which they carried out to the last details of food for soldiers and mounts. The west had moved on to other concerns which had become "traditional" for them [p.101] notes that the British ambassador, Sutton, felt that the Ottomans ignored "traditional concerns such as battlefield positions" etc.

<sup>54</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York, 1976, Vol. I, p. 227.

of thought as the means for the revival of Ottoman glory.<sup>55</sup> The introduction of foreign experts in the training and development of the military and the use of sciences for military technology were the obvious and physical aspects of modernity. The abstract and conceptual forces were to follow, but let us not mistake these for democracy or nationalism. Europe was to resist these trends for another fifty years after the end of the eighteenth century. More particularly the Europe that confronted the Ottomans, Austria-Hungary and Russia, were to resist these trends for almost as long as the Ottomans themselves. Let us not mistake these developments as the decline of feudalism and the rise of trade. The Ottoman Empire had never been feudal like Europe and had been the instigator of the blockade on European commerce, not the victim of the blockade. It was the rise of industry that the Ottomans were slow in emulating, just as they were slow in reacting to the changing commercial environment. Above all, however, it is a fact that the changing economic profile of Europe itself was enough of a setback to offset and highlight the internal economic decline of the Ottomans.

### **Xenic-secularism: Counter-reaction to the Islamic Turkism of the *Sipahis***

The Islamic-Turkism of the *sipahis* coincided with the decline in Ottoman supremacy and as such was demonized by the ascendant West. The Ottomans were viewed as ethnic ally and religiously motivated. Thus, in the eighteenth century, while Europe was discovering nationalism and secularism, a xenic-secularism was inculcated in a small community within the Ottoman Empire which was willing to follow a European modernism that it had itself fostered. The Tanzimat and Young Turk movements were a counter-reaction to the Islamic Turkism of the *Sipahis*. Though these movements were pro-Turk, they were so in the traditional

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 233, the Tulip period and the military reforms of the *Humbarachi* corps [bombardiers] etc. provide several examples of this trend throughout this period.

Ottoman<sup>56</sup> sense rather than a Seljuqid-Sassanid one. Both took their cue from European developments and both were patriotic, but one looked more to the West for inspiration than the other. Of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sultans, Abdulhamid II resisted this process the most strongly.

By this stage the transformation of the international scene was as reactionary as were the developments within the Ottoman state. The British claimed that their battle for democracy had started centuries earlier with the Magna Carta while the French ascribed it to their own revolution, which actually started in earnest in conjunction with the American revolt of 1776. This all culminated in the victory of democracy nearly a hundred years later. The monarchy continued effectively as the supreme power until 1858, sporadically until 1872 and tenaciously in certain states even later. The Treaties of Westphalia and Utrecht set the stage for the Congress of Vienna and an international comity of nations to sweep aside the final vestiges of feudalism and aristocracy. Changes in the Muslim world were no less momentous; mega-states vanished, leaving Muslim rulers to ponder the feasibility of state and policy matters under a new set of non-Muslim norms and complex inter-state relations.

The Ottomans also faced a unique situation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the one hand an Anglo-French rivalry for colonies and its concomitant rivalry in European affairs fuelled a diplomatic war in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, a tripartite contest for supremacy fell to the lot of the three empires whose subjects included a significant Slavic population. In the battlefield and in Eastern diplomacy, the Ottomans were able to hold their own for nearly a century from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. However, in competing with the British, they, like all the other states of Europe, suffered defeat. In the 1730s French and Russian diplomats vied with each other for Ottoman favours. While the Austrians preferred a more belligerent approach, the French, being

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<sup>56</sup> This is distinct from the trend of the Sipahis which, as noted earlier, was Seljuqid and Konya based rather than Ottoman and Istanbul-based.

at a greater distance from Turkey, were exclusively diplomatic while Russians were both militant and diplomatic.<sup>57</sup>

France's claim in matters relating to Mediterranean politics was stronger than the British but the Napoleonic wars provided Britain with an ideal opportunity to acquire more influence in central Europe. Ottoman interests in Europe had generally focused on Eastern Europe but now they were virtually confined to it.<sup>58</sup> The Ottomans saw themselves in competition with Austria-Hungary and Russia, therefore their aim was to achieve a Balkan-centered balance of power. Such a balance of power would exclude the British from the Levantine theatre in the immediate future and from the European arena in the long run. Master of the seas and way ahead in the colonial race, Britain was keen to limit its involvement in Europe to the minimum but could not afford to be eliminated from the scene. Whether France brokered the balance of power in the East or one of the competitors in that theatre emerged as the victor in their contest, Britain was bound to suffer. It therefore chose to fight its battle for Europe on the Ottoman front with diplomacy as its strategic weapon.

Within the Ottoman Empire, the elimination of the ayans and the Janissaries threatened society with a catastrophic change. With typical pragmatic alacrity, the Turks turned to reorganization in the form of the Tanzimat.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the pomp and show of the Empire had grown inordinately in matters of foreign affairs. The protocol surrounding attendance at court and its inconvenience were brought into sharp focus by the beginning of the eighteenth

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<sup>57</sup> Lavender Cassels, *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1966, p. 76 gives an account of the kinds of ordeals to which the Russian ambassadors were subjected.

<sup>58</sup> Briefly, in the sixteenth century, during the Franco-Austrian rivalry, the Ottomans had been power brokers of central and western Europe. According to Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, New York, 1976, Vol. I, p. 87, perhaps the Ottomans had a natural affinity for the French.

<sup>59</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, "The Stages of Ottoman History: A Structural Comparative Approach" in Kemal H. Karpat, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 79-99, p. 95, suggests that *Tanzimat* were in fact "legal and political recognition" of institutional changes that had taken place since Selim III.

century<sup>60</sup>. While the Ottoman Empire may not have lagged too far behind its European neighbours in military organization, the diplomacy gap grew to gigantic proportions. It took the Ottomans forever to realize that they had actually lost the battle for survival in the diplomatic field. They were no sicker than the Austro Hungarians or the Russians in socio-political, administrative and intellectual terms, but by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were too crude and unwieldy in diplomacy for their own survival.

The Ottomans had been expelled from the Yemen in 1630<sup>61</sup> but soon managed to regain control. This, along with other factors, may have forced the Ottomans to re-evaluate their relations with the subject races, especially the Arabs. The eighteenth century reform process seems to have included this agenda.<sup>62</sup> While the Ottomans met with some success during the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century saw an unending and continuous decline. In the first decade, Egypt and Serbia, in the second and third decades Greece, the Balkans and Syria, in the sixth and seventh decades the Crimea and Lebanon represented steps towards disintegration. Towards the end of the century Armenia, Crete and Macedonia brought the dismantling of the European segments of the Ottoman Empire to a climax.<sup>63</sup> Obviously, the empire could no longer survive further mismanagement by the Sultans.

Sultan Abdulhamid II is regarded as being a "pan-Islamic"

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<sup>60</sup> Lavender Cassels, *The Struggle for the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1966, p. 56, gives the details of the protocol for the envoys.

<sup>61</sup> Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth-Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule*, London, 2002, p.119, mentions that the chiefs of Aden, Qatabah and Yafi in the sanjaq of Taizz 'reverted to their old tribal methods of rule'. They were of course to re-conquer it in due course but the event is an example of tribal affinity within sub units of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>62</sup> Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758*, New Jersey, 1980. p. 8 outlines how "the Ottoman state tried to revitalize its administration in the province".

<sup>63</sup> William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Successors*, London, 1966, is the volume to consult for a comprehensive survey of the European decline of the Ottomans.

Sultan.<sup>64</sup> It is more likely, however that his pan-Islamism was essentially out of political expediency. The real purpose was probably to woo the powerful Islamist elements in the Empire and to pit them against the modernist group then in the ascendancy. By 1800 AD the ethnocentric element within the empire had been active for two centuries. Their actions resulted in activating centrifugal forces in the extremities of the Empire. It is worth noting that the ethnocentric forces were not exclusively Turkish; the Arabs and Slavs etc. were both active within their homelands.<sup>65</sup> During the many phases of trying to catch up with competitors in the West, the Ottoman military had received massive doses of European modernization. It represented both revolutionary and reactionary forces. Abdulhamid II tried to pit the reactionaries against the modernizing revolutionaries but this proved a losing battle.<sup>66</sup> What was remarkable about this phase was the fact that while Ottomanism and Islamism were unable to retain an appeal for the army, the Turkism of the Ottomans rather than that of the Seljuqs took firm root and assumed almost total control<sup>67</sup> of the movement.

The Ottomans have not been given due credit for their tireless

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<sup>64</sup> Itzchak Weismann, "Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The Views of Ibn 'Abidin", in Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs, ed., *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, New York, 2005, pp.69-80.

<sup>65</sup> Itzchak Weismann, "Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The Views of Ibn 'Abidin", in Itzchak Weismann and Fruma Zachs, ed., *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, New York, 2005, pp. 69-80. This presents the Syrian perspective in the same volume, Moshe Ganner, "The Ottoman Reforms and Shaykh Shamil", *loc. cit.*, pp. 55-66, reflects the Daghestan situation. Similar events took place in Arabia and Mousel, as reflected in Part II of the same volume. In the Yemen in fact the developments of the 1600s reflect the beginning of this mood. See Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule*, London, 2002. Notwithstanding the biases of the authors of these articles, it is certain that ethnicity and Islam went hand in hand in this period.

<sup>66</sup> Handan Nezir Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I*, London, 2005, p.30, gives the detail of the losing battle on the side of the Sultan.

<sup>67</sup> A set of three comparative statements of the relationship between Ottoman evolution, modernism and the European pull are given as annexure "B".

and continuous desire for improvement and excellence in government. Having been far ahead of Europe in matters of state involvement in governance for three centuries, no sooner had they realized that they had fallen behind than they began to try and bridge the gap. Starting in the reign of Abdulhamid I in the eighteenth century, the restructuring of the state continued for a century<sup>68</sup> until the crafty and reluctant Abdulhamid II was forced to concede two constitutions in one reign. Those who feel that the Ottomans were slow to acquire 'modern' European norms may be forgetting that in 1839 not only the Austrians but also the British were strongly opposed to the democratic winds blowing from France. What the Tanzimat offered was hardly less advanced than what the more liberal European states were willing to concede.

### **Generalizations regarding Islamism and Turkish ethnicity**

As a religion, Islam had a modicum of religious tolerance for other Semitic religions built into it since the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) are protected within all Muslim states. Other religions are also given a prescribed place in the body politic,<sup>69</sup> albeit an inferior one compared to the Muslims. Turkish Islamism has always been more inclined towards simple and pragmatic matters, eschewing much legality. An interesting fact of Muslim history is that almost all the legal and philosophical battles between the intellectuals of Islam have taken place in the period preceding Turkish hegemony. Occasionally, as in the case of Ibn Taymiya, the debate occurs during and within the range of

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<sup>68</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> People who surrendered and accepted the protection of the Muslim state had a status equal to the 'People of the Book' but, more importantly, the Quran decrees that people who fear Allah and are righteous in their actions and believe in the Day of Judgment will be given the reward for their actions on the Day of Judgment and they shall have no fear nor will they be worried. Al Quran, 2:62.

Turkish dominance. However, the issues for Ibn Taymiya are also largely pragmatic and more inclined to practice than to theory, more actual than conceptual.<sup>70</sup> One could argue that because they were lax in enforcing sharia the rate of conversion of non-Muslim subjects to Islam was low during the time that the Turks were increasing the extent of the territory under Muslim rule.

The Turks as a people had the remarkable ability to adjust to the dictates of virtually any social environment.<sup>71</sup> However, it seems that an Islamic polity suited them best, perhaps since it was predisposed to both the nature of their tolerance and their form of aggression. It was in a spirit of tolerant syncretism that the Ottomans had absorbed so many races in the initial period of their expansion. This cultural absorption resulted in the formation of a society the preservation of which is designated as Ottomanism in the Constitution of 1876. The foregoing discussion has shown that this was also a policy of the early Sultans. The ethnic absorption of the children of the ghilman is a more obvious example but the settlement of yuruk groups and the formation of Zawiya centers for acculturation of the non-Muslim non-Turk population, particularly in Rumeli, were sophisticated tools for the Ottomanization of the governed people. Thus Turkish ethnicity in the Ottoman Empire is to be seen as a process of acculturation rather than racial dominance.<sup>72</sup> In this sense there had been a consistency within the

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<sup>70</sup> Saeeda Iqbal, *Islamic Rationalism in the Subcontinent*, Lahore, 1984, p. 64 identifies four approaches in Muslim rationalism. In the case of Ibn Taymiya, she uses the terms "dogmatic and theological", which is at variance with the view of Qamar-ud-din Khan, *The political thought of Ibn Taymiya*, Islamabad, 1973, and rather different from the picture that emerges in Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, London, 1938, who calls Taymiya a "free thinker".

<sup>71</sup> M. B. Ahmad, *Select Constitutions of the World*, Vol. I, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Karachi, 1951, p.1, noted that "among the nations that have flourished and decayed, the Turks stand out by reason of their recuperative genius." Although he was writing with reference to modern Turkey, his dictum applies equally to all Turks.

<sup>72</sup> The concept of ethnicity and its racial component is a subject beyond the scope of this article but, like the issue of historical justification of the geographical designation of the continents, forms part of the author's work in progress on a world history.

Ottoman state with only a brief aberration.

The particular brand of Ottoman religious tolerance which emerged as a combination of Islamism and Turkish ethnicity during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries was eroded during the 17<sup>th</sup> century due to the ethnic jealousy of the Timar holders on the one hand and the winds of religious violence blowing from Europe on the other. The Tanzimat revived the spirit of tolerance to a certain degree but it proved impossible to revive the essence of Ottomanism. When, in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the democratic norms became overwhelming and the dismemberment of the European portions of the Ottoman state was almost complete, a sense of pugnacious obstinacy pervaded the Islamist camp within the Ottoman Empire. Islamists were led to believe that modernism was synonymous with being anti-religious.<sup>73</sup>

The Crusades had gone far in undermining the goodwill towards Christianity in the hearts of the common Muslims. Modernity and science, in the form which they took c.1800, although essentially a-Christian in their secularism, became, in the eyes of Islamists, synonymous with the Crusades as anti-Islamic movements or a kind of Crusade. Thus, when Abdulhamid II put up a resistance to democracy, first in granting a Constitution and then in implementing the same, Islamist elements gave him overt and covert support. These Islamists belonged to the sipahi tradition and adopted the role of the landed aristocracy from the European traditions. On the other hand, the modernists also arose from a military tradition in line with the xenic openness to ideas which had been a hallmark of the Janissary.

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<sup>73</sup> Europe started its reformation with a belief that science and secular knowledge were opposed to religion but this was soon translated into a belief among the modernists that religion was opposed to modernity and to development. It took three centuries for this attitude to gradually infiltrate Ottoman society but it exerted no influence on politics until the democratic and constitutional norms began to assert themselves. Principles of consensus and compromise as practiced in Muslim states were replaced by democratic divisive grouping. It was in this climate that modernists and Islamists of the Ottoman Empire came to direct confrontation.

## **Analysis of the Second Ottoman Constitution**

As a historical analysis of intellectual traditions and a study of a socio-political psyche, this article is cross-disciplinary in approach. In preceding sections we presented historic antecedents of the traditions and socio-political psyche of the Ottoman Empire. In this section we will deal with the intent behind the content of the constitutional formulations at the beginning and the end of Abdulhamid II's reign. The values and cultural forces that dictated the content and form of the constitutions of the Ottoman period can first be seen in the composition of the Constitution Commission of 1876. Sixteen bureaucrats, ten ulema<sup>74</sup> and two soldiers sat together under the chairmanship of Midhat Pasha. The Sultan ensured that there were powerful opponents like Cavdet Pasha in the commission to counter Midhat Pasha. They proposed a bicameral parliament, a proposal which was accepted and promulgated by October 1876. Efforts of the Sultan to delay parliamentary ratification were countered through international pressure<sup>75</sup> and the Constitution was finally approved by the cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. The issues that were the subject of last minute debate included the status of languages within the state, the clause relating to ministerial responsibilities, freedom of the press and Sultan's prerogative to exile a person considered a danger to the state.<sup>76</sup>

The opposing political bodies were obviously the modernists and traditionalists but the issues they raised were ethnic and administrative. That it took only two months to formulate and ratify the Constitution testifies to the evolutionary and inherently

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<sup>74</sup> The Ulema in particular represented the Islamist element while the soldiers probably had a commitment to modernity and the bureaucrats could belong to either category.

<sup>75</sup> The fact that the modernists were supported by European diplomacy provided the Sultan with an ideal opportunity to exploit the Islamists and lay claim to nationalist sentiments.

<sup>76</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p. 174.

Ottoman nature of the document. The status of the Sultan not only remained unchallenged but the Islamic aspect of his powers was also affirmed by the first few articles of the Constitution.<sup>77</sup> The fact that the choice of the title of Prime Minister as opposed to Vizier became a subject of discussion shows that it was not merely a semantic issue. However, issues like this were political in essence and not symptomatic of the Islamic or ethnic undercurrents, like the powers of enforcing sharia or having the Sultan's name pronounced in the Friday prayer.<sup>78</sup>

The executive powers of the government as such were more bureaucratic than political<sup>79</sup> and laid mainly with the council of ministers. The meclis-i-ayan may be linked directly with the post-1600 rise of the Islamic Turkism of the sipahis and the timar system.<sup>80</sup> However, in financial matters, the parliament had considerable powers which could, however, be circumvented by articles 101 and 102. Ottomanism gave the citizens of all religions equal rights within the state but Islam was to remain the state religion while the constitution curtailed access to public offices by demanding proficiency in Turkish as the state language.<sup>81</sup> It is in this context that we can see the underlying Turkism of this Constitution, the causes of debate between Midhat and Cevdet Pashas, who may be identified as champions of the xenic and ethnic segments within the Constitution Commission on the language issue in 1876.

The vilayet structure subscribed to by Midhat and his cohorts

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175, articles 3, 4, 5 and 7. Article 113, later added at the Sultan's insistence, further consolidated his power by giving him the prerogative of exiling "opponents" to the state.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175, articles 28-38 left the Assembly without any coercive powers and gave the Sultan, through the ministers, the ability to take action without recourse to approval from the Assembly.

<sup>80</sup> See for examples, references number 30 and 56 supra and the sources for them.

<sup>81</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p. 177, articles 8, 9, 17, 18 and 19.

had a mixed origin in that it devolved power to the vilayats for trade, commerce, education and agriculture on the western model while regarding the vilayats as a sub-central unit on the model of the beglarbagliks and sanjaqs. The judicial system in the new set-up was a compromise between Islamism and secularism. The millet structure was not European in conception; rather it had its roots in the sanjaq and beglarbey system of the early period. The sanjaqs that had been formed in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries had some basis of ethnic grouping built into them or acquired in due course of time. The racial and ethnic elements that entered the Ottoman Empire through its conquests had been absorbed and Ottomanized at a much earlier date, only to revert to a non-Ottoman status during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Constitution of 1876 may have "contained ... institutions that had been developed during the previous half-century by the Tanzimat",<sup>82</sup> but it was based on principles that had been the essence of Ottoman government<sup>83</sup> for about six centuries. All who resisted acculturation to Ottomanism<sup>84</sup> throughout this period were sidelined. So long as the state had more benefits to offer, even the second tier of privileges was sufficient. However, when the benefits were limited; competition brought the need for fresh

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<sup>82</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p. 178.

<sup>83</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey*, New Jersey, 1968, p.86, claims that the Turks reacted to pan-Slavism and European intervention with patriotism and a "fanatically Islamic" attitude. It would seem that the patriotism was of a much older origin and there was hardly any fanaticism in the Turkish reaction. However, Davison has a soft spot for Abdulhamid who came to power after two of his predecessors had been deposed by Midhat and others and immediately had to face a loss of territories in which the kingmakers may have contributed as much because of foreign pressure as to the ethnic priority which was later to be exercised after World War I, whereby the Turks were content, almost happy, to surrender non-Turkish speaking territories.

<sup>84</sup> David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*, London, 1977, p.37, places the Ottomans above all other Turks. Whether this be defensible on all counts one cannot say but certainly in nationalism and administration they had no parallel among the Turks.

acculturation into sharp focus. In over thirty years the Sultan had given the Constitution only lip service and was, as a consequence, deposed by the Young Turks.<sup>85</sup> We may note that both processes, the one that brought Abdulhamid II to power and the one that led to his deposition, bore marks of an association with Islamism and Turkism.<sup>86</sup> The developments in 1908 mainly started with a modification of the Constitution of 1876, except that they went further in subscribing to the secularized nationalism cast in the European mould. Of course the modifications proposed included the power of the Sultan and 'freedom of conscience' for all, but the essential services and the empowerment of ministries only reflected complaints against the Sultan's administration not a change in the aspirations of the people. While this may be true regarding the reason for the modification of the Constitution, a change in the proportion of active modernists seems equally plausible.

Since some of the cultural forces of ethnicity and governance that had evolved over the centuries could not be ignored in the formulation of the new constitution, reflections of the Ottoman tradition are apparent in the constitutions under review. However, we see that some cultural forces had acquired a negative and pejorative connotation for the Turkish people and could not be included in the constitution under preparation in 1908. The Sultan's policies on the one hand, particularly those towards the end of his reign, and European propaganda on the other, swung the balance of public opinion against Abdulhamid II. This need not imply that the modernists had already acquired majority support but it implies that the politically active population was

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<sup>85</sup> Halide Edib, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, Lahore, 1963, p. 60, is very bitter in her criticism of Abdulhamid in contrast with Davison, as perhaps should be expected from someone who lived through a national crisis of which the head of state was viewed as the cause.

<sup>86</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Volume II, Cambridge, 1977, p.78, note that in reaction to European nationalism, "the Muslims turned more and more to Islamic and Turkish views".

by now dominated by forces opposed to Abdulhamid II. They gradually began to oppose the institutions of the Sultanate and Khilafat, but only after the results of the First World War had placed Ottoman rulers in an untenable position. A comparison of the articles of the two periods is given in appendix "C" where the debatable aspects of the first constitution and comments on them are highlighted.

The bulk of the changes relate to administrative and procedural issues and are concerned with articles 3, 7, 27, 28, 30, 41, 44, 54, while article 120 was a new addition. Separate comments on each of the articles are given in appendix "C", but the comments do not relate exclusively to the reasons for change of text; they also present ideas regarding causes which led to the wording of the Constitution of 1876. A more detailed analysis may be made by persons conversant with the Ottoman language in which the original articles were formulated. In the present article only a conceptual framework has been presented for a historical analysis of the intellectual approach of Ottoman society while framing the documents under review.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude we may say that the particular form given to the secular and democratic structure of constitutions during Abdulhamid's reign reflected the principles of neutrality of the state in matters of religion and procedures for representation which had stood the Ottomans in good stead for six centuries. That which was maligned as ethnocentrism was a mechanism for ethnic-integration and is probably the binding force that has subsumed Slavic, Turkic and Greek ethnic identities. That which was alleged to be Islamism provided a syncretic solvent in which the 'secular' agenda of post-Ottoman governments could build the national identity of modern Turkey.

The Ottomans were the first among Muslim states to recognize that Europe had gained the lead. They were the first to try to redress their technological disadvantage or overcome their political

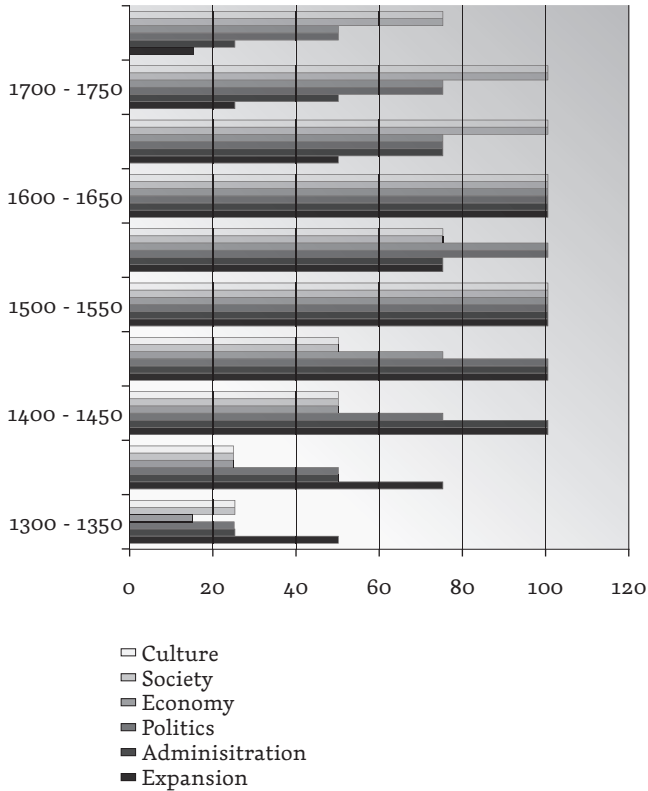
and international shortcoming. Part of the reason was their direct interface with Europe but part of it was due to the innate progressive nature of Ottomanism and its brand of Islamism. It may be difficult to establish that many ideas that are associated with secularism and democracy were derived from the influence of Turkic Islamism and the pagan Mongols which percolated to the social fabric of Europe from the east. It is however certain that the Ottomans were more responsive to wishes of their subjects and the mechanism for articulation was more effective than in Europe before the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is also certain that Ottoman religious tolerance could serve as a model for secularism even today.

## Annexure "A"

### OTTOMAN EVOLUTION

Cultural development	=	Islamism
Social integration	=	Ottomanism
Material development	=	Economy
Internal development	=	Politics
Management	=	Administration
External growth	=	Expansion

### GROWTH RATES



## Annexure "B"

### TRANSITION OF TRADITION

Ottomanism-Islamism	Democracy-Secularism
»Janissary Kulkardashi	»Tanzimat
»Ghazi Sipahi	»Young Turks
»Biradarkushi	»Secular democracy
»Sanjaq	»Vilayet
»Timar	»Imaret
»Sharia Ulema	»Pan-Islamism
»Ayan Ashraf	»Meclis-i Ayan
»Yuruke Ottomans	»Imtiazat
»Surgun Zawiya	»Millet
»Kulliya Darwish	»Sufi orders
»Madrasas Muftis	»Sheikhu'l-Islam

### ISLAMISM VS. SECULARISM

»Ghazi	»Sipahi
»Sharia	»Tanzimat
»Ulema madrasas	»Meclis-i Ayan
»Qazi-Mufti	»Rabi-Patriarch
»Zawiya	»Millet
»Kulliya	»Imtiazat
»Sufi	»Dervish
»Sheikh al-Islam	»Vizier-Prime Minister

### ISLAMISM VS. SECULARISM

»Ghazi	»Sipahi
»Yuruke	»Imtiazat
»Surgun	»Millet
»Ghazi Sipahi	»Ottomans
»Ayan Ashraf	»Ayan Ashraf
»Tanzimat	»Young Turks
»Sanjaq - Timar	»Vilayet - Imaret

The push and pull of these factors dictated the Ottoman relationship with internal demands and foreign commands which dominated the constitutional debate.

## **Annexure "C"**

### **The Ottoman Constitution (23 December 1876)**

#### **The Ottoman Empire**

The obvious reason for Art. 1. "The Ottoman Empire comprises present territory and possessions, and semi-dependent provinces. It forms an indivisible whole, from which no portion can be detached under any pretext whatever." is that a process of dismemberment on several pretexts had been taking place for about a century by this time.

#### **Sultan, "Supreme Caliph"**

Art. 3. The Ottoman sovereignty, which includes in the person of the Sovereign the Supreme Caliphate of Islam, belongs to the eldest Prince of the House of Osman, in accordance with the rules established ab antique.

Art. 4. His Majesty the Sultan, under the title of "Supreme Caliph," is the protector of the Muslim religion. He is the sovereign and padişah (emperor) of all the Ottomans. The object of articles 3-6 was to assert on the one hand the Ottoman Sultan's primacy within his own state as well as the Muslim world and, at the same time, to reinforce deterrence to potential dismemberment. Particularly worthy of note is the use of the term Ottomans to denote citizens of the empire regardless of colour and religion.

#### **Sovereign Rights of the Sultan**

Art. 7. Among the sovereign rights of His Majesty the Sultan are the following prerogatives: - He makes and cancels the appointments of ministers; he confers the grades, functions and insignia of his orders, and confers investiture on the chiefs of the privileged provinces, according to forms determined by the privileges granted them; he has the coining of money; his name is pronounced in the mosques during public prayer; he concludes treaties with the powers;

he declares war and makes peace; he commands both land and sea forces; he directs military movements; he carries out the provisions of the Şeriat (the sacred law), and of the other laws; he sees to the administration of public measures; he respites or commutes sentences pronounced by the criminal courts; he summons and prorogues the General Assembly; he dissolves, if deems it necessary, the Chamber of Deputies, provided he directs the election of the new members. In evaluating this article, it would be worthwhile to see which of these prerogatives was denied to the British, Austrian and Russian monarchs and which of them allowed any such limitation to exist in practice between 1876 and 1908.

### **Public Rights of the Ottomans**

*Personal Liberties:* Articles 8-11, dealing with rights and liberties, apart from a general and principled statement, were basically concerned with the secularism that was demanded by Christian Europe to protect its religion and enforce its newfound state egalitarianism while 'upholding' the traditional egalitarianism of the Ottoman Empire.

*The Press:* In matters relating to press and education etc. again, words like "without interfering in the religious education in various districts" show a resolve to tailor the European cloth of secular principles to the Ottoman situation.

Art. 18. Eligibility to public office is conditional on knowledge of Turkish, which is the official language of the State.

Art. 27. His Majesty may appoint as Grand Vizier and Şeyhü'l-İslam whomsoever he confides in, and thinks right to nominate to those posts.

The other ministers are appointed by Imperial Decree (İrade)

Art. 28. The Council of Ministers meets under the presidency of the Grand Vizier.

All weighty state affairs, whether domestic or foreign, come within the competency of the Council of Ministers. Those of their measures, which must be submitted for the approval of His Majesty, are made law by Imperial Decree.

Art. 29. Each head of department, within the limits of his powers, carries out the measures, which appertain to his Department. In matters without this limit he must have recourse to the Grand Vizier.

The Grand Vizier takes action on the measures presented to him by the heads of departments, either by referring them, if need be, to the Cabinet, and then presenting them for the Imperial sanction; or, on the other hand, by deciding on them himself, and referring them to the decision of His Majesty the Sultan.

Special enactments will, in the case of each department, determine under which of the preceding heads the various business is to be distributed.

Art. 30. The ministers are responsible for decisions or acts under their management.

Art. 41. Every functionary is bound to pay respect to his superior, but obedience is only due to orders given within the limits defined by the law. In respect of acts contrary to law, the fact of having obeyed a superior will not relieve the official who has carried them out from responsibility. Articles 18-41 may be seen as the direct consequence of the corruption that had crept into the Ottoman state during the preceding century. While the solutions offered herein for uprooting corruption are derived from the European model, the issues are similar to the ones addressed by conscientious Sultans of the seventeenth century and even the Koprulu vazirs.

*The General Assembly* – It will be interesting also to compare what were the practices and norms of parliaments and assemblies in the other states of Europe where a monarch was head of state. This is beyond the purview of this article.

Art. 42. The General Assembly is composed of two chambers: the Chamber of Notables or Senate, and the Chamber of Deputies.

Art. 43. The two chambers will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November of each year, the opening to take place by imperial decree (irade), the closing, fixed for the following 1<sup>st</sup> March, also to take place following an imperial decree. Neither of the two chambers can meet while the other chamber is not sitting.

Art. 44. His Majesty the Sultan according to the exigencies of

circumstances, may anticipate the date of the opening or may abridge or prolong the session.

*Art. 45.* The opening of the session shall take place in the presence of His Majesty the Sultan, either in person or represented by the Grand Vizier, and in the presence of the Ministers and the Members of the two Chambers.

An Imperial Speech will be read, giving an account of the internal position of the Empire and the state of its foreign relations during the past year, and setting forth the measures the adoption of which for the following year is deemed to be necessary.

*Art. 46.* All the members of the General Assembly shall take an oath of fidelity to His Majesty the Sultan and to the country, shall bind themselves to observe the Constitution, to perform the duties entrusted to them, and to abstain from all acts opposed to those duties. Again an article which purports to provide a modern garb to a Muslim practice. In this case it is the Bait or Khutba which is shrouded in a constitutional cloak.

This oath shall be taken by new members at the opening of the Session in the presence of the Grand Vizier, and after the opening in the presence of their respective Presidents and at a public sitting of the Chamber of which they are members.

*Art. 47.* Members of the General Assembly are free to express their opinions and to vote as they like.

They cannot be bound by conditions or promises, nor influenced by threats. They cannot be prosecuted for opinions or votes delivered in the course of debate, unless they have contravened the Standing Orders of the Chamber, when they are amenable to the provisions of the regulations in force.

*Art. 48.* Any member of the General Assembly who, by an absolute majority of two-thirds of the Chamber of which he is a member, is accused of treason, or attempting to violate the Constitution, or of peculation ("concession"), or has been condemned to imprisonment or exile, loses his status as Senator or Deputy.

He will be tried and sentence passed by the competent tribunal. Whereas article 47 was almost exclusively from the European wish

list, article 48 was a thinly veiled threat of repercussions which had been meted out by the non-conscientious Sultans.

Its decisions are not susceptible either of appeal or of recourse to Cassation.

Matters of financial management are almost exclusively on the European model.

Art. 54. Drafts of Bills elaborated by the Council of State are in the first instance laid before the Chamber of Deputies, and after that before the Senate. Though passing both Chambers, no Bill will become law until it has been sanctioned by the Imperial İrade. No draft Bill, once thrown by either of the Chambers, can be brought forward a second time in the course of the same session.

### **Various Provisions**

The articles 113 and 114 having provided the Sultan with extra powers to combat dismemberment, led to articles 115 and 116 limited his ability to further tamper with the constitution. In effect the constitution pandered to secularism, administrative procedures and parliamentary rules of business from the European perspective and the Sultans power, some Islamic principles and Ottomanism from the internal concerns of the citizens of the Ottoman Empire. So far as procedures of administration were concerned, many of them were Europeanized versions of early Ottoman practice. So far as parliamentary formulae were concerned, they generally represented the most advanced practices accepted to the European public but were also frequently circumscribed by social acceptability within the heartland of the Ottoman Empire. By the same token, so called Islamist aspects of these articles were, apart from limitations to secularism which in fact were more Ottoman than Islamic, part of the balancing act between internal and external political pressures on the Sultan. The common core and actual bond between the Sultan and his subjects was the Ottomanism which was duly transformed into Turkism by the Young Turks in later years. It was this which had reflections of Islam as a basis of culture; it was this which sustained Abdulhamid through his reign against external pressures even

though he may not have enjoyed substantial public support within the empire.

**Revised Articles of the 1876 Constitution,  
August 1909**

Art. 120. Ottomans enjoy the right of assembly, on the condition that they obey the law on the subject.

The societies are forbidden which aim at injuring the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, changing the form of the Constitution or of the government, acting contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, or bringing about a separation between the various Ottoman elements, or which are contrary to public morals. The formation of secret societies in general is also forbidden.



# Yasawiya Traditions in the Culture of the Volga Muslims

Güzel Sayfulina\*

**Abstract.** *The aim of this article is to characterize the state of the traditions, which can be united under the name "Yasawiya" in the folk culture of the Volga Tatar Muslims towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is meant here are the traditions that reflect the significance of Ahmad Yasawi himself as a "saint", as an important link in the chain of other holy names, and also of the literary traditions connected with him such as his "Hikmets" (wise words) and with his followers. Different kinds of texts were used in the analysis including texts initially recorded in oral form from Muslims of older generations (primarily women), they happened to be tightly connected with written sources, as it appeared during research. Field trips to villages of Tatarstan in the 1990s and 2000s enabled the author to record the elements of religious practice, which carried traces of this legacy, to observe changes in its functioning and in its overall understanding in the conditions of modern Tatar culture.*

**Keywords.** Ahmad Yasawi, Volga Tatar Muslims, hikmets, oral transmission, literary tradition.

The importance of the Turkestani mystic Ahmad Yasawi (late 12<sup>th</sup>– early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)<sup>1</sup> and in general of the Yasawiya order

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<sup>1</sup> The usual dating of death of Ahmad Yasawi (1166) is impugned by D. DeWeese, in whose opinion it could take place later, at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. See DeWeese, Devin, "The Mashā'ikh-i Turk and the Khojagān: Rethinking the Links between the Yasawi and Naqshbandi Sufi Traditions," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 7(2), p. 183.

in the culture of Central Asia is a subject, which has been repeatedly discussed in literature. Also, it is known how influential the legendary figure of Yasawi was in the region located far away from Central Asia, namely in the Volga-Ural territory (nowadays Russia). The influence of Yasawiya order here was mentioned in sources of different directions and aims (the penetration of the order in the region, the connection with other orders, especially Naqshbandiya, statement of the spread of "hikmets" (wise words) of Yasawi among Tatars or, as Köprülü wrote, the "Northern Turks").<sup>2</sup>

However, the question of existence of the Yasawi traditions in the folk culture and in the daily religious practice of Muslims in this region was only touched in these works, and still there is no special research on this subject.

The aim of this article is to characterize the state of the traditions, which can be united under the name "Yasawiya" in the folk culture of the Volga Tatar Muslims towards the end of the 20th century. Here, we mean the traditions that reflect the significance of Ahmad Yasawi himself as a "saint", as an important link in the chain of other holy names, and also of the literary traditions connected with him such as his "Hikmets" (wise words) and with his followers.

The scholars repeatedly have mentioned that it is hardly possible to speak about wise words attributed to Yasawi as genuine

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<sup>2</sup> Köprülü, Mehmed Fuad, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*. Trans., ed. and with an introduction by Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff, Foreword by Devin DeWeese, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006. Among other works, where in one way or another, the role of Yasawiya in the Volga-Ural region is stated (D. DeWeese, Z.V.Togan, I. Melikoff), the monograph of M. Kemper should be noted. See *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag 1998. [Sufis and Alims in Bahkurtistan and Tatarstan (1789-1889): Islamic Discourses under Russian Domination, Kazan: RITU, 2008. Here, the influence of both the Yasawiya order and the literary tradition of Ahmad Yasawi are consistently traced. Thus, Kemper mentions that the sufi culture of the Volga-Ural territory was under the influence of Yasawiya from the late middle-ages till the 18<sup>th</sup> century and shows the "signs" of this influence both in folk beliefs and the works of the local sufi poets. See M Kemper, *Sufis and Alims in Bahkurtistan and Tatarstan*, p.131 and further.

ones.<sup>3</sup> However, in the perception of the Tatar Muslims of many generations, much of textual information was connected with this name and, thanks to vitality of oral traditions and to written transmission, was preserved in one form or another. Speaking about these forms, or, better to say, the traces of the Yasawi heritage among Tatars, it is appropriate to use the definition given by DeWeese in the context of the Central Asian region, namely the "broader realm" of the Yasawiya traditions:

"...by this designation I mean not only the specifically Sufi communities linked to the name of Khodja Ahmad Yasawi, ... but also the broader social, religious, and literary legacies of these communities as adopted in much wider circles of Central Asian society. This broader legacy includes popular religious practice in Central Asia influenced by the specifically Yasawi style of the Sufi dhikr; it includes the narrative and ritual aspects of the veneration of shrines linked to figures belonging to, or adopted into, the Yasawi Sufi succession; it includes narratives of Islamization focused upon figures linked to the legacy of Ahmad Yasawi in a variety of ways; and it includes notions of communal identity—as well as the specific communities that sponsored them—conceived in terms of descent lines traced back to Ahmad Yasawi or to his early Sufi successors. This broader definition of the Yasawi tradition is in part suggested by the forms in which the legacy of Ahmad Yasawi has survived even today..."<sup>4</sup>

The definition of the "broader Yasawiya legacy" given by DeWeese seems pertinent to the culture of the Volga Tatars too<sup>5</sup> (here we

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<sup>3</sup> According to DeWeese, these texts could have been produced much later. See, in particular, his commentaries in the English translation of the Köprülü monograph *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*.

<sup>4</sup> DeWeese, Devin, "The Mashā'ikh-i Turk and the Khojagān: Rethinking the Links between the Yasawi and Naqshbandi Sufi Traditions", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 7(2), pp. 180-207, p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> Apparently, special studies on religious culture of other Muslim Turks of Russia (Bashkirs, Siberian and other groups of Tatars) in this direction would allow us to speak about it in bigger scale. On some elements of the Yasawiya tradition in Siberian Islam see A. Bustanov, *Hatm-i Hâcegân as a Naqshbendi Tradition*

would omit only the note on the special Yasawiya dhikr, which does not exist among the Tatars anymore).<sup>6</sup> At the same time, we should keep in mind the factors, which defined its specificity: Firstly, it is the geographical remoteness from the original Central-Asian milieu and consequently the different social, cultural and linguistic context of the existence of the Yasawiya traditions.

Secondly, it is the time factor and especially the role of the Soviet period in development (or rather stagnation) of religious culture designated by incalculable losses in that period. In the context of our subject, the disappearance of a huge part of the written legacy should be mentioned. The subsequent Soviet atheistic campaign also resulted both in violation of the mechanism of oral transmission and in inability of Muslims to read texts in Arabic script.

Field trips to villages of Tatarstan in the 1990-2000s<sup>7</sup> enabled us to record the elements of religious practice, which carried traces of this legacy, to observe changes in its functioning and in its overall understanding in the conditions of modern Tatar culture.

Different kinds of texts were used in our analysis: initially recorded in oral form from Muslims of older generations (primarily women), they happened to be tightly connected with written sources, as it appeared during the research. First of all, there were texts from a wide repertoire of didactic and lyrical texts that characterized the Tatar "book culture" of the end of the

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in Siberia) <http://www.islamrf.ru/news/faith/traditions/15334/>; A. Seleznyov, I. Seleznyova, I. Belich, *The Understanding of the Sacred in the Case of Islam in Siberia: Local Features*, Moscow: Mardjani Publishers House, 2009, pp.166-180.

<sup>6</sup> Because of disappearance of the practice towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we are not able to discuss the Yasawiya dhikr among Tatars as it was done by A. Djumaev on the material of the Central Asian traditions. (See A. Djumaev, "Dhikr in the Tradition and Theory of Yasawi and Yasawism", *Tamyr*, No.2 (4), 2001. <http://ru-sufi.livejournal.com /193507.html>). At the same time, a proper analysis of the works of the Tatar sufi poets (Qul Sharif, Mawla Qulyi and others) could give an idea how it was performed in the Tatar milieu.

<sup>7</sup> The Baltach, Aqsubay, Chuprale districts of the Tatarstan Republic.

19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from texts connected with the name of Yasawi himself, there are poems of his followers – Suleiman Baqirghani (Hakim Ata), the Kazan poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Qul Sharif, the sufi poet of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Mawla Qulyi and others. Also there was a popular, often anonymous religious literature (both printed and handwritten), which existed in abundance in home libraries of the Muslims of the beginning of the 20th century and was partly preserved towards its end. One of editions of that time – a small booklet “Sharait al-Iman”, which was often republished from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and used to be a textbook for majority of our informants – is a particular example of the status of Yasawi among Tatars.<sup>8</sup> Here one can find the following lines:

“To whose madhab (order) do you belong?”

“I am from madhab of Imam Aghzam Abu Hanifa...”

“To whose silsila do you belong?”

“I am from the silsila of Hujja Ahmad Yasavi.” “How many silsilas are there?”

“Four.”

“What are they?”

“First, that of Hujja Ahmad Yasawi;  
second, of ‘Abd al-Khaliq Ghujduwani;  
third, of Shaikh Najm al-Din Kubra;  
fourth, of Abu ‘l-Hasan ‘Ishq”.<sup>9</sup>

As a whole, the texts used for analysis could be divided into

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<sup>8</sup> First published in 1801, it was given various titles over the years: “*Alifba iman shartları belän*” (Alphabet together with conditions of faith), “*Iman sharti*” (Conditions of faith). On history of these publications see A.G. Karimullin, *In the Source of the Tatar Book: From the Start to the 60s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*, Kazan 1992, p.110.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from “Sharait al-Iman”, Kazan, Publications of the Imperial University, 1901, p.20. These lines were mentioned by both Z. V. Togan and F. Köprülü in their works. See in particular Köprülü, Fuad, *Türk Edebiyatı`nda İlk Mutasavvıflar (First Sufis in Turkish Literature)*, p.37.

two groups: 1) the ritual dedications (baghishlau), which are read at the end of the recitation of the Koran; 2) the book texts and munajaats recited with melodies in different circumstances – earlier, at the time of special religious rituals, later – as a way of religious education or, just as a kind of entertainment.

Frankly speaking, at the beginning, it was unexpected to be discovered in the recordings the names of Yasawi and other saints linked to him, as well as the lines attributed to Yasawi as a poet, taking into account the successive elimination of the religious rituals and the religious literature itself in the Soviet times. However, the frequency of such samples, their inner connection demonstrated their non-random nature, and as a whole, – the presence of a definite sufi tradition here.

### **Texts Of Baghishlau**

These texts were recorded from the generation, which still related to the pre-Soviet culture and carried knowledge of that time, - even if those Muslims did not get the traditional religious education. Many of their baghishlau combine the elements of the old religious culture strongly connected with the sufi tradition, and the folk beliefs of the daily character.<sup>10</sup> In the traditional hierarchy of names mentioned by Muslims in baghishlau in their asking for protection, the name of Khodja Ahmad Yasawi<sup>11</sup> can be pronounced among the first ones, together with the names of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. The analysis of the following names shows that many of them indicate the spiritual link with the Turkestani shaykh. These are the names of Hozur-

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<sup>10</sup> On the content of texts of baghishlau see Guzel Sayfullina, "Baghishlau (dedications) as a source on the culture of folk Islam of the Volga Tatars", *Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Islamic Civilisation in Volga-Ural Region*, Kazan, 24-26 June 2005, IRCICA: İstanbul, 2008, pp.51-63.

<sup>11</sup> In Tatar pronunciation, "Hujja Ähmät".

Ilias<sup>12</sup> (the saint who was considered to be a patron saint for Yasawi), disciples of Yasawi Suleiman Baqirghani (Hakim-ata), Muhammad Danishmand,<sup>13</sup> Bayrash-hujja (who, according to a legend, brought the teaching of Sufism to the Volga territory)<sup>14</sup>, also the links of the same chain Hubbi-hujja, Zenki-baba, Ghambar-ana, Hujja Pahlevan, Askha-hujja, the shaykh Kasimbaba<sup>15</sup> and other figures venerated by Muslims both in Central Asia and the Volga-Ural region.

Besides, the names of so called "Eleven Ahmads" often appear in baghishlau. They are eleven saints with the name Ahmad, including Yasawi. The appearance of this expression (similar to other groups: "Unber anka" – "Eleven Mothers", "Jide soltan" – "Seven Sultans", "72 pahlevan" – "72 heroes", "366 ghayb irannare" – "366 invisible spirits") can be explained by the influence of a booklet of the same title.<sup>16</sup> As mentioned in the Kazan edition of 1907,<sup>17</sup> the aim of the book was to help Muslims to get intercession of

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<sup>12</sup> Hozur-Ilyas in Tatar folk beliefs is a double name of a figure who unites magic power of two saints – Hozur (in other traditions - *Hızır*, *Khizr*, *Khidr*, *al-Hadir*) and Ilyas. *Hozur-Ilyas* is believed to be among the best helpers for Muslims in different situations. In the texts of Ahmad Yasawi and Suleiman Baqirghani he is mentioned as their protector, companion and teacher. See Ahmet Yasawi, *Divan-i Hikmet*, Kazan: Tarikh, 2003; Books of Baqirghani, Kazan: ТКН 2000. On Al-Khadir see also A.J. Wensinck, "Al-Khadir" (al-Khidr), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H.A. Gibb, B. Lewis, C.E. Bosworth, Ch. Pellat et al. Leiden: Brill, 1978, pp.902-905; R. Rahimov, "Islam in the Russian Empire: Encyclopaedic Dictionary], 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Moscow, 1999, pp. 91-92; V. Bartold, *Mysticism in Islam: Islam and Muslim Culture*], Moscow, 1992, pp.31-37.

<sup>13</sup> On legends about Hakim-Ata and Sufi Muhammad Danishmand spread among Yasawiya circles see: DeWeese, Devin, "The Mashā'ikh-i Turk", p.190.

<sup>14</sup> See: Kemper, Michael, "The history of Sufism in the Volga-Urals", *Islamic Civilisation in the Volga-Ural Region, Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Kazan, 8-11 June 2001. IRCICA, Istanbul, 2004, p.36.

<sup>15</sup> The names are written according to their pronunciation in Tatar tradition.

<sup>16</sup> This anonymous booklet was repeatedly published by Tatar publishing houses beginning from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, in our field trips we met the handwritten copies of this text.

<sup>17</sup> Unbar Ahmad, Kazan: B.L. Dombrovskii Tipography 1907.

saints called Ahmad. Keeping in mind that most of the names still need deciphering, we can see again the high status of Yasawi who is on a par with the Prophet Muhammad and the founder of the Hanbali mazhab Ahmad Hanbal:

“The names of these shaykhs are as follows:

The first is Ahmad Marsil

The second is Ahmad Hanbal

The third is Sayed Ahmad Kabir

The fourth is Ahmad Yasawi

The fifth is Ahmad Jarjani

The sixth is Ahmad Runda

The seventh is Ahmad Haer al-Fa(i)ttah

The eighth is Ahmad Waina (Wina)

The ninth is Ahmad Jami

The tenth is Ahmad Isfahani.

The eleventh is Ahmad Irkam.”<sup>18</sup>

Even more, the importance of Khodja Ahmad is shown in the famous Turkestanian “Seal of Yasawi” which was known in Kazan<sup>19</sup> and was probably the original source of information given in the booklet. Here the name of Ahmad Yasawi is placed in the centre, whereas other ten Ahmads (including the Prophet) just surround him.

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<sup>18</sup> Unber Ahmad, p.3. Translated from Tatar by G.S. The interpretation of the names of Ahmads in the book is specified: each saint protects Muslims in a special situation. In particular, Ahmad Yasawi is said to be a patron of travellers. For his protection, a traveller should recite the sura “Yasin” and dedicate the recitation to Yasawi. It is noteworthy that together with Ahmads, the names of other saints are given here, among them there are above mentioned Zenki-baba; Khodja Daneshmand, Khodja Pahlevan, Hozur-Iliyas,, Hubbi- Khodja.

<sup>19</sup> See P.P. Akhmerov, “Description of the Seal of Yasavi”, *Journal of Kazan University Archeology, History and Ethnography Community*, Kazan, 1896, pp.528-537. The commentaries and the reproduction of the “Seal of Yasawi” can be found in Sayfullina, *ibid.* pp. 19-20.

## Koile Books and Munajaats

The comparison of information given in texts of baghishlau and religious literature spread in the Tatar milieu around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrates a significant influence of this literature on the folk rituals. Studies on traditions of recital of books and munajaats bring us to similar conclusions. In folk culture, this tradition is called "kitap köylap uqu", literally, "reading of books with melodies", or "chanting of books". Research of its repertoire started not so long ago.<sup>20</sup> However, even the first steps in this direction allow us find the elements, which still indicate the presence of the Yasawiya traditions here.

It is worth noting that among all texts, recited towards the end of the 20th century, the most popular were the poems attributed not to Yasawi himself, but to his closest follower and contemporary Suleiman Baqirghani, known as well as Hakim ata. These are the poems signed by him "Qol Suleiman", "Migrajname", "Märyam ana kitabı" (Book of Mother Mary), "Ismaghil qissası" (Story of Ismaghil) and also the books attributed to him:<sup>21</sup> "Yarım alma" (Half an Apple) and "Akhirzaman kitabı yaki Taqiy ghajjab kitabı" (The Book of the End of the World, or the Miracles of Piety).<sup>22</sup>

These are narratives of many couplets, which were recited by Tatars not at the time of rituals, but in schools, at home, as a kind of entertainment. This peculiarity was mentioned by observers already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, concerning the Book of Mother Mary, the Russian missionary Matveev wrote that

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<sup>20</sup> This repertoire is discussed in our following articles: ["Keile Book Category in the Musical Poetic Culture of Muslim Tatars", *Music of World Peoples: Research Problems*, Moscow: MGK 2009, pp.129-141; "Keile Books and Munajaats in the Islamic Tradition", *History of Musical Culture, Kazan State Conservatory, Scientific Editions*, Kazan 2010, pp. 7-31.

<sup>21</sup> See F. Yakhin, *Tatar Literature in the Middle Ages: Religious Mysticism and Mythology in Tatar Literature*, Kazan: TDGPI publications, 2000, p.137.

<sup>22</sup> In his book F. Yakhin mentions the historians who would attribute these poems to Baqirghani. See Yakhin, *ibid.* p.139-142.

"For the Mahommedans of the Kazan land, the story of Suleiman [i.e. Baqirghani] serves as religious-didactic reading for children, whereas in Central Asia, these verses are recited together with the poems of Khodja Ahmad Yasawi by the whirling dervishes in their praying sessions."<sup>23</sup> Another missionary wrote about the "Akhirzaman kitabi" (Later Times Book): "Among the Tatar Muslims of the Kazan land... the book is widely spread. Especially, educated women or Muslim female tutors like to read it for themselves and for the listeners – the girls-students and their mothers... For a long time, this book has been known and loved for its melody. Women, at the time of chanting, cry, especially coming to the moment, when Muhammad, after the death of his parents, becomes a baby-orphan".<sup>24</sup>

Some of Baqirghani's poems were included in the book, which we can call a special monument of the Yasaviya tradition in the Tatar culture of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century,<sup>25</sup> namely, the famous "Baqirghan kitabi" (literally "The Book of Baqirghan"). From its first publication in Kazan in the mid of the 19th century, it was reprinted there many times<sup>26</sup> and became an integral part of many private libraries of Tatar Muslims.

Named after Suleiman Baqirghani, the book is a collection of poems by this author in addition to poetry by different sufi authors from the 12<sup>th</sup> till the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Yasawi, Rajji, Mashrab Magdi, Shamseddin Ghasiy, Qul Sharif, Hodadat,

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<sup>23</sup> See S. M. Matveev, "The Mary Book: Text and Translation", *IOAIE* v. XIII, Kazan, 1895, p.34.

<sup>24</sup> See Malov,.. "Later Periods Book: Doomsday in Islam", *IOAIE*, v. XIV, Kazan 1897, p.25-26, 39.

<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, this book still has not been analyzed from this point of view.

<sup>26</sup> According to F. Yakhin, the editor of the last publication of the "Baqirghan kitabi" in Kazan, the first time it was published there was in 1947, whereas Köprülü and other authors give the date 1857. See Books of Baqirghan, p.3. For commentaries to the book see Hofman, H. F., *Turkish Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, Section III, Part I, vol. 2, Utrecht, 1969. pp.227-230; Köprülü, Mehmed Fuad, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, p.175, 183.

Iqanıy, Ghabidi (Ghobäydi), Shohudi (Lutfi), Gidai, Ghazzali, Nasimi, Fakiri, Tafi, Qasıym shaykh, Gharibi, Karim Hobbi, Hatai Saqıyn, Baba Machin.<sup>27</sup>

Being of a different structure, the poems of this collection were recited with melodies of special type, also called "Baqirghan" in the folk tradition (literally, Baqirghan köe). Over the course of time, Muslims, even those who were not able to read the text in Arabic alphabet, would remember and transmit separate couplets from "Baqirghan" thanks to these melodies. Among other poets represented in the "Baqirghan" collection, there is the name of Qul Sharif, the Kazan poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, famous for the poem "Hubbi khodja",<sup>28</sup> where the significance of both Baqirghani and Yasawi is shown. Thus, there are lines where Yasawi is traditionally called "The head of 99 thousands shaykhs".<sup>29</sup>

"...There were many anbiya (prophets) and auliya (saints) in this world, The leader of all of them is Mohammad Mostafa.

Next to the great leader, is the head of ninety nine  
Thousand shaykhs Khodja Ahmad Yasawi.

The deputy of Khodja Ahmad is Hakim ata Suleiman..."

Thanks to its typical structure, this poem could be also recited with a "book melody", and, in particular, with the tune of "Baqirghan". Another example, which demonstrates the

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<sup>27</sup> Names are given according to the order and their spelling in the mentioned Kazan edition of 2000.

<sup>28</sup> "Qissai Höbbi hujja" is dedicated to Hubbi khodja, the youngest son of Baqirghani, also a saint and "protector" according to folk beliefs. Apparently, the content of the story is based on information of the "Hakim ata kitabi", the main source of information on Suleiman Baqirghani and the legends connected with him. See Devin DeWeese, *Three Tales from the Central Asian 'Book of Hakim Ata', Tales of God's Friends, Islamic Hagiography in Translation*, Ed. by John Renard, University of California Press, 2009, pp.121-135.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from *Qissa Höbbi Khodja*, Kazan: Imperial University Library, 1899, p.2-3. Translated from Tatar by G.S.

continuation of the Yasawiya traditions in Tatar culture, is the poetry of Mawla Qulyi, whose wise words are comparable to ones by Yasawi both in their content and composition.<sup>30</sup>

Stating the fact of the popularity of the texts of the Yasawiya tradition in the social milieu of the Volga Muslims, we still have a question: what place was taken by the texts known by them as the texts of Yasawi himself and were they actually as popular as, for example, poems of Baqirghani in the musical-poetical culture towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

Here, we should again emphasize the disappearance of appropriate rituals in religious practice and the decreasing competence of Muslims in old religious texts. Besides, we can add that, according to the field observations, the written (both published and handwritten) texts of wise words<sup>31</sup> were already less spread at that time than, for example, "Baqirghan" and the other "koile kitap". Under these conditions, the lines and couplets, well-known in earlier years, are being mostly orally transmitted, without "support" of written texts. This means that the verbal information becomes a fact of a musical-poetical folklore, in our case, - of munajaats, which became the main form of Tatar religious folklore nowadays.

The repertoire of munajaats "absorbs" texts of different genres and forms. Thus, one can find here lines from the popular religious textbooks written in poetical form, for example, lines from a booklet "Koile Iman", mentioned by Köprülü in its time:<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> On this subject see. Kemper, idem, pp.133-135.

<sup>31</sup> "Divan-i Hikmet" /Collection of wise words) was published in Kazan several times. The first edition took place in 1878.

<sup>32</sup> Muhammad al-Tahiri, Koile iman, Kazan, 1903, p.12. In a munajaat recorded in 1992, the words are slightly changed "Bu süzlarneng kübese – aüliyalar olughı Ahmat Yasawi süze...". These words are for the most part the words of Ahmad Yasawi, who is the head of saints.... K. Khosnullin, *Munajaats and Couplets: Selected Main Works*, Kazan: Rannur 2001, p.161.

...Bu süzlärneng kübese

Ävliyalär olıghı

Ahmät Yasävi süze

Ânı seven Allah sen...

(All of these words are the words of Ahmad Yasawi,  
Greatest of the Saints, whom God Loves).

As for the lines of texts known as wise words, they make their way into anonymous folk texts where they remain more or less faithful to the original.<sup>33</sup> For example, the first five couplets of the 25<sup>th</sup> word are repeated almost without changes in one of the munajaats published in the biggest collection of recited religious poetry existing today:

*"Unsigez meng ghalämğä särvär bulghan Möhammäd,  
Utız öch meng äshäbkä rähbär bulghan Möhammäd..."*<sup>34</sup>

Muhammad was the leader of 18 thousands worlds ('alam),  
Muhammad was the head of 33 thousands companions....

Apparently, especially popular among Muslims was the wise word with the refrain

*"Kemnär öchen kilde Räsül, beldegezme?"*  
(Do you know, for whom the Prophet came?)...

In the mentioned collection we find three variants of this text. Some of the couplets sound just as in the original:

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<sup>33</sup> It was a rare case when I could record a chant of a munajat that happened to be the complete text of the wise word; *"Haqq Taghala fazlı berlan farman qıldı..."* as it is presented in the last Kazan publication A. Yasawi, *Wise Words*, prepared by F. Yakhin, Kazan: Tarikh 2003, p. 81. The folk text with the melody is given in the article mentioned above: (Sayfullina, Koile Books and Munajaats, p.28).

<sup>34</sup> Yasawi, p. 77. Husnullin, p. 18.

"Kemnar öchen giryan qıldı küzlaremne,  
For whom he made me cry,

Ömmät öchen böryan qıldı üzlarene,  
For the followers he asked for help;

Ömmät bulsang, angla oshbu süzlarene,  
If you are the follower, understand these words;

Kemnar öchen kilde Räsül, beldegezme?..  
Are you aware, for whom the Prophet came?

Ömmät bulıp, Räsül qadren belmädengme?  
Being a follower, did not you understand the value of the  
Prophet?

Tän-jan berlä sönnätlären qılmadıngmı,  
Did not you perform all obligations (sunnat) with your body  
and soul;

Räsül öchen zar ingräbän ütmädengme,  
Did not you weep with sorrow for the Prophet,

Kemnar öchen kilde Räsül, beldegezme?..<sup>35</sup>  
Are you aware, for whom the Prophet came?...

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<sup>35</sup> Yasawi, p. 302. Below are the lines from the munajaat (Husnullin, p. 24):  
"Kemnar öchen föryad qıldı üzlarene, (For whom he asked for help),  
Kemnar öchen giryan qıldı küzlaremne, (For whom he made me cry),  
Ömmät bulsang, tingla oshbu süzlarene, (If you are a follower, listen to these  
words);  
Kemnar öchen kilde Rasül, beldegezme?.. (Do you realize, for whom the Prophet  
came?)...  
Ömmät bulıp, dinneng qadren beldegezme? (If you are a follower, do you  
understand the value of the religion),  
Ihlas ila sönnatlären qıldıghızımı, (Did you perform all obligations sincerely),  
Ruhına dip meng salamnar birdegezme, (Did you greet his soul thousand times),  
Kemnar öchen kilde Rasül, beldegezme?" (Do you realize, for whom the Prophet  
came?)

In other munajaats, one can find the fragments of wise words as separate lines (as in the sample from the mentioned Husnullin collection, where, similar to Yasawi, the phrase "Iy Hodaem, ghafu qilghil gonahımnı" (My God, forgive my sins) serves as refrain for the whole text.<sup>36</sup>

Also, there are the paraphrased texts, where the original idea gets new interpretation. Thus, in 1995 we recorded a munajaat, where the famous phrase

"Mädinädä Möhämmät, Turkestanda Hujjahmät"

(In Medina is Muhammad, in Turkestan is Khodja Ahmad) sounded as

"Mädinädä Möhämmät, jir jözendä Hujjahmät"

(In Medina is Muhammad, on the whole earth is Khodja Ahmad).

We see here, on the one hand, the reflection of the preserved veneration of the shaykh among the Tatars, but on the other hand, - ignorance or a very superficial reading of the tradition. Besides, the tune itself sounds here not in the style of old "book melodies", but like a joyful folk song.

Given and other examples let us assume that the knowledge on Yasawi in the Tatar folk milieu becomes rather superficial and an existence of texts, recited earlier as wise words, is hardly connected with this figure for Muslims.

## Conclusion

Despite all the collisions of the 20th century, loss of written texts, broken mechanisms of oral transmission, it is still possible to trace Yasawiya's traditions in the culture of the Volga Tatars. Regrettably, there is little established scholarship in the context

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<sup>36</sup> Husnullin, p.177. Yasawi, p.356, 152<sup>nd</sup> wise word. The only difference here is the name of God: "İlahi".

of the Tatar tradition, no critical editions on wise words or "Baqirghan" or other literary texts of such kind.<sup>37</sup>

Given the virtual absence of religious practice (in particular dhikr, which is considered as one of the key features of Yasawiya) and the gradual loss of authors' texts in the Yasawiya tradition, we can say that the Volga region features the "expanded Yasawiya tradition" (DeWeese) with the tendency to anonymize and folklorize the texts that used to be associated with the legendary figures and works of Yasawi, Baqirghani, Qul Sharif and others in the minds of most Muslims.

Sadly, a new religious culture developing among Tatars does not seem to draw upon its historical and spiritual heritage (both oral and written); in fact, Muslims often are not aware of its value.

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<sup>37</sup> Recent works of F. Yakhin, M. Ghaynutdinov and other scholars who published old texts in modern Tatar alphabet, helped considerably to bring this legacy back to the society. Still, these are only the first steps in this direction.