

## ABSTRACT

### POLITICAL SCIENCE

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THE DILEMMA OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD:  
THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN ISLAM AND SECULARISM AND  
NATIONALISM IN TURKEY AND SUDAN

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This study presents an analysis of the dilemma of the Islamic world and the struggle between religion, secularism, and nationalism in Turkey and Sudan. In fulfilling this task, the following issues were selected: 1) Islam and secularism, 2) Turkey's secular experience, 3) Islam and secularism in Sudan, 4) Islam and nationalism, 5) Islam and nationalism in Turkey and the Kurdish problem, and 6) Islam and nationalism in Sudan and the southern problem. These issues tested the impact of religion and nationalism on Turkey's and Sudan's public life.

The study was done through the use of both primary and secondary sources. The study examined Turkey's and Sudan's problems of identity and national unity, the challenges to both countries, along with options available for addressing these problems.

The findings reveal that the cause of Turkey's and Sudan's problems of identity and national unity are at their root internal, and that anti-Islamic Western policies were significant in exacerbating these problems. However, the researcher emphasizes the role of leadership in Turkey and Sudan in addressing the problems of their respective countries. The researcher is convinced that the future of these countries depends on the role of both political and intellectual leadership, in reconciling Islam with the realities and needs of Turkey and Sudan. The solution to the problems of identity and national unity of Turkey and Sudan can only be found inside these countries by the Turkish and Sudanese people.

THE DILEMMA OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD:  
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AND NATIONALISM IN TURKEY AND SUDAN

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GAP	Southeast Anatolia Project
IIC	International Islamic Conference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
PPK	Kurdistan Workers Party
SPLM	Sudan People Liberation Movement
SPLA	Sudan People Liberation Army
UTS	United Tribes Society
WFL	White Flag League

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Islamic world has not been a blissful, prosperous, or successful place for the past hundred years or so. Following World War I, with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, almost all the Islamic world was subjugated by the various European colonial powers. The Caliphate system, which used to stand as a symbol of unity for Muslims, was abolished. Palestine was reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people based on the "Balfour Declaration."<sup>1</sup> Since that time, the Islamic world has been moving from one crisis to another. Muslims' projects of development and modernization, unity and nationalism, and finally democratization and peace have thus far come to nothing.<sup>2</sup>

Whether we like it or not, the twentieth century demonstrates a bitter fact: all the Islamic countries, from the islands of Indonesia in Southeast Asia to the shores of Morocco

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<sup>1</sup> The document was adopted by the British government during its mandate of Palestine and it was backed by all the European powers and the United States. For terms of the Balfour Declaration see George E. Kirk, *A History of the Middle East* (New York, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> While most of the Islamic countries are under authoritarian regimes of one sort or another, those countries that attempted to join the third wave of democratization were unable to live with the experiment. Algeria is just one horrible example in this regard. See for instance, Kay Adamson, *Algeria: A Study in Competing Ideologies* (London and New York: Cassell, 1998).

in North Africa, have been unable to deal with the political realities of their societies as well as with the fact that we live in a globally interdependent world.<sup>3</sup> At the internal level, war, poverty, corruption and oppression, military and personal rule are the standard fare in the Islamic world. The misery and frustration of the people are best manifested by the exodus of millions of Muslims to the outside world. They crash Europe's and America's gates in search of liberty, safety, and employment. As the Islamic world has become a place of punishment and subjection, the West has become a safe haven for many Muslims. Tragically, the best educated, most qualified, and most needed people are seduced from their countries by the West. Many have left forever to avoid the fates of those who remained at home.

At the external level, the agony of the Islamic world is buttressed by the new developments in what former U.S. President George H. W. Bush termed the "New World Order." With the collapse of the "Evil Empire" and the death of communism, many Western scholars and policy makers have identified Islam as a new threat to the West. Thus, the Islamic countries of Sudan, Iran, and Pakistan with its nuclear power, became the new "Evil Empire." The Islamic revival, or political Islam, is being portrayed as a black plague or

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<sup>3</sup> Morocco and Indonesia are good examples to clarify part of the crisis of the Islamic world. In 1985, Morocco withdrew its membership from the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In 1986, it marginalized its membership in the Arab League, and in the same year Morocco applied for membership in the European Economic Community (EEC), which was rejected.

Indonesia is the most populous and most prosperous Islamic country; with the independence of East Timor, the remaining united islands are threatened by further disintegration due to their ethnic complexity.

cancer spreading around the world and posing a dangerous threat to the West.<sup>4</sup> This hostility to Islam culminated in Huntington's thesis in "The Clash of Civilizations"<sup>5</sup> warning the West that the Third World confrontation (if there is going to be one) will come from the Islamic world.

However, an objective and careful view of the Islamic world, from Kashmir through Afghanistan and Iraq to Kosovo and Chechnya, demonstrates that, more often than not, it is the Muslims who have been seized, tortured, bullied, and butchered.

As we ponder the causes behind this bleak picture of the Islamic world, we ask questions such as: "What went wrong in the Islamic world?" "How can Muslims get out of the situation they are in?" "Who is responsible: the West that allegedly plots against the Islamic world or should Muslims be held responsible for their own crisis?"

A major crisis in the Islamic world was precipitated by the advent of nationalism in the eighteenth century. This secular, European idea remains a serious philosophical and ideological challenge to the Muslims. Throughout the last two centuries, Muslim intellectuals have been examining and debating the fundamentals of Muslim beliefs and,

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about political Islam in the Western view, see for instance Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). Also, Martin Kramer, "Islam vs. Democracy," *Commentary*, vol. 95, no. 1 (January 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Huntington's writings raise the blood pressures of most Muslims. After publishing his well-known and most provocative work, "Clash of Civilizations," his works are viewed as anti-Islamic. For the full text of his theory, see Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no.3 (Summer 1993). Huntington expounded the argument in his work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).



most importantly, the idea of reconciling secular ideas such as nationalism, democracy, and development with the Islamic faith. How to bridge the gap between the Islamic faith and secular ideas or how Muslims can accommodate their religion with contemporary political, social, and moral issues are significant themes in Muslim discourse and debate.

Intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani, Muhammed Abduh, al-Kawakibi, Said Nursi, and many others, argued the compatibility of Islam with secular ideas such as nationalism. They were eager to learn from and imitate the West in order to develop and prosper. These intellectuals saw the unification of Italy and Germany, mergers based on nationalism as an ideology, as a source of inspiration that should be adopted by Muslims.

The Islamists, such as Hassan al-Banna, Mawlana Abu Ala Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb, and currently Hassan Turabi, advocate complete rejection of the West and its ideas and values. For this group, the solution is simply to return to Islamic teachings and to refuse to deal with the West, "the historical enemy of Islam." Therefore, religion remains the historical basis of identity and cannot be replaced by any other element of loyalty such as language, race, and territory.

If the Islamists preached rejection and resistance, secular voices such as Qasim Amin, Zia Gokalp, and Ataturk, to name just a few, followed the opposite route. They advocated abandoning Islamic ways in favor of Western ones. To those voices, nationalism, for example, though a Western, secular ideology, represents an alternative source of legitimacy to Islam and offers a second path of identity.

As a result, the Islamic world is being torn by conflicting arguments. Furthermore, none of these schools was able to reach a clear-cut vision of how Muslims can accommodate

their religion within the realities of their societies as well as with the outside world.

An objective study of two Islamic countries is illuminating and helpful in fathoming the roots of the endless plight of the Islamic world. While the Islamic world contains more than 50 sovereign states that make up the International Islamic Conference (IIC), Turkey and Sudan have unique characteristics that make them very attractive for discussion and comparison.

Turkey is one of the most considerable states in the Islamic world. Its significance lies in its Islamic historical record. Turkey was the last *Jihad* state in the Islamic calendar. As an ideological state devoting all of its resources and activities in the path of God, Turkey—the former Ottoman Empire—expanded and defended the frontiers of Islam. Its troops advanced deeply into Christian Europe and struck the West with a sense of doom. Richard Knolles, the historian of the Turks, was expressing the common feeling of Europe when he described the Turkish Empire in the sixteenth century as “the present terror of the world.”<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary Turkey is the only secular state in the Islamic world. In spite of its large size, huge natural resources, and rich cultural heritage, Turkey is the poorest country in Europe. Thus far, its struggle to catch up with the West has been fruitless and it is still outside the European club. Turkey’s democratic experiment is fragile. The Kurdish problem is a continuous headache for Turkey, as it has failed to suppress efficiently the Kurdish insurgency and, at the same time, has been unable to integrate the Kurds into Turkish society.

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<sup>6</sup> In Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982), 32.

Turkey's foreign policies are very hostile towards its Arab and Muslim neighbors. Finally, most of the Turkish government's attempts to boost the country's image have failed. Turkey still shares with the Third World most of its problems and aspirations in terms of development, unity, and stability.

It is in the above context that Islam began to return to the scene. The rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey demonstrates that, after more than 76 years of secularization, the country has been unable to accomplish its objectives based on the ideology of secularism. Consequently, the Islamic model became attractive to the Turkish masses. However, such aspirations are not tolerated by the military junta supported by the West. Therefore, Turkey is still at a crossroads in search of a lost identity.

Sudan, in Northeast Africa, is the largest country on the continent. As an immense geographical unit, it contains huge cultural diversity. There are more than 300 ethnic groups speaking about 115 languages. In general, the country is divided between the north and the south. In the north, the majority are Muslims and Arabs, while in the south, people share the civilization of black Africa. Sudan gained independence from Egypt and Britain in 1956. However, during 45 years of self-rule, its leaders have often mismanaged its resources and abused its people. Sudan experienced several periods of democracy, brought about in large part by popular uprisings that overthrew military regimes. In 1989, a military junta overthrew the civilian government and imposed martial law. The junta decided to use religion as a device of governance. The regime is currently trying to reconstruct the society in both the north and south according to a narrow vision of Islamic law and culture. Thus, it imposed an Islamic legal system on a state where one third of its population is non-

Muslim. Policies of Islamization and Arabization have escalated the savage civil war that has been going for years. After more than a decade in power, the accomplishments, if there are any, of the Sudanese Islamic experiment are few. Sudan, a prosperous African state in the 1970s, is now a candidate for Live Aid support. Its people live in a grinding poverty exacerbated by a brutal civil war and an authoritarian regime.

As mentioned earlier, both Sudan and Turkey share similar characteristics. Both countries have significant potential and huge natural resources; however, they are falling behind most of their neighbors. The government in Sudan has alternated between military regimes (beginning in 1959, 1969, and 1989) and civilian regimes (beginning in 1957, 1964, and 1965). By the same token, the Turkish military seized power three times, in 1960, 1974, and 1980 and then returned to the barracks. The threat of military takeover is always present in both countries. Sudan and Turkey share the crisis of national identity, with its devastating consequences of economic chaos and civil war. Finally, both Sudan and Turkey have tension with their neighboring countries and unstable external relations as well. By the same token, the previous similarities do not conceal the sharp differences between Africa's largest country and Turkey, making the discussion and comparison more challenging.

This study focuses on the fundamental causes that led to such profound crises in Sudan and Turkey. It explores the role of both external and internal factors behind the agony of those two Islamic countries. It details their experiments with the competing ideologies of Islamization and secularization. It looks at the roots and dynamics of their ethnic problems, and civil wars and their consequences. Also, it highlights the love-hate relationship that characterizes their involvement with the outside world. Finally, the study

concludes with an evaluation of the prospects for change in those two countries and attempts to answer questions such as whether Sudan and Turkey will be able to come to grips with their problems and achieve peace, stability, and prosperity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

From the advent of Islam in the Arab peninsula 1,500 years ago until now, the relationship between Islam and the West has been marked by mutual enmity, confrontation, and rivalry. From the very first, the West viewed the new faith in terms of violence, conquest, destruction, polygamy, the veil, and segregation.<sup>7</sup>

Islam has a universal message; thus, it must be spread all over the world. Consequently, Muslim armies overran the lands of the Middle East, Central Asia, North and Central Africa, and Eastern Europe. The West, however, did not submit to what it considered Imperial Islam. Both Islam and Christianity have universal messages, yet religious competition between the cross and the crescent has become the center of the relationship between the rival groups.

Western fears and hostilities toward Islam reached their peak during the apogee of the Ottoman Empire. Since its rise in the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Ghazi troops advanced deeply into Christian Europe. Constantinople became the gate of Islamic conquests in Europe. The city, once the capital of the Byzantine Empire, was conquered in 1453 by the Sultan Mehmed II, known henceforth as the Conqueror. The fall of the city

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1983), 85.

shook every throne in Europe.<sup>8</sup> Islamic troops drove further into Europe, besieged Vienna in 1529 for more than two weeks, and retreated under the pressure of a ferocious resistance from the defenders.

That great Empire was established by an administration that was once organized, humane, just, and relatively free from both fanaticism and corruption. However, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the seeds of decline began to grow in the Ottoman Empire. The decay started in the Sultan's court and extended to the military and to other institutions in the state. According to the English proverb, "There is nothing so ill as the corruption of the best." The Sultan, himself, set the example of corruption when he became accessible to bribes. The depth of corruption reached a level to where the Sultan was ruled by his harem and by frivolous moods and desires with little interest in the affairs of the state.<sup>9</sup>

On the other side, the West was under the influence of the liberal values spread by the French Revolution. With its rising nation-states, the West outstripped the Ottoman Empire in all fields of life. Thus, the moment had come to settle a historical score with the Ottoman Empire that had caused fear for Europe for more than three centuries.

The process of decline was very slow, due to rivalry between the European powers. However, by the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire became part of history. Turkey, the heartland of the Ottomans, was occupied by Allied forces, closing an epoch in the history

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<sup>8</sup> Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 133-144.

<sup>9</sup> Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 162-163.

of the Islamic world and marking a new phase in the modern history of Turkey and the whole Middle East.<sup>10</sup>

After gaining independence under the leadership of Atatürk in 1923, Turkey—the former *Jihad* state—became the first secular state in the modern history of Islam. With the object of transferring Turkey into a modern state, Atatürk decided to cut its links with Islam. Atatürk's divorce from Islam reached its peak in the constitution of 1928.<sup>11</sup> The clause referring to Islam was deleted from the constitution.

However, Atatürk was ambivalent and opportunistic in his secular and nationalist program. He initially appealed to Islam to gain the support of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples. Thus, Islam was a rallying cry in the War of Independence, and it was a crucial component of Turkish nationalism in the early days of the republic. Nevertheless, Atatürk's goal was to establish a secular, modern state, not to restore an Islamic empire. Atatürk played the Islamic card only when it suited his purposes. Atatürk believed that his goal of establishing a new, modern state could only be achieved if he disestablished Islam. Thus, his secular nationalist program was, at its base, a policy of de-Islamization strictly enforced by the state apparatus. It was forced on both the Turks and Kurds from above. Neither the secularization nor the Turkification of the nation was negotiated with the people of Turkey.

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<sup>10</sup> M. Philips Price, *A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1956), 87.

<sup>11</sup> Sencer Ayata, "Patronage, Party and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 41.

Furthermore, Ataturk's dream of integrating Turkey into the Western world has not yet been achieved.

For the last seven decades, Turkey has been struggling to become part of the West. Despite numerous attempts and decades of interaction and imitation of Europe, Turkey remains in a deadlock. The country has neither been able to catch up with Europe's development nor to be accepted by the European Union (EU).

Contemporary Turkey is torn between the advocates of secularization and Islamization. The first group believes that Turkey belongs to the West; therefore, one day it will become a European nation. The other side argues that Turkey was, and remains, an Islamic state; thus, it will never become part of Christian Europe. Therefore, it is not surprising that since the early 1950s, the Turkish people continue to struggle and debate over the identity of their country.<sup>12</sup>

The rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey could be explained partly by the failure of the Westernization process in the country and its rejection by Europe as well. Therefore, when the political climate became more relaxed for religious expression, the Turkish people with their strong religious sentiments took the opportunity to establish Islamic political parties and associations.

However, the military leaders supported by the West could not tolerate such aspirations and attempts at re-Islamization. Turkey's experiment with democracy is still threatened by military interventions. However, the pressures on the secularists in Turkey

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<sup>12</sup> Sami Zubaida, "Turkish Islam and National Identities," *Middle East Report*, vol. 26, no. 2 (April, June 1996): 10-14.



will continue, especially with its current economic deterioration and the civil war with the Kurdish people.

The Kurds are a nation without a state. Turkish politicians have found the solution to this problem in the use of military force. Although military methods are indispensable to suppress the military activities of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PPK), they are not enough to find a solution to this problem. While Kurdish aspirations for an independent state could not be considered an acceptable demand by Turkey, cultural independence and economic equality for the Kurds might be more readily received and accomplished than policies of assimilation and destruction of the Kurdish people.<sup>13</sup> The Turkish politicians did not realize that arresting the leader of the PPK, Ocalan, and sentencing him to death will never solve the problem of a people who struggle for self-determination. Finally, as foreign policy is largely influenced by domestic affairs, Turkey's relations with the outside world are also in a deep crisis. The list of Turkey's enemies and rivals is a long one, and includes Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cyprus, Greece, and Russia. In its neighborhood, Israel may be Ankara's closest ally. The list of adversaries includes Western critics of Turkey's human rights record and its war against the Kurds.

The Islamic resurgence in Turkey is not an isolated phenomenon in the Islamic world. In fact, since the early 1980s, the Islamic revival became a well-known issue in the Islamic world. The Islamic revolution that took place in Iran in 1979 has an impact on almost all the Islamic world. While most of the Islamic countries struggle against political

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<sup>13</sup> David McDowal, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 418-426.

Islam, Sudanese leaders, by contrast, have chosen Islam as a system of government, regardless of the consequences, including civil war.

While the north of Sudan became part of the Islamic world early on, the south remains religiously and culturally independent. The dichotomization of the country into Arab Muslim north and African Animist/Christian south is in part a legacy of the British policy of separating the south from the north during colonization.<sup>14</sup>

Islam initially spread in Sudan and much of sub-Saharan Africa through the peaceful and gradual migration of Muslim peoples from north Africa. In other words, Islam spread in Sudan and much of Africa without the application of *Sharia*. In a country where one third of the population was non-Muslim, religion became a divisive ideology. However, Islam as a religion cannot be blamed for the current crisis in Sudan. Rather, it is the manipulation of religion and the practices and policies of the Sudanese ruling elite that bear immediate responsibility for the present crisis in that country. After independence, the northern Sudanese desired a unitary state under their control. On the other side was the deepening fear among southern Sudanese of their subordination to a state that defined itself as having Arab and Muslim identities they do not share. Their reaction was revolt. The civil war has continued for nearly four decades, punctuated by a ten-year pause.

As the country has alternated between military and civilian regimes, stability and peace have become unknown for the Sudanese people. With the failure of the civilian governments to run the country and solve its problems, especially the war in the south, the

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<sup>14</sup> John W. Harbeson and Donald Rotchchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), 32-34.

military officers found the pretext to step in several times so as to bring peace and prosperity to the country, but to no avail. As both the north and south continued to take hard positions, the country continued to bleed. Moreover, the country became open to foreign intervention, which crippled all efforts to solve the problem.

In 1989, a combination of military leaders and Islamic fundamentalists overthrew the civilian government and established a new Islamic Republic in Sudan. Not surprisingly, the new Islamic government of Sudan was faced by challenges from all directions. At the internal level, as the military leaders believed that the only solution for the problem of the south to be military, the regime stepped up the civil war. It demonstrated that it was conducting a deliberate policy of genocide. Since it seized power in 1989, the regime adopted very repressive measures against the political opposition, causing the exodus of hundreds of thousands of people to neighboring countries and to the Western world as well. As the war in the south has worsened, the economy has collapsed.<sup>15</sup>

At the regional and international levels, the regime supported Iraq in 1990, and so most Arab states joined the West in their antagonism towards Sudan. Arab oil-producing countries decided to sever aid to Sudan and shifted their support to the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM).<sup>16</sup> Relations with neighboring countries such as Egypt,

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<sup>15</sup> Judy Mayotte, "Civil War in Sudan: The Paradox of Human Rights and National Sovereignty," *The Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 47, no. 2 (Winter 1994).

<sup>16</sup> In fact, Saudi Arabia was the major donor to Islamic groups in the Middle East. As most of these groups stood with Saddam during the Gulf War, the war persuaded Saudi Arabia to abandon its policy of trying to co-opt Islamic groups by buying them off.

Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya, and Algeria were nearly cut off.<sup>17</sup> Being isolated regionally and hated internationally, the government of Sudan decided to search for new allies outside the region. In addition to Iraq, relations with Iran were strengthened. Both Iran and Sudan exchanged visits at a very high level. With such friends, Sudan did not need enemies. Moreover, Sudan's revolutionary regime followed the path of Iran. Sudan started to export the Islamic revolution to other Arab countries. Islamic movements in countries such as Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia received support from the government of Sudan. Sudan became a harbor for the fugitives of other Islamic countries. With such policies, Sudan became a friendless regime.<sup>18</sup> The antagonism between Sudan and the West culminated in 1998 when the United States forces conducted air strikes against the country.<sup>19</sup>

Apparently, the Islamic experiment in Sudan is not promising. After 12 years in power, Sudan's crisis has worsened. In fact, Sudan's Islamic experiment discredits the Islamists' promises of a better alternative under their rule. Sudan, once the potential food basket for the Arab world, now suffers from famine. The country is also threatened by the possibility of disintegration. The current plight of Sudan is brought about in part by unwise policies followed by its government and its poor leadership.

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<sup>17</sup> Hilal Khashan, "The New Arab Cold War," *World Affairs*, vol. 159, no. 4 (Spring 1997): 164-166.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel M. Makind, "Iran, Sudan and Islam," *The World Today* (June 1993).

<sup>19</sup> For more information about Sudan's relations with the West since the military coup of 1989, see for instance the work of Donald Petterson, U.S. Ambassador to Sudan in the 1990s, *Inside Sudan, Political Islam, Conflict and Catastrophe* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999).

To summarize, today both Turkey and Sudan are facing gridlock. The question is, of course, to know if the government of both countries will be able to overcome the situation or not. While it is not possible to answer the previous question, one can speculate about future possibilities based on the previous facts. There are some reasons to be optimistic, but even more reasons to be quite skeptical

### **Assumptions**

Western anti-Islamic attitudes have not changed throughout history. Since the advent of Islam in the seventh century, the West viewed the new religion as a threat to Christianity and Western civilization. Therefore, the West had adopted and implemented hostile positions toward the Islamic world. From the early encounters between those two rivalries, through the crusades and imperialist periods to the Gulf War,<sup>20</sup> and its consequences, specifically the so-called peace process, until the present, Western perceptions of Islam have never changed. Though the perception has its roots in the early clashes between Islam and Christianity in Europe, the United States has inherited Europe's antagonism towards the Islamic world. The United States has shaped its strategies and policies with the Islamic world based on the European legacy. Muslims are haunted by this legacy inside and outside

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<sup>20</sup> In fact, the Gulf War marked a crucial turning point, not only in relations between Islam and the West, but more profoundly among Muslims themselves and specifically the Arabs. Moreover, the war, with its devastating consequences—specifically the so-called peace process, which turned out to be a sell out—closed the century with the bitter realization that this is an age of Muslims' inferiority, weakness, and division.

the United States.<sup>21</sup> However, the Western powers would not succeed if the Islamic world had not been afflicted by many internal stresses. These include ever-increasing corruption, lack of legitimacy, bankruptcy of leadership, abuse of power, and backwardness. With such afflictions, definitely, it seems that nothing could prevent penetration, influence, and finally, domination by the West.

One also assumes that the current turmoil in the Islamic world could be measured by its failure to employ the power of Islam to encounter the challenges that face this part of the world. Islam is a religion of forgiveness, peace, and dignity. It inspires in its followers the mood of tolerance. It is not against development and modernity.

In Turkey, where 99 percent of the population is Muslim, Islam was and still remains the historical basis of identity. National territory as the basis of identity, as adopted by Ataturk, had neither succeeded in integrating the Kurds within the new state nor met the aspirations of the people of Turkey.

In Sudan, the policies and practices of the Sudanese ruling elite, and the present regime in particular, constitute a radical departure from the historical, peaceful Sudanese Islam and the wishes of the population at large. Many Sudanese Muslims and non-Muslims oppose the present Sudanese Islamic experiment and view it as a distortion of Islam. The Sudanese ruling elite failed to understand Islam in a way that would better respond to the present needs of the Sudanese society.

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<sup>21</sup> For analysis of the relationship between America and the Islamic world in the last two decades, see for instance Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Therefore, the underdevelopment and instability of Sudan, where Islam plays a central role, and Turkey, where religion is on the periphery, cannot be explained by the incompatibility of Islam with modernity and development. In fact, it is the author's belief that both Sudan's Islamic experiment and Turkey's secular experiment have failed due to misguided policies followed by both countries. Finally, one also assumes that the current turmoil in both countries could be explained by their lack of leadership with a vision to reconcile the differences in the said countries. Neither Sudan nor Turkey has been blessed with great leaders in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

### **Hypotheses**

Two major hypotheses guide this work. First, Islam and politics are inseparable in the political process of Sudan and Turkey. However, both countries have failed to utilize religion, or its counterpart secularism, in accord with the political, ethnic, and cultural identities of their societies. This failure had largely contributed to the underdevelopment and instability of the said countries.

In Turkey, Ataturk's secular nationalist program was unsuccessful. The rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey in the last two decades is a product of the failure of Ataturk's program, and thus represents a crisis of Ataturk's legacy. By the same token, the Kurdish uprisings throughout the last century were an outcome of a mixture of religious and nationalist motivations.

Consequently, it is the author's belief that Islam can accommodate nationalism, and it could be the core of identity for both the Kurds and the Turks. Had Ataturk

integrated Islam into Turkish nationalism, the basis of such a nation would have been more encompassing and the crisis of identity in Turkey would have been eliminated.

Thus, a reasonable argument can be made that secularism, rather than religion, is the one to be blamed for Turkey's current crisis of national identity.

In Sudan, after independence, the Sudanese ruling elite adopted an ambivalent program in which it declared Islam to be the official religion of the state while providing equal citizenship rights to all people. From 1956 until the present, with the exception of the period from 1973 to 1983 following the Addis Ababa agreement and the relatively more secular constitution of 1973, the Sudanese ruling elite had sought to mold the diverse population of the country according to their understanding of Islam. The National Islamic Front (NIF) and the present regime declared Sudan as an Islamic state and enforced the application of *Sharia*. Furthermore, it declared holy war against its own non-Muslim population in the name of Islamic Jihad in defense of the Islamic faith. The Sudanese ruling elite failed to reconcile Islam with the realities of their country.

Had Sudan and Turkey been able to use religion as a power to unite the efforts to build stable, developed, and strong national states and political systems that enjoy the support of their citizens, problems of identity, stability, democracy, and under-development would have been marginalized and the benefits would be maximized.

Secondly, the Western powers had adopted and implemented negative positions towards the Islamic world including Sudan and Turkey. Furthermore, the Western powers exploited the crises in these countries to promote their interests and expand their influence. The West employs human rights, democracy, political Islam, terrorism and several other



means to promote its own interests rather than to help the people of those countries. However, the Western powers would not have been successful if Sudan and Turkey had not been in deep domestic crises. Consequently, we have an international environment hostile to the said countries, and a domestic environment that has set the stage for foreign penetration, hegemony, and hostility.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to provide answers to the following questions:

#### **Primary Questions**

1. Can Islam be separated from politics, and if not, why not?
2. What is the role and place of Islam in the political processes, both domestic and foreign, of Sudan and Turkey?

#### **Secondary Questions**

1. What are the underlying reasons for hostility and rivalry between Islam and the West? How does the West view Islam with the end of the Cold War? Does the West use double standards when it comes to Islamic issues? What roles have Western powers played in the crisis of Sudan and Turkey?

2. What are the original causes for the failure of Europeanization in Turkey? Why was Turkey able to develop a military relationship with the West, thus becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but could not build a political, economic, and social relationship with the West or join the European Union? Is there a correlation between Turkish attempts of Westernization and the return of Islam in Turkey? Finally, can Turkey reconcile Islam with modernity?
3. Should the government of Sudan favor Islam and the Arabic language or accord equal citizenship to people of all faiths and races? Are the Sudanese people satisfied with the Islamic experiment, and if not, how do they express their discontent with their government?
4. What are the prospects for establishing nation states for the Kurds in Kurdistan and the southern people of Sudan? What roles do regional and foreign powers play in those ethnic conflicts? What are the humanitarian, economic, and political impacts of these civil wars? Is there a possibility for reconciliation between these conflicting parties, and if not, why not?

## Definitions

The key concepts pertinent to this study are corruption, conspiracy, ethnicity, civil war, Islamization, secession, Westernization, crisis of national identity, the Islamic state, and the secular state. The concepts presented below will be defined either by a relevant source or by the author of this study, and followed by a brief discussion.

### Corruption

Corruption can be defined as the acceptance by public officials of money or an equivalent for doing something that he is under obligation not to do, or exercising a legitimate discretion for improper reasons.<sup>22</sup> In this study, corruption seems to be an evil deeply rooted in the culture of the Islamic world: In the old Ottoman Empire, given its vastness, the Ottoman bureaucratic system, and the practices of those at the center of power, all these factors contributed to the rampancy of corruption. As the Empire grew, so did corruption, and it figured no less prominently in the decline and fall of the Empire. As old habits die hard, the modern political system in Turkey continued to be rocked by political scandals. The former Turkish president Sulayman Demirel was in deep personal political trouble in 1971, while prime minister, in part due to scandals surrounding his brother.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Arnold J. Heidenheimer, *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1970), 5.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, January 15, 1971.

In Sudan, as in most Middle Eastern countries, given its economic and political hardships, people take refuge in the so-called "back door." In order to meet their needs, or to avoid severe punishments, they bribe, beg, and barter.<sup>24</sup>

### Conspiracy

We can define conspiracy as an agreement between two or more parties to act together to achieve an illegal or improper object.<sup>25</sup> In this work, the conspiracy is the Western hostility toward the Islamic world. Thus, Muslims see themselves as surrounded and under attack, thus most of their defeats and failures the inevitable consequences of the Western conspiracy against them. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, and the crisis of both Turkey and Sudan as Islamic countries in the present are explained as part of a Western conspiracy to divide and weaken the Islamic world, thus to facilitate its exploitation, penetration, and domination.

### Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity is often employed to identify a group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity, which exists as a subgroup of a larger community.<sup>26</sup> In the research, the southern people of Sudan are different ethnic groups that suffer from

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<sup>24</sup> James A Bill and Carl Leiden, *The Middle East: Politics and Power* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), 181.

<sup>25</sup> *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "conspiracy."

<sup>26</sup> John Hutchinson and Antony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 43.

cultural oppression, social discrimination and exploitation. The oppressed southern Sudanese started fighting against the north with the objective of establishing an independent state. However, in the last two decades, they turned their back from the ultimate goal of an independent state in favor of a united, democratic secular Sudanese state.

### Islamization

Islamization is a call for a return to the root values of Islam. It emphasizes the necessity of applying Islamic laws in the society. It is a new phenomenon in the history of Islam. It could be partially explained as a reaction to the failure of secular ideas to solve the problems of the Islamic world. Until the late 1970s, Islam had little influence in the important realms of political and economic development. However, in the last two decades, Islam reemerged as a potent force in Muslim politics and society. This resurgence encompassed much of the Muslim world from Algeria to Indonesia. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 is one of the events that demonstrate the power of a resurgent Islam.<sup>27</sup>

While the call for a return to the roots in Turkey came from the masses and took the form of establishing Islamic political parties, the Sudanese Islamic experiment is unique. It was the military regime that took refuge in Islamic laws as a source of legitimacy. This amounts to the exploitation of religion for political ends. Unfortunately, so far the experiment is not promising.

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<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of this issue, see James P. Piscatori, ed., *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

### Secession

Secession can be defined as an attempt by a community to break away from a larger political organization and to gain self-determination. This withdrawal is usually accomplished by force. In this work, the Kurds, like the southern people of Sudan, started their struggle as a separatist movement with the objective of establishing an independent state. After years of fighting, the Kurds gave up the objective of an independent state and began to call for a modest solution within the boundaries of Turkey that ensured justice and freedom. Thus, Kurdish nationalism is no longer a separatist movement fighting for independence.

### Westernization

As a concept, Westernization suggests that the West is the incarnation of development, freedom, prosperity, and civilization. Thus, in order to catch up with the West, the rest of the world must adopt Western values, which are the only way to salvation. Therefore, Westernization as an attempt at reform is the aim of the whole non-Western world. Turkey was the first Islamic country that sought to become like or part of the West by adopting and implementing a secularist ideology. Turkey did not realize that Westernization could not be achieved only by abandoning the laws and principles of the Islamic faith. Unfortunately, after more than seven decades of Westernization, Turkey's experiment of Westernization is not inspiring.

### Civil War

Civil war is a war fought between different geographical areas, political divisions,

or ideological factions within the same country.<sup>28</sup> The concept of civil war in this study means the war between the Kurds and the Turkish state, and the southern people of Sudan unleashed against the central government of Khartoum. Although these civil wars took place within the boundaries of Turkey and Sudan, other states have intervened.

### Crisis of National Identity

The crisis of national identity is defined as the inability of individuals and groups to define who they are and how they are different from other groups on the basis of language, religion, race, territory, and culture. In this work, the crisis of national identity can be seen in the existence of contested national identities in Sudan and Turkey. In Sudan, religious and ethnic differences between the north and the south have nearly destroyed the country. The northerners view Sudan as an Arab state that belongs to the Islamic Middle East; thus, they struggle to stamp Sudan according to their image. However, the southerners have a different vision as they view Sudan as an African country and resist the policies of Arabization and Islamization.

In Turkey, many Turkish people perceive themselves as Muslim Turks; thus, they belong to the Islamic Middle East. However, those who wish to integrate with Europe believe that Turkey is part of the Christian West or Europe. Therefore, the search for national identity will continue to be a major problem for the above-mentioned countries.

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<sup>28</sup> Jack C. Plano, *The International Relations Dictionary* (California: Santa

### Islamic State

The Islamic state can be defined as the state in which Islamic law is applied in all spheres of life. Its sovereignty belongs to God and the legitimacy of its ruler, whether caliphate, sultan, or mullah, is derived from his adherence to Islam. While Islam continued to play an important role in Sudanese politics throughout the country's history, Islamic law was applied in Sudan only in 1983 and, in 1989, Sudan was declared fully an Islamic state.

Thus, Islam became the primary source of identity, ideology, and values. After more than a decade of Sudan's Islamic experiment, the continuation of the civil war and the power struggle between President Bashir and Sudan's ideologist of an Islamic state, Turabi, reinforce the perspective of the failure of such an experiment.

### Secular State

The secular state separates religion from politics and limits it to the private sphere of life. Its sovereignty belongs to people and the legitimacy of its ruler, whether president, king, or emperor, is derived from his ability to satisfy the needs of his people. Turkey was the first state in the Muslim world to embark upon a comprehensive process of secularization. After more than seven decades of Turkey's secular experiment, Islam remains central in Turkish politics and continues to be the historic basis of identity for the Turkish people. The current resurgence of Islam in Turkey is considered as a representation of the crisis of secularism in Turkey.



### Methodology and Data Collection

The basic method of research for this study is historical and descriptive analysis. The historical approach explores past trends in relationship to the subject of interest with the goal of providing systematic and comprehensive understanding of the present. The historical context brings out features that are crucial to an understanding of the present. Therefore, it could be used as a solid base for speculation in the future. Furthermore, this study uses a descriptive approach, which helps to scrutinize and explore the obtained information, as thoroughly as possible with a view to providing material and guidance for subsequent research.

The major sources of data for this research include both primary and secondary sources. Primary information was collected from government documents of Sudan, Turkey, and the United States, as the leader of the Western world. In fact, valuable materials were derived from actual actions of the previous countries, which include internal and foreign policy declarations, statements by key leaders in those countries, and hearings before Congress. Data were generated from other primary sources, such as World Bank reports, Amnesty International reports, and U.S. Department of State publications.

Secondary data were gathered from such sources as specialized works on the Islamic world in general, and Sudan and Turkey in particular. Scholarly journals such as *World Politics*, *Middle East Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Middle East Studies* were used. Also, information on the research topic was collected from African, American, Turkish, and British

magazines and newspapers such as: *New Africa*, *Middle East Times*, *The Turkish Times*, *New York Times*, *The Economist* and the *Washington Post*.

Materials for this study were collected from various library resources, specifically, the libraries at the Atlanta University Center, Georgia State University, and Emory University. However, with the development of computers and in the era of internet, valuable information in remote places has become accessible; thus, frequent research visits were made to the web sites of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of State, and the governments of Turkey and Sudan.

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The controversial relationship between the Islamic world and the West, and the experience of failure and the quest for identity in Sudan and Turkey are complex issues that cannot be explored in detail in one work. Certainly, it is nearly impossible to examine in depth a fifteen hundred year-old conflict. Furthermore, this long clash is further complicated by the involvement of different nations and various regions that have developed different responses to the challenge of the West. Therefore, to keep the study in a manageable proportion, this work focuses on a number of issues associated with the topic at hand and the hypothesis advanced.

As the historical approach helps to capture certain common or repeated patterns relevant to the contemporary status of Sudan and Turkey, this study starts with a historical background of both countries. Nevertheless, the study is primarily concerned with Sudan

and Turkey's contemporary politics, their religious, ethnic, and regional complexities, their relations with the outside world, and finally, their future chances of survival as nation states.

The study focuses on the developments of the past two decades (1980-2000). This time frame was chosen because there were significant domestic, regional, and international developments that took place between 1980-2000.

At the internal level, the 1980s marked the renewal of civil war in Sudan in 1983 and the beginning of the armed Kurdish conflict in Turkey in 1984. Also, the 1980s were marked by the reversal of democracy and return of military rule in both countries. Two military coups took place in Sudan in 1985 and 1989. Similarly, the military overthrew civilian rule in 1980 in Turkey. In 1998, the government of Turkey, influenced by the military, forced its nation's first Islamist prime minister to resign and dissolve his political party. The 1990s were marked by continuous political and social unrest in both countries, and the deeply embedded conflict of secularism versus religiosity. At the regional level, the 1990s were the years of tension between Sudan and Turkey and the outside world. Turkey almost entered a war with Syria over the activities of the PPK. Moreover, its relations with Greece, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq were deteriorating due to Turkish alliance with Israel. By the same token, Sudan's disputes with Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Algeria, and its other African neighbors worsened.

At the international level, with the end of the Cold War, the world had a period of profound changes with direct impact for Sudan and Turkey as nonhomogeneous countries with ethnic conflicts and undemocratic governance. Among the features of change that took place in the last decade are the following:

- The practice of humanitarian intervention for the purpose of protecting human rights from government oppression. This principle was practiced in Iraq and Somalia; both are close neighbors to Turkey and Sudan.<sup>29</sup>
- The world's movement towards more accountable democratic governance. During the Cold War, the West, in its quest for allies, ignored considerations of human rights. Now the West celebrates its victory by making democracy and liberalism the wave of the future.
- The reassessment of the West's political and economic aid priorities. This feature goes hand in hand with the previous features.<sup>30</sup>

There is no doubt that this new international climate will have long-standing effects on Turkey which is classified among the three top recipients of USAID, after Israel and Egypt. It will also affect Sudan, where the principle of humanitarian intervention is enforced by the United States.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Alex de Wool and Rakiya Ommar, "Can Military Intervention be Humanitarian?" *Middle East Report*, vol. 24, no. 187 - 199 (March-April/May-June 1994): 3.

<sup>30</sup> Mark Dufheld and John Prendergast, "Sovereignty and Intervention after the Cold War," *Middle East Report*, vol. 24, no. 187-188 (March-April/May-June 1994): 10.

<sup>31</sup> In fact, the humanitarian intervention that the United States is now practicing in Sudan is a pretext to cover the U.S. hostility toward that country, especially after the bombing of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The United States blocked all the attempts of reconciliation between the SPLM and the government of Khartoum. Until the end of President Clinton's administration, the U.S. was determined to divorce the north from the south and almost issued a "Balfour Declaration" for the southern people of

## Literature Review

A vast body of literature has been written on the Islamic world and modern Turkey and Sudan. The task of exploring this tremendous body of literature is further complicated by the different arguments presented by the authors. In fact, from 1979 when the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power until 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the developments and events in the Islamic world became cardinal in the minds of most Western scholars and politicians. This unobjectively marked most of their writings with a bearing on the crisis of the Islamic world. However, to keep the review to a compact size, the researcher reviewed some exigent literature that shed light on the subject. Also, as the subject is huge and complicated, the literature was divided into three main categories. The first category covers the Ottoman Empire and its struggle with both external enemies and internal troubles. The second category detailed the current trends in modern Turkey. It is necessary to review some of these studies that focus on the new nation that was formed from the heart of the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the researcher reviewed the most prominent works that deal with Sudan, a major part of the study.

### Literature on the Ottoman Empire

While the vast majority of Muslims believe in the conspiracy theory and argue that the Western powers are the source of evil in the Islamic world, there are many studies in

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Sudan to establish their independent state. See for instance *Al-Hawadeth*, Dec. 17, 1999, No 2250, 16.

which the Western role is marginalized, and Muslims are seen as accountable and responsible for their own misfortune. In other words, the roots of the plight lie in the internal environment. The breakdown of the Ottoman Empire supports this argument. In his pioneering study, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*, Lord Kinross presented an objective analysis to the rise and decline of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup> Kinross noted that the Empire began in 1300 under the legendary Osman I. It reached the zenith of its power and glory in the sixteenth century. As the author argued, during that glorious period, the rulers of the Empire were over-occupied by its affairs. However, as Kinross affirmed, the seeds of decline began to grow in the Empire as its rulers neglected their duties and were ruled by harems and pleasures. The author noted that the depth of corruption and disorder reached a level when imbeciles, sots, and children were put on the throne. Therefore, Kinross attributed the disintegration of the Empire to its leadership. The late untalented rulers of the Empire left the path that their ancestors had trod.

In addition to corruption and disorder, inequality and oppression are other afflictions that played a significant role in tearing apart the Empire. The Empire held together vast lands with very different political traditions and numerous nationalities—Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, Kurds, Turks, Africans, and Arabs. By the same token, these communities had various religious affiliations—Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Animist. The Ottoman rulers failed to achieve equality and justice among their citizens, thus inspiring the oppressed to struggle for self-rule. Roderic H. Davison argued that the Ottoman

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<sup>32</sup> Lord Kinross and Patrick Balfour, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (New York: First Morrow Quill, 1979).

discrimination against non-Muslims and non-Turks was a fundamental reason for the disruption of the Empire.<sup>33</sup> In the opinion of Davison, the Turkish mind, conditioned by a sense of superiority, was not willing to accept an absolute equality with non-Turks. The Christians were viewed as second-class citizens and so pushed forward to separation. As the author contended, neither the concept nor the practice of citizenship involving equal rights and duties between citizens of different religious or ethnic groups existed in the Empire, paving the way for the disadvantaged people supported by foreign power to disintegrate the Empire.

In fact, in the late years of the Empire, inequality was not only between Muslims and non-Muslims, but also among Muslims of different ethnic groups. Ernest Dawn, in his essay "From Ottomanism to Arabism: the Origin of an Ideology,"<sup>34</sup> asserts that the Arabs, though the vast majority of them are Muslims, suffered from inequality and humiliation by the Ottomans. The Arabs rejected the kind of Islam supported by the Turks. There were radical calls that denied the Turks the right to rule the Arabs. Dawn saw that Arab nationalism developed as a reaction against the atrocities of the Turks. Al Kawakibi, one of the Arab intellectuals, in his quest to restore the purity of Islam and the past glory of the Arabs, argued that the inferiority of the Islamic world was a natural result of religious defectiveness:

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<sup>33</sup> Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian Muslims in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, vol. 59, no. 4 (July 1954).

<sup>34</sup> C. Ernest Dawn, "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology," in *The Modern Middle East*, eds. Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury and Mary C. Wilson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 375-393.

Is there anyone who doubts that the existing religion is not the religion by which our ancestors were distinguished over the world? Nay, unfortunate changes have fallen upon the religion which has changed its foundations.<sup>35</sup>

In fact, the Arab's divorce from the Turks gives credit to theories of Turkish oppression and corruption. The Turks undermined the pre-eminence of the Arabs and pushed them toward separation. This separation was accomplished by the Great Arab Revolt in 1914, led by Sherif Hussein of Mecca.

The former studies emphasized the role of the Turks in the decline and defeat of the Empire. The studies that inspect the external factors represented by the anti-Ottoman policies carried out by the European powers differ substantially. These studies assert that the European powers, in the struggle to bring down a weaker opponent, were not, by any means, reluctant to perform their objective. They directly attacked Ottoman domains through military, economic, and diplomatic means. Moreover, they intervened in the internal affairs of the Empire and blocked all attempts that were taken to remedy the sick Empire.

One of the works that examined the European antagonistic procedures towards the Ottoman Empire is Barbara Jelavich's monograph, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers, and the Straits Question, 1870-1887*.<sup>36</sup> With a solid diplomatic history based on extensive

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers, and the Straits Question: 1870-1887* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).



documentary research, Jelavich showed that the fate of the Ottoman Empire lay in the hands of the European powers. They entered into a period of imperial expansion, one of whose prime target was the possessions of the Ottoman Empire.

As Jelavich observed, the Ottoman Empire, as a weak state, was usually a stronger supporter of legality in international relations and the sanctity of treaties. On the other side, the European powers did not regard their agreements in a similar manner. In fact, the European powers, regardless of their rivalry and conflicting interests, unanimously approved repeated violations of the treaties. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire lost territories and people through legal and illegal actions of European powers.

The aversion and hypocrisy of the European powers took other dimensions during that period. The believers in liberalism were convinced that their principles and theories could immediately be applied to all people and all places. Moreover, it was the duty of their governments and troops to transfer such ideas all over the world. However, if such ideas conflicted with their interests, they would quit supporting them.

The Ottoman Empire was subject to European criticism as it was an absolute monarchy without a representative government. The European self-contradiction was clear in the reaction toward the establishment of a constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire, which started officially in 1876. In his work, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study in Midhat Constitution and Parliament*, Robert Devereaux<sup>37</sup> observed that the prejudiced Europeans did not even bother to wait to read the constitution before

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Devereaux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study in Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963).

presenting their judgment. England, the dean of the constitutional states, had the most hostile and disappointing reaction to the constitution. Devereaux wrote:

The constitution was widely viewed in England as a shame and an outrageous defiance of the powers, which one newspaper termed as a reckless and suicidal course foisted on the Sultan by a "blind and willful" minister and his "carelessly acquiescent colleagues." The constitution as a project meant nothing, for even if the Empire contained the elements necessary for an independent parliament, which it strongly doubted, a parliament dominated "by Asiatic and African barbarism would be quite unacceptable."<sup>38</sup>

According to Devereaux, the hypocrites could not admit that their objection to the constitution lay on the grounds that it maintained Islam as the religion of the state. The European powers had exploited the existence of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and objected to the idea of a constitution. Devereaux concluded that European attitude showed that it was Europe, not Turkey, where religious fanaticism was the guiding principle.

Apparently, the Ottoman Empire was harmed by the European policies and by the dark picture that most of the people of Europe held of it, an attitude that was in a sense a repetition of the old crusading spirit of the past.

The previous studies disagree on the argument to the question of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, yet they remain valuable as they balance between the internal and external factors that brought down the Empire. However, Turkey's relations with the West have never been determined yet. Turkey is still at a crossroads. This fact will be examined in exploring the literature about modern Turkey.

## Literature on Modern Turkey

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire decided to enter the war on the side of the central powers. The Ottoman Empire could have stayed neutral in that conflict; however, this choice proved to be fatal to the empire. It resulted not only in its defeat, but also the occupation of Turkey by the Allied troops. During the occupation, it was the nationalist movement under the leadership of General Mustafa Kemal Ataturk that launched the War of Independence. Ataturk mobilized the Turkish resistance to the invasion, and after three years of bitter struggle, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed in 1923, with Mustafa Kemal as its president and founder.<sup>39</sup>

With the object of transforming Turkey into a modern state, Ataturk had abolished the Caliphate, and set off a program of secular reforms that made Turkey the first Muslim country to disestablish Islam. The process of transformation is detailed in Bernard Lewis's work, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.<sup>40</sup> Lewis opened his work with the process of slow decline of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then he moved to the twentieth century and traced the roots of revolutionary change and the advent of the Kemalist principles.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 87, 88.

<sup>39</sup> Ataturk's image is very contradictory. While the majority of Turks believe that he is legendary and the man of the century, most Muslims view him as no more than an illegitimate son who became the enemy of Islam in Turkey.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Lewis believed that nationalism in the Turkey of the 1950s was based not just on the Westernizing revolution of 1920, but also on nationalist sentiments, which had been developing since the French Revolution. Among the ideas of the French Revolution that were attractive enough to borrow, imitate, and adopt were individual freedom and nationalism. According to the author, the evolution of the corporate senses of identity and loyalty among Turkish people culminated in their divorce from their tradition and their attempt to establish a national society and to follow the path of Western civilization. Lewis had a word of explanation:

The basic change in Turkey, from Islamic Empire to a national Turkish state, from a medieval theocracy to a constitutional republic, from a bureaucratic feudalism to a modern capitalist economy was accomplished over a long period, by successive waves of reforms and radicals.<sup>41</sup>

Lewis was very optimistic regarding the Turkish experience of Westernization. He praised the experiment and compared it with the great European revolutions in England, France, and Russia. Much had changed in Turkey during the rule of Ataturk, and few Turks had a good word to say about the Kemalist principles. Ataturk had overthrown the Koranic rules and thought that his action was the endorsement of modernity. However, Turkey is still a Third World country. It is still more like most of its neighbors to the south or east. These facts are not accepted by Lewis. His work indicates that Ataturk was a hero able to drag Turkey from the eighteenth century to the 1920s. One wonders whether Lewis has modified his views in the light of the recent tragic happenings in Turkey.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 481.

The crux of Turkish events from independence until the early 1990s is detailed in Feroz Ahmed's work, *The Making of Modern Turkey*.<sup>42</sup> Ahmed argued that Turkey did not rise as a phoenix out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. It was made in the image of the Turkish elite that responded to both internal and external inspirations. Ahmed agreed with Lewis regarding the process of change and the role of the legendary Ataturk in this transformation. As Ahmed pointed out, Turkey was transformed from a traditional Islamic state to a modern secular one based on Ataturk's image. Ahmed believes that the process of making Turkey is still going on after more than seven decades.

Turkey gave priority to her relations with the West; however, the Western response was cool and sometimes humiliating. Turkey is still denied membership in the European Union. Therefore, Turkey might change its direction and knock at the doors of the East. As Ahmed concluded, the history of modern Turkey shows that the Turks have the ability to deal with changing situations in the world order.

While Ahmed admits the bitter fact that Turkey is still at a crossroads in terms of its identity and its relation with the West, Ahmed did not offer any explanation for this crisis. Turkey, for years and years, has been struggling to gain legitimacy in Western eyes. The Turkish secular elite defines Turkey as a Western society; however, the Western elite refuses to accept Turkey as such. Turkey is being considered as a client of, but never as a partner

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<sup>42</sup> Feroz Ahmed, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

to, the West.

Writing from this perspective, Brace R. Kuniholm in his article "Turkey and the West," declared that Turkey's relationship with the West is determined by Western security concerns rather than by mutual interests.<sup>43</sup> According Kuniholm, during the Cold War era, Turkey was viewed as a bulwark against Soviet ambitions in the Middle East. Thus, Turkey became an active member in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Though the Soviet threat ended with the Cold War, Turkey's strategic importance was never eliminated. As the author pointed out, during the Gulf War, Turkey played a pivotal role in the anti-Iraq coalition. However, the West paid lip service for that favor and Turkey's membership in the European Union was rejected. Kuniholm warned that if Turkey's struggle to join the West continues to fail, the consequences would be a reversal in the Westernization process and a revival of Islamic religion. Kuniholm explained the rise of Islamic movement in Turkey by the failure of the West to provide incentives to Turkey. In fact, this is a misleading and superficial explanation for Islamic revival in Turkey. While Turkey's closeness to the West was a product of the Cold War, communism's collapse and the relaxing of the political climate opened the way for the Turkish masses to freely express their fears and expectations. As they were no longer concerned about communism, they became more worried by the spread of libertarian values and Western morality or immorality, and they seek a moral framework that Islam can provide. The debate over this issue started in the early 1950s with the country's transformation towards a multi-party system. Among the works on this topic

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<sup>43</sup> Brace R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70 (Spring 1991).

is "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites," written by the Turkish sociologist Nilufer Gole.<sup>44</sup> Gole, a Turkish scholar with deep knowledge of his country, reviewed the arguments of both parties: the secularists and the Islamists. As Gole mentioned, the secularists believe in a secondary role of religion in the society. They consider the separation of the state and the mosque as a requirement for modernization, democracy and other Western values. The Islamists, on the other hand, believe in a fundamental role of religion in the society, so they struggle to move religion from the periphery of the system to the center. They criticize and fight against the corrupting influence of Western immorality. Gole called attention to the battle lines of this dispute. These include lifestyle, world-views, gender relations, and other normative values. According to Gole, the Islamists have been successful in many political and social areas. The veiling of women is just one example in this context. Veiling symbolizes Islamization as a way of life. It also signifies the political participation and the active voluntary re-appropriation of an Islamic identity by the Turkish women.

#### Literature on Sudan

The most fundamental fact about Sudan is its ethnic and cultural diversity. Throughout history, the country's plight had been its failure to accommodate this diversity. In the past, regional and foreign powers (mainly Britain and Egypt) had successfully played the card of diversity to achieve their own interests. Unfortunately, the modern history of

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<sup>44</sup> Nilufer Gole, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: The Making of Elites and Counter Elites," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 1997).

Sudan since independence in 1956 demonstrates that Sudan's successive regimes (both military and civilian) have been unable to accommodate the diverseness of their people with the same inclusivity. The outcome of such a situation is not only a legacy of total distrust among the Sudanese people but also a continuous brutal civil conflict with devastating consequences.

In a joint work by P. M. Holt and M. W. Daly, the authors emphasized that two main factors predominate in the modern history of Sudan.<sup>45</sup> The first factor is the Arab- Islamic influence that started with the early contacts between the Muslim Arabs based in Egypt and the pagan and Christian Sudanese. While these contacts had begun hundreds of years ago, their effects on Sudan are still visible. Though the crisis of identity in Sudan is one side of this influence, Sudan's engagement with the Arabic world and Egypt's hegemony over Sudan is another side. In fact, from the beginning of recorded history until this moment, Egypt has been the most important regional power in Sudan's affairs.<sup>46</sup>

The second factor that has had deep influence on Sudan is the British legacy. British policy aimed at the separation of the south from the north by economic and cultural methods.

Holt and Daly observed:

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<sup>45</sup> P. M. Holt and M. W. Daly, *A History of the Sudan: From the Coming of Islam to the Present Day* (London and New York, Longman, 1988).

<sup>46</sup> The Egyptian influence on Sudan has not been terminated by the country's independence. Egypt still views Sudan's affairs as part of its internal affairs. It is difficult for a Sudanese regime to gain regional and international legitimacy without Egyptian support.



Religious policy in the south differed markedly from that pursued in the Muslim north. Obsessed with the dangers posed to the internal security by fanatic Islam, Wingate and his subordinates sought to exclude Muslim influence altogether from southern provinces. Christian missionary organizations were allotted spheres for proselytization in the South. Education, in English language, was entrusted to them. Efforts were made to discourage the learning and use of Arabic and even wearing of Arabic dress.<sup>47</sup>

This viewpoint was shared by Richard Gray in his work, *The History of the Southern Sudan: 1839-1889*, where he examined the motives of British policy.<sup>48</sup> According to the author, Christianity and commerce were the primary motives for European missionaries, explorers and traders. Thus, these were the real objectives, not the so-called "white man's burden" meant to bring European civilization to the isolated pagan tribes all over the world, including southern Sudan. As commerce was not conducted on an equal basis, exploitation and robbery of southern Sudan was achieved by prolonged oppression and ruthless subjugation. The result of this policy left a legacy of bitter hatred towards those intruders.

The policy of divide and rule was used by the British Colonial Office. However, in southern Sudan, this policy was destructive. The British were masters in stimulating existing rivalries between the Arabs and Africans. Gray provides a vivid picture of this policy:

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Gray, *The History of the Southern Sudan: 1839-1889* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

Adoption to the outside world, took place through a forced mingling of blood and a harsh turbulent disruption. The clash between pagan southern and Arab northern has dominated the subsequent history of the area, but it was decision and actions of European traders which inaugurated and intensified the conflict.<sup>49</sup>

The earlier authors emphasized the role of the British policies of fostering divisions within Sudanese societies. However, the authors did not explain the ethnic, internal warfare that plagued Sudan long before the advent of European conquest. In fact, slavery is one of the fundamental issues that poisoned the relationship between the Arabs and the Africans. There is no doubt that the legacy of the slave trade continues to haunt modern Sudan.

If British colonization fostered the hostility between the northern and southern people of Sudan, one might consider the post-independence period and raise such questions: As both the Arabs and Africans of Sudan joined together in the struggle against colonization, why could not the post-independence period bring an end to this antagonism? Why could not the Sudanese people forge a sense of national identity and unity and achieve peaceful co-existence in modern Sudan? What is the missing link that the Sudanese lack to act as a unifying force?

One way to address the previous questions is to review some of the literature that covers this period. Furthermore, it is necessary to present the southern view. Francis M. Deng, a prominent southern intellectual who has served as Sudan's minister of state of foreign affairs, provided a penetrating analysis for the crisis that has shattered his country. In his brilliant work, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in Sudan*, Deng argues that the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 46.

policies of Sudan's successive governments are the core of the conflict.<sup>50</sup> According to the author, after independence, the northern government carried out ruthless and suppressive policies that reinforced the historical animosities and made the northern and southern peoples view each other as foreigners if not enemies. Deng wrote:

The relationship between the north and the south . . . has essentially been one of the internal colonialism, in which northern culture and religion were forcibly imposed on the southerners. Southerners did not regard any government in Khartoum as having legitimacy over them. In their views, northern rule was a transfer of colonial control from the British to south's traditional enemies in the north.<sup>51</sup>

Deng contends that the sharp contrast and mistrust between the north and the south was deepened by the failure of both military and civilian governments to respond to the aspirations of the southerners. Deng goes further and points out that even the Addis Ababa Agreement that ended the war in 1972 for ten years was not initially intended by Numeiri to achieve an everlasting peace. The accord, as political events later proved, was a tactical move by Numeiri, a desperate dictator in search of a political base of representative power.<sup>52</sup>

In fact, one cannot share this judgment with Deng on the grounds that after the agreement, Sudan enjoyed stability for the first time after independence. The 1970s was a decade of hope due to the promise of stability and development in the whole of Sudan. The

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<sup>50</sup> Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

reconciliation proved that no military solution is possible to the problem of the south. Moreover, Numei began to move regionally and internationally as an advocate for peaceful settlements of disputes.<sup>53</sup>

With the renewal of the war and its tragic impacts on both the north and the south, it is pertinent to present the view of the leader of the south, John Garang, the founder of SPLM and the commander in chief of Sudan's People Liberation Army (SPLA).

In *The Call for Democracy in Sudan*, which is a collection of letters, speeches, and news conferences by the leader of (SPLM/A), Garang explained the motives for the establishment of the movement, its genesis and objectives, and the ways and means of accomplishing these objectives.<sup>54</sup> According to Garang:

The ills of Sudan can be solved within the context of a united Sudan under a socialist system that affords democratic and human rights to all nationalities and guarantees freedom to all religious beliefs and outlooks. A united and socialist Sudan can be achieved only through protracted revolutionary armed struggle.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast to what most of the northern Sudanese think about the movement, Garang

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<sup>53</sup> Being successful in reconciling the conflict in his country, Numei moved regionally and played a vital role in ending the civil war in Chad. Numei acted under the auspices of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) as peaceful settlements of disputes is among its objectives. Moreover, Numei tried to end the civil war in Lebanon. Finally, Numei was among the very few Arab leaders who maintained strong relations with Egypt after it signed a peace agreement with Israel.

<sup>54</sup> John Garang, *The Call for Democracy in Sudan*, edited and introduced by Mansour Khalid (London: Kegan Paul International, 1992).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

made it apparent that his movement is nationalist rather than regionalist. His movement is committed to liberate or advance the interest of the whole Sudan, not those of the south in any narrow sense. It is also a unionist not secessionist organization as it's committed to the establishment of a "new united and integrated Sudan."

As these objectives can neither be asked from nor negotiated with the military regime in Khartoum, Garang made it very clear that violent, not peaceful, struggle is the only way to achieve the SPLM's objectives of freedom for the country as a whole.

In this context, one cannot fathom the reasons beyond Garang's optimism to achieve peace by armed struggle. The longest African civil war has proved to be unwinnable. However, both Garang and the Khartoum regime continue to believe in a military solution. This ensures that the Sudanese people in the south as well as in the north will have permanent sorrows and suffering and continue to pay the price for the madness of their leaders.

In this war, the chief losers are the people of the south, where all the fighting takes place. Part of the tragedy of the southern Sudanese people is told by J. Millard and Robert O. Collin. In their work, *Requiem for Sudan: War, Drought, and Disaster Relief on the Nile*, one can read a sad tale of brutality and despair about a tragedy that is still unfolding.<sup>56</sup> The authors shared most scholars' views about the impact of the misguided policies of Sudanese leaders. Their policies, far from alleviating population tragedy, have actually intensified the problem.

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<sup>56</sup> J. Millard and Robert O. Collin, *Requiem for Sudan: War, Drought, and Disaster Relief on the Nile* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

The authors provided a deep analysis of the impact of politics (local, domestic, regional, and international) on relief operations. Using food as a weapon of war, water as means of coercion, and the army as an instrument of revenge created a new situation for the southern Sudanese people. Caught between the atrocities of the SPLA and the brutalities of Sudanese government, they fled to neighboring countries as sanctuaries from war, drought, hunger, and disease. By the end of 1989, nearly two million displaced persons were registered in refugee camps.

While both belligerent sides used food as a weapon, and both are now being blamed for the starvation and suffering of their own people, the lion's share of the blame must rest on the Sudanese government. As the international community was outraged by these events, finally it intervened and exerted pressures on the belligerent parties to accept a ceasefire to enable the relief agencies to do their job. Their pressures resulted in the declarations of Operations Lifeline Sudan (OLS), a crucial program designed to alleviate the suffering of millions of southern Sudanese people. With the return of the military in 1989, the relief efforts were blocked and the war escalated. The southern people remain the major victims of these developments.

The situation in Sudan is best represented by the words of the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, "They are in that condition called war, an such a war, as if every man, against every man."<sup>57</sup> In fact both belligerent parties have done little to contradict such

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<sup>57</sup> As later events proved, the military takeover in 1989 marked a new turning point in the modern history of Sudan. The last eleven years for the Sudanese people were a decade of despair.

words.

Since the subject of this study deals specifically with the current crisis in Sudan, it becomes imperative that a closer look should be focused on the literature that covers the recent developments in Sudan with the return of the military in 1989. Thus, a number of works that examine the current trends in Sudan with its new military-Islamic regime will be selected to highlight Sudan's contemporary politics.

Abdel Wahab El. Affendi, in his work *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan*,<sup>58</sup> delineates with great clarity and broad scope the process whereby the leaders of the Islamic project, initially the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>59</sup> and later the National Islamic Front (NIF), made a concrete attempt to elaborate the moral, economic, and political foundations of coherent national governance.

While the NIF underwent nearly three decades of preparation in order to thoroughly inscribe itself as a logical outcome to and emancipation from post-independence politics, which was characterized by authoritarian rule, its current rule has proved to reflect the disarray of the past with little difference. Hassan Turabi,<sup>60</sup> the coordinator of the revolution,

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<sup>58</sup> Abdel Wahab El. Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 by Hassan Al-Banna, an Egyptian schoolteacher. His movement, which started as a small group in Egypt, snowballed quickly to become a major political and social force not only in Egypt but also throughout the Arab world.

<sup>60</sup> Hassan Turabi is the mastermind of Sudan's current regime. He has a MA from London and a doctorate from the Sorbonne. He is classified as a coordinator of differences. For more information about Turabi's profile, see for instance Judith Miller, "Faces of Fundamentalism: Hassan Turabi and Mohammed Fadallah," *Foreign Affairs*,

works at the level of philosophy and so was unable through his splendid formulations to bridge the gap between high theory and the mundane practice. El. Affendi wrote:

The claims that Islam is powerful motivating force which can revolutionize society and hasten economic development had been constantly made since 1960's, argued at great length, but the political programs of the movement did not translate these ideas into practical program to end Sudan's economic dependency.<sup>61</sup>

El. Affendi observed that the NIF programs and policies have incorporated Sudan's dependency and underdevelopment. Far from alleviating Sudan's misery, these policies have profoundly intensified the agony of Sudan.

Although El. Afendi's history goes from the early Islamic reform movements in the Arab world in general and Sudan in particular, he considers the current movement in Sudan as one person's revolution. The critical question in this regard becomes to what extent was it Turabi's revolution. There is no doubt that Turabi is an instrumental figure and played a significant role in the revolution. However, one can argue that the modern Islamic movement in Sudan, though it has unique characteristics, still shares a lot with the other Islamic movements in the Arab and Islamic world. Part of the justification for the rise of the Islamic movement is the ineffectiveness of established secular leadership in Muslim societies. In other words, the justification relates to the fact that those charged with

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vol. 73, no. 6 (November/December 1994).

<sup>61</sup> El. Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan*, 180.



responsibility were not fulfilling it. The most important questions in this regard would be how different was Sudan's Islamic project, and what, if any, are the accomplishments of such a project.

In order to answer such questions, we must analyze both the internal and external responses to Sudan's new regime. After 12 years of the Islamic experiment, the pressures on and frustrations with the regime come from all sides. There were international pressures from the Western powers and the United States specifically, from the United Nations, and from major human rights organizations. There were regional pressures and criticism from Sudan's neighbors, including Egypt, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia. Finally, there were internal pressures from the Sudanese people, as they were fed up with the Islamists enjoying economic and political privileges while the rest of the Sudanese people live in a grinding poverty.

In fact, things have not gone very well with Sudan's regime from the very beginning. A review of the regime's first year was made by Sadia Jamal.<sup>62</sup> As Jamal observed, the civilian government was overthrown on the grounds that it had neglected the armed forces, failed to combat the deteriorating economic situation, corruption, and Sudan's increasing isolation from its Arab and African neighbors. As Jamal argued, the military takeover was hailed by both Arab and African countries; however, this initial welcome changed to almost universal hatred due to the regime's unwise policies. After one year in power, Sudan was expelled from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Civil war in the south worsened,

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<sup>62</sup> Sadia Jamal, "Under Bashir's Boot," *New African*, July 1990.

relations with Sudan's neighbors—especially Egypt—deteriorated, and the Sudanese people were silenced and intimidated.

The following years were even worse for the Sudanese people. As the proverb says, "There is no smoke without fire." Sudan's tragedy is not without reasons. Having acquired a reputation for hostility toward the West in general, and the United States in particular, Sudan's regime now finds itself bereft of friends in the developed world. In the Arab world, Sudan's support of Iraq throughout the Gulf crisis has left it with few friends other than Iraq and Libya. Increasingly, close ties with Iran have done little to contradict the fact that Sudan with such friends does not need enemies.

Julie Flint commented on the misguided policies of Sudanese government as being un-Sudanese.<sup>63</sup> Since Al-Bashir has been in power, the government has stifled the majority of the Sudanese people by death, torture, exile, and imprisonment.

As the regime has failed to create a popular base on democratic or human grounds, it decided to rule through force and intimidation. These methods are unprecedented in Sudan. However, Sudanese people continue to voice their grievances with the regime even in this climate of fear. They speak angrily about the corruption of the regime. A member of the National Assembly complained publicly:

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<sup>63</sup> Julie Flint, "Under Islamic Siege," *Africa Report* (September/October 1993).

There are many in this government who understand Islam in a shocking and horrible and ugly and twisted way. Under the Islamic umbrella, some have too free a hand to creep all over the place. They think that they can do anything because they have beards. But being a devout Muslim does not depend on pieces of hair hanging from your face. They are doing Islam and Sudan a great disservice – and putting people who believe Islam can be human in a very difficult situation.<sup>64</sup>

This statement demonstrates how little support Sudan's regime enjoys. If such a statement was made by an ordinary Sudanese citizen, the Sudanese government could reply by stating that he is a collaborator, but he is a member of Sudan's Parliament. On the other hand, in such crisis of legitimacy, one might expect that such a regime will probably not last for a long time; however, after more than 12 years in power, it seems that the Sudanese people are suppressed and intimidated. Moreover, there appears to be little chance of change for the foreseeable future and the silenced majority in Sudan knows this fact.

A review of the literature about Turkey seems to show that most scholars share one specific view, and that is the view that Turkey's opening to the East follows the refusal of Europe to open to it. However, these scholars were unable to provide a profound explanation of why Europe closes its gates to Turkey and yet builds a strong military relationship with it. The argument that Turkey is an Islamic country and Europe wants to keep itself as a Christian club is not adequate. In fact, the issue is more complex than that and there must be other factors that have made Turkey appear not worthy to sit at the European Union (EU) table.

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<sup>64</sup> Julie Flint, "In the Name of Islam," *Africa Report* (May/June 1995).

It is also observed that the existing literature misreads the Islamic revival in Turkey.

Most scholars argue that the reason for Islamic resurgence is the failure of integration with Europe. To explain the Islamic revival in this way can be deceptive. It implies that Islam has somehow disappeared or has been absent from Turkey. In fact, the Westernization process and its poor achievements raised questions about the direction and accomplishments of development, but religious sentiments were always strong among the Turkish people. It was the political climate during the Cold War era that prevented the Turkish people from voicing their aspirations and dissatisfaction with the perceived immorality of the West.

Finally, works on Turkey's relations with the outside world are insufficient. Where they exist, Europe and the United States are the major areas under study.

A review of the above-mentioned body of literature on Sudan demonstrates that Sudan's misfortune is oversimplified when it is explained by the incompatibility between the Arab Muslim north and the African non-Muslim south. In fact, not all the Sudanese in the north are Arab Muslims in harmony with the regime and its policies. Moreover, there are northern Muslims who support southern demands. They joined the southerners with their struggle for freedom and justice and opposed the promulgation of Islamic law. By the same token, there are many southern people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who disagree with the policies and activities of the SPLM. As a very large country with complex ethnic combinations, it is torn not only by the dichotomy of south and north. In fact, in both regions, there is tension between the haves and the have-nots, religious versus secular, traditional against modern, military versus civilian, and finally majority against minority. All these cleavages have torn and complicated the crisis in Sudan.

Moreover, this literature blames the Islamic experiment for all the ills of Sudan. His explanation contradicts the fact that all the political systems that the Sudanese people have tried since independence have failed. They have tried everything: Socialism, Marxism, Islam, democracy, and military dictatorship. So far, none of these systems has worked in Sudan.

Finally, it is also observed that no attempt was made to examine the role of foreign powers in the war in the south. Regional and international actors have played the card of southern Sudan to advance their own interests. They escalated the war and blocked all attempts of reconciliation.

This study attempted to cover all the aspects of this subject. It was an attempt to share with the scholars of contemporary Sudan and Turkey this author's views of the countries' past and present problems, and air some thoughts with regard to their future.

### **Significance of the Study**

As shown above, several studies have examined the politics of Sudan and Turkey, but hardly any of them have compared those two countries with their contrasting experiment of secularization and Islamization. Moreover, most of the previous studies on Sudan's Islamic experiment and Turkey's efforts of secularization were primarily subject to the authors' ideological position in evaluating each experiment. It is this author's belief that, whatever the consequences of each attempt, the native people of Turkey and Sudan should be the core of judgment.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that Sudan and Turkey need to re-examine and reform themselves so as to alleviate the agonies of their people and minimize the impact of the anti-position and policies of the foreign powers. Most especially, it is concerned with the inability of both countries to accommodate their own people and the outside world. It is very painful, disturbing, and disappointing that Turkey with its rich historical record as the standard-bearer of Islam, strives to join the European club when the cost is its faith and dignity. It is also painful that the Islamic experiment in Sudan has resulted in a catastrophe for the country. How could both countries reconcile their internal differences and avoid the dangers of war, disintegration, and antagonism with the external world? If there is no political will to work for these objectives, more decades of sorrow may follow. Hopefully, this study brings to light policies, events, and activities that have not been fully studied, but are essential to understand what went wrong in Turkey and Sudan. Therefore, the present study makes some substantive, intellectual contribution toward this goal by seeking to scrutinize the crisis in both countries and possibly come up with some prescriptions for the policymakers of both countries. Any useful ideas generated in this study might help change the course of events and offer an opportunity of peace, freedom, and stability for all.

Finally, this study adds to the existing literature on the crisis of the Islamic world in general, and in Sudan and Turkey, in particular. It also adds to the ongoing debate on the rise of the Islamic movements and its impact on the West.

## Organization of the Study

This study is organized in seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the study. It presents the statement of the problem, the methodology and data collection, the literature review, and the significance of the study. It is in this introductory chapter that the general guidelines, assumptions, definitions, research concerns, and hypothesis of this study are established. Chapter Two seeks to provide a historical background of both Turkey and Sudan. It starts with the Ottoman Empire, its rise and fall, and its cooperation and confrontation with the European powers. Also, this chapter discusses Sudan's contacts with the outside world. It starts with the Arabic and Islamic conquest and ends with the British colonization and its deadly legacy. If history is a guide, this chapter is crucial to an understanding of the current crises in Turkey and Sudan highlighted in the following chapters. Chapter Three presents Muslims' different responses to secularism, and is followed by a comparison outlining the arguments of all sides on many significant themes. Chapter Four examines and discusses both countries' experiments of secularization and its counterpart Islamization. The Kemalist principles, the rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey, Sudan's experiment with both ideologies, and the people's reaction to such ideologies in both countries are detailed. Chapter Five presents Muslims' reaction to nationalism. The development of Turkish and Arab nationalisms is also analyzed in this chapter. Chapter Six is devoted to the crisis of national identity in both countries. Priority is placed on the struggle of the Kurds and the southern people of Sudan against the governments of Ankara and Khartoum. The reasons of the conflict, the role of the foreign

powers, the impact of the conflict, and the prospects of reconciliation are among the major components of this chapter. Chapter Seven, which is the final chapter, summarizes the research findings and gives the final conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### Turkey

##### The Ottoman Empire

History indicates that the founders of the Ottoman Empire were originally Turkish nomads who converted to Islam in the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> Like the Arab peoples in the seventh century in Arabia, the Ottomans were separate tribes settled in the region of Anatolia, with slight contacts with the outside world. However, after their conversion, they welded together and became a formidable force that has changed the course of events in world history.

As devout Muslims, the Ottomans began to fulfill their religious duties by extending the *Darul Islam* (the world of the faithful). The Ottomans were able to take advantage of the decay of the Byzantine Empire and the rise of social and religious discontent among its people. Internal strife in the Byzantine Empire had minimized resistance to the Ottoman troops. Clark comments:

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<sup>1</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey: Short History* (England: The Eothen Press, 1998), 20.

This misgovernment and oppression produced its natural results. The people of the provinces, especially those more remote from the capital, were inspired with a bitter hatred of the imperial government, which prepared them to welcome any foreign invader as a deliverer from the oppression under which they groaned.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, many Christian rulers in the outlying areas of the Byzantine Empire agreed to surrender their cities to the Ottomans and welcomed them as liberators. Moreover, some converted to Islam and later led the Ottoman armies to expand the rule of Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Islam served as a new bond among all those converts who professed it. As a religion, it stressed the community of believers over ethnic, cultural, or social differences. Islam accepted the Christian Greeks as brothers upon their conversion. However, this tolerant nature of Islam was not the only reason for conversion. Conversion had several benefits, such as access to trade and fewer taxes. It also was an opportunity to join a dominant social, economic, and political group, and thus to have access to power and wealth.<sup>4</sup>

In the span of one hundred years, the Ottomans created a state that took over the core of the Byzantine Empire. Inevitably, there must be an explanation for such rapid transformation within one hundred years of a tiny state into a great Islamic Empire. No explanation can be final, but there are several pertinent reasons. For one, as the European Christians fought among themselves, there was no unified power to challenge the appearance

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<sup>2</sup> Edwon L. Clark, *Turkey* (New York: Peter Feleon Collier, 1878), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Price, *A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic*, 36-37.

of the Ottomans in Europe. "The Bulgarians, Servians, Bosnians, and Greeks were madly jealous of one another; each of them preferred the extension of the Ottoman rule to that of their rivals."<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Christian leaders, during their conflicts, appealed to the Ottomans for aid against each other. This state of affairs was very favorable to the Ottomans. The best example of Christian assistance to the Ottoman conquests came from the Byzantines. John Cantacuzene, the Byzantine emperor, hired Ottoman troops to fight for him in 1343. He offered his young daughter to the Ottoman Sultan for the aid of six thousand troops and gave the Sultan a green light to expand at the expense of the Byzantine Empire in Europe. The Sultan accepted the offer and sent his troops to Europe.<sup>6</sup> It was the first time a Christian state had sought the assistance of the Islamic Empire, but as events will demonstrate it would not be the last.<sup>7</sup>

At that time, the Ottoman Sultans were a major source of power for the Ottoman Empire. They were devout Muslims, concerned for the welfare and safety of their Empire more than for privileges and pleasures. Furthermore, they were adroit politicians; they played their enemies off each other and married into Christian royal families for political

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<sup>4</sup> McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923*, 30.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Eversley and Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Turkish Empire* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1924), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance, Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 44.

gain. The early history of the Ottoman Empire is full of names of gifted leaders including Bayazid the Great Sultan, Selim the Just, Suleyman the Magnificent, or the Law Giver, and Mehmed the Conqueror. Such leaders give much support to the "great man" theory of history. There were also internal reasons for Ottoman success. The Ottoman Sultans created military and administrative systems that proved highly workable. There was a professional standing army to protect the borders of the state and keep order and security inside as well as to conquer Christian lands outside.<sup>8</sup> Also, there was a great naval force that dominated the Mediterranean in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> This military institution became one of the pillars of the Empire. "Throughout Ottoman history the army along with the Sultan's palace establishment, remained the largest, most elaborate, and most expensive part of the Empire's ruling institution."<sup>10</sup>

The Ottomans also created an organized administration that was free from corruption, oppression, and injustice. The efficiency and justice in this administration can be seen by its tolerance towards the non-Muslim religious communities and foreign subjects resident in the Empire. These groups were able to go about their business without interference by Ottoman authorities.<sup>11</sup> The Ottomans were most tolerant of all religions in striking contrast

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<sup>8</sup> Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 25.

<sup>9</sup> Price, *A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic*, 50.

<sup>10</sup> Dankwart Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic," *World Politics*, vol. II, issue 4 (July 1959): 514.

<sup>11</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 164.

to the bigotry and persecution that prevailed then among the East European Christians.<sup>64</sup><sup>12</sup>

In fact, according to Islamic teachings, religion, race, class, and color should not be barriers to tolerance in the Islamic society. It seems that only when the Muslims fell away from their religious teachings did they decline in tolerance.

In sum, the organized military and administrative machine, established in the early years of the Ottoman Empire, provided stability and prosperity to the Empire.

### The Decline of Ottoman Empire: Internal Problems and External Pressures

#### The Internal Problems

It is not an easy task to assign a specific date to the origin of the decline of a great empire. However, the date September 1683 could be used, as it was then that the Ottoman troops were forced to retreat from Vienna.<sup>13</sup> After that, the Ottomans suffered hard from continuous defeats at the hands of European powers until the Empire was dissolved after World War I.

In the beginning, the Ottomans saw the problems of their defeats and setbacks in purely military terms. They had lost their old military supremacy and they propounded military remedies. While the role of the military factor is essential in explaining the failure

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<sup>12</sup> Price, *A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic*, 48.

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *Turkey* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 33.

of the Ottomans to conquer Vienna and advance more deeply into Europe, it was not the sole factor. A variety of factors accounted for the defeat and decline of the Ottoman Empire.

At the internal level, the decline of the Empire started at the center of power. The Sultans, once a major source of the strength of the Empire, later laid the foundation of its downfall. The tradition of early days of great Sultans began to fade away, and indiscipline to grow. The Sultans lost their power to govern efficiently. They ceased to take the field with their troops, withdrew from public affairs, and devoted themselves to the pleasures of their harem.<sup>14</sup> From Sultan Selim (1566-1574), the Sot or the Drunk, to Sultan Abdulhamit I (1774-1789), the Incompetent, Sultans were, with few exceptions, weak, corrupt, incompetent, and in some cases mentally defective.<sup>15</sup> As the Turkish saying has it "The fish stinks from the head." Sultan Murad (1574-1595) set the example of corruption by selling offices to his own favorites:<sup>16</sup>

As a result of this evil practice of the sale of offices, the whole system of government, from top to bottom, was infected with bribery and corruption. The judges, equally with the officers, were corrupt, and gave their judgments to the highest bidder.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For a historical analysis of the role of woman in the decline of a once mighty empire, see the work of Leslie P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Davison, *Turkey: A Short History*, 62-64.

<sup>16</sup> Eversley, *The Turkish Empire*, 154.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

As justice was sold and bought, oppression, corruption, theft, and social unrest became standard fare in the Ottoman Empire. Under such conditions, it was inevitable that other institutions of the Empire would be influenced. The bureaucracy, once noted for its efficiency, became infused with nepotism, and the buying and selling of offices was a common practice.<sup>18</sup>

The Janissaries, once the backbone of the Ottoman army, became a threat to the state as they got involved in politics and became concerned only with their own privileges.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, a succession of weak Sultans was conducive to regional governors, especially in remote areas, gaining power at the expense of the central authority. In some cases, as in that of Muhammad Ali in Egypt, the regional governors became completely independent from Istanbul. This encouraged some subject nationalities in the Empire to struggle against their Ottoman rulers to establish their own nation states.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, these political problems were accompanied by economic hardships. In an empire that was geared to war,<sup>21</sup> continuous military defeats and consequently territorial losses, and little or no spoils, worsened the economic situation. They meant the loss of

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<sup>18</sup> William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 57.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 273-275. Also, Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 64.

<sup>21</sup> Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizon: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: A John Macreal, Owl Book, 1998), 65.

sources of wealth and power. This produced over-taxation, corruption, and theft.

The economic situation was further affected by the high inflation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>22</sup>

In sum, the institutions and traditions by which the glories of the past had been achieved later lost their prestige and efficiency, thus setting the stage for the collapse and disintegration of the Empire. Moreover, there was a reciprocal relationship between domestic defects and the loss of power in the foreign field as will be discussed in the following section of this study.

### **Intense External Pressures**

With the failure of the second siege of Vienna in 1683 (the first unsuccessful siege had been in 1529), Ottoman decline became irresistible. The defeat of the Ottoman army was celebrated all over Christian Europe as a great victory. Among the consequences of the victory, the European powers ceased to fear the Ottoman army, and further began to attack Ottoman territories.<sup>23</sup>

The European powers set out to acquire territories from the Ottoman Empire. In the span of 125 years (1683-1812), the Ottomans lost all their possessions on the north coast of

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<sup>22</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 47.

<sup>23</sup> John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 265-287.



the Black Sea including Bukovina, southern Ukraine, and the Crimea.<sup>24</sup>

In the meantime, a new danger appeared on the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire that was destined to have profound effects upon the fortunes of the Empire and to further its decline. It was the Russian Empire that started to expand southward into the Caucasus at the expense of the weak Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were aware of this danger, but their attempts to counter it were unavailing.<sup>25</sup>

From 1800 until its disintegration following World War I, the Ottoman Empire became increasingly dependent on the European great powers for protection against Russia. Russia considered the Ottoman Empire a "sick man" whose possessions could be divided among the European powers. In 1853, in an interview with the British ambassador to Russia, Sir Hamilton Seymour, the Russian czar Nicholas I told him:

We have in our hands a sick man, a very sick man, it will be. I tell you frankly, a great misfortune if one of these days he should slip away before all necessary arrangements were made.<sup>26</sup>

However, the Russian desire to cooperate with Great Britain to divide the legacy of the sick man was unavailing. Great Britain as well as other European powers regarded the integrity of the Ottoman Empire as an indispensable element of the European balance of

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (New York and London: Martin Press, MacMillan, 1966).

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2000 Years* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 119.

<sup>26</sup> William Miller, M.A., *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1927*

power.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the European powers were suspicious of Russia's advances in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. These suspicions continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the survival of the Ottoman Empire from 1800 to 1919 was due to the rivalries between the great powers and their failure to divide the legacy of the sick man rather than to the sick man's determination to survive.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, as a result of this relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers, the Ottomans were compelled to allow the European powers to intervene legally on behalf of Christian subjects according to the system of Capitulations.<sup>30</sup> These not only

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 203-204.

<sup>27</sup> Ference A. Voli, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1971), 9.

<sup>28</sup> The animosity between Russia on one side, and the Turks and the Western Europeans was to renew after the end of World War II. Turkey was viewed by the West as a bulwark against the expansion of the Soviet Union in the Middle East; thus it became a member of NATO.

<sup>29</sup> Marian Keut, ed., *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984).

<sup>30</sup> A Capitulation meant all subjects of a foreign power who happened to be residing within the Sultan domains remained under the laws of their own country. Thus, they enjoyed full exemption from Ottoman laws. These Capitulations became the cause of much evil and undermined the sovereignty of the Empire. See for instance Donald Quatuert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700 - 1922* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77 - 78.

increased European influence in internal Ottoman affairs, but also they gave the clearest indication of the weakness and decadence of the Empire.<sup>31</sup>

### The Attempts of Reform

Reform, modernization, Europeanization, and finally, Westernization are different concepts that describe the continuous attempts of the late Ottoman Empire, now Turkey, to copy the West. Reform or Westernization in the Ottoman Empire was a reaction to Western domination and imperialism. Because the source of strength of the Christian European powers was seen as their modern and professional armies, the Ottoman rulers tried to emulate their Christian enemies.<sup>32</sup> In other words, Christian armies had proved superior to Muslim armies in the field; therefore, there might be some advantage in adopting European techniques.<sup>33</sup>

The Ottomans were in desperate need to strengthen their army in order to end the military defeats that threatened the very existence of the Empire. It is not surprising, then, that military reforms started directly after the Ottoman's disastrous defeat at the hands of Russia in 1774, and the humiliating peace of Kutchak Kainardj that gave Russia the right to

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<sup>31</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 32.

<sup>32</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 43.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, *Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 49.

protect Orthodox Christians throughout the Empire.<sup>34</sup> There is no doubt that the agreement of Kutchak Kainardj marked the beginning of a series of abdications in favor of the European powers.

As mentioned earlier, the reform program in the military field started in 1774, under Sultan Abdulhamit I. This program was continued under the leadership of Sultan Selim II (1789-1807), in which he tried to create a new European-style army.<sup>35</sup> Military reforms continued under successive Sultans until they ceased with the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamit II in 1909.

The process of modernization that started in the military field in the eighteenth century, later progressively expanded into other spheres of life. After the military, the Ottomans tried to reform the system of government. The Ottomans responded to the external threat of European expansion by military reforms; by the same token, they responded to internal, social, and political pressures by reforming the political institutions and practices. In 1839, Sultan Abdulmecid I proclaimed the *Tanzimati Hayriye* (beneficent reforms), which ensured the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims before the law, the security of life and property, and several other legal reforms.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The fatal treaty of Kutchak Kainardj has always been recognized by historians and politicians as the starting point for further European intervention and dismemberments of the Turkish Empire. For more details of the conditions of the treaty, see for instance Eversley, *The Turkish Empire from 1288 to 1914*, 220-222.

<sup>35</sup> William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> Donald Everett Webster, *The Turkey of Ataturk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation* (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science,

Furthermore, in 1876, the Ottomans adopted a constitution establishing an assembly in which Muslims, Christians, and Jews were represented. Unfortunately, a year later, the constitution was suspended.<sup>37</sup> By that time, the atmosphere in the Empire was not tolerant towards Western ideas of constitutionalism and liberalism. The conservative elements in the Empire preferred anarchy and misrule to reform and liberation.

However, this atmosphere changed in the early part of the twentieth century. In 1908, the Young Turks, a younger generation of Turkish thinkers and statesmen, were not satisfied with the practices of those in power. They were primarily concerned with preserving the Empire. They feared that the Sultan's policies and practices, and European interventions were endangering its existence. Therefore, they demanded reform in the center of power, and a constitution, which meant a permanent check upon the power of the Sultan.<sup>38</sup>

Under such pressures, Sultan Abdulhamit II restored the constitution. In 1909, Abdulhamit was deposed and replaced by Sultan Mehmet V (1908-1918). During Mehmet V's rule, anarchy, internal strife and external pressures continued until the dissolution of the Empire in 1918.<sup>39</sup> It seems that the reform movement was too late to cure the sick man, who died after World War I. In other words, the Ottomans did not accomplish much in the way of reform and so they had to pay the price for their failure. As Toynbee put it, "Westernization

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1939), 21.

<sup>37</sup> McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks*, 302-306.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 46.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-29.

is an expensive process, and so a non-Western country like the Ottoman Empire could not afford it."<sup>40</sup>

### The Emergence of Modern Turkey

In 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War as one of the Central Powers, a decision that had fatal consequences for the Empire. By the end of the war, the Empire was defeated. Furthermore, large parts of the Empire were occupied by the Allies.<sup>41</sup>

The Turks were ready to face the loss of their provinces outside Turkey, but not to submit to foreign rule.<sup>42</sup> Patriotic and religious feelings among the Turks paved the way for the emergence of a great national hero who would emancipate their fatherland from foreign occupation. It was under such circumstances when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came on the scene and set about organizing national resistance in a War of Independence. After two years of resistance, Turkish troops under the leadership of Atatürk were able to drive the Greek invaders out of Turkey. Furthermore, the Allies were forced to recognize the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Turkey according to the Treaty of Lausanne<sup>43</sup> signed in July

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<sup>40</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee and Kenneth P. Kirkwood, *Turkey* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 50.

<sup>41</sup> Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1931), 253.

<sup>42</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 58.

<sup>43</sup> Bulent Golcay, *A Clash of Empires: Turkey Between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 161-163.

1923.<sup>44</sup> Then Ataturk, the founding father of modern Turkey set about his radical reforms and plans to transform Turkey into a secular Western state.

In October 1923, Turkey was proclaimed a republic with Ataturk as its first president. Ataturk continued his reforms, which culminated in the Kemalist principles: elimination of Islamic law, abolition of polygamy, political rights for woman, introduction of the Roman alphabet, etc.<sup>45</sup> More details about these principles and their impact on modern Turkey will be discussed in the following chapters.

The divorce between Islam and politics in Turkey became final with the adoption of the constitution of 1928. The clause "the religion of the Turkish state is Islam" was deleted from the constitution.<sup>46</sup> In doing so, Ataturk put an end to all hopes for the establishment of an Islamic state in Turkey.

At the external level, Ataturk adopted the principle "peace at home and peace abroad."<sup>47</sup> Thus, confrontation and rivalry with the European powers were replaced by cooperation and friendly relations. Turkey signed treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union, England, and the United States.<sup>48</sup> Turkey remained neutral in World War II, until it

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<sup>44</sup> Davidson, *Turkey: A Short History*, 386-387.

<sup>45</sup> Price, *A History of Turkey from Empire to Republic*, 126-130. Also Webster, *The Turkey of Ataturk*, 129-130.

<sup>46</sup> Davidson, *Turkey: A Short History*, 153.

<sup>47</sup> Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913-1923*, 313. Also, Bulent Gokay, *A Clash of Empires*, 101.

<sup>48</sup> Voli, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus*, 32-33.

joined the Allies in February 1945 and declared war on Germany and Japan.<sup>49</sup> Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952.<sup>50</sup>

Much had changed since Turkey adopted secularism, and few Turks had gained the fruits of this ideology. Political repression and economic depression had characterized the years of 1955-1960. In the early 1960s, the failure of the civilian government to address people's grievances pushed the army to intervene. In May 1960, the army carried out its first bloodless coup so as to maintain unity of the country and integrity of the Kemalist principles.<sup>51</sup> The army leaders lived up to their promises, and elections were held the following year. Then the civilian government was restored. In the following decades, anarchy, violence, internal divisions, and severe economic problems shook the legitimacy of the civilian governments and paved the way for the interventions of the army in 1971 and 1980.<sup>52</sup>

From 1980 to 2000 Turkey lived under conditions of varying degrees of instability. During these years, two major developments took place that threatened its secular experiment as well as its territorial integrity: 1) the rise of an Islamic movement opposed to secularism and to Turkey's links with the West; and 2) the Kurdish conflict which led to

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>50</sup> Yasemin Celik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 36.

<sup>51</sup> Omer Karaspana, "Turkey and U.S. Strategy in the Age of Glasnost," *Middle East Report*, vol. 19, no. 5 (September, October 1989): 8.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Kubicek, "Turkish European Relations: At A New Crossroads," *Middle East Policy*, vol. VI, no. 4 (June 1999), 160-161.



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guerrilla warfare between Kurdish fighters and the Turkish army. This conflict drew criticism from the European Union, which Turkey wishes to join.<sup>53</sup> In sum, Turkey, like many Third World countries, enters the twenty-first century with both internal problems and external pressures. The question is whether Turkey will be able to tackle all these challenges.

### **Sudan: The Heritage of the Past**

#### **The Early History**

While little is yet known about the ancient history of Sudan's southern region, northern Sudan has a wealthy and well-chronicled history going back to the third millennium B.C. The ancient history of northern Sudan can be traced to the Stone Age. The earliest inhabitants were hunters and gatherers scattered along the banks of the Nile River, with slight contacts with the outside world.<sup>54</sup> However, in the following centuries, the region was subject to Egyptian influence and occupation and it became an Egyptian province. It served Egypt as a rich source of goods obtained through both trade and plunder. These commodities included gold, ivory, and, most important, slaves. While slaves have been owned in black Africa throughout recorded history, the ancient Egyptians were the first in the Middle East who practiced slavery.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Celik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, 96.

<sup>54</sup> Shillington, *History of Africa*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> A detailed description of Sudan's relationship with Egypt at that time will be

With the decline of the pharaonic empire in Egypt, the indigenous people in Sudan were able to establish their first independent state known as Kush or Cush. Cush ruled Sudan for almost 1000 years. It expanded northward and controlled Egypt to the shores of the Mediterranean. It became a regional power, but it was not to last. In 350 A.D., it was destroyed by the king of Axum, who marched down from the Ethiopian highlands. The invasion resulted in the conversion of the majority of the population to Christianity.<sup>56</sup>

After the fall of Cush, two Christian kingdoms were established: Maqurra and Alwa. Maqurra was the most powerful. It ruled Sudan until the fourteenth century, when it was destroyed by Arab and Mamluk invasion from Egypt.<sup>57</sup> With the destruction of Maqurra, a new era in Sudanese-Egyptian relations began. From that time until independence in 1956, Egypt's political claims in Sudan were based on the historical fact of occupation.

### The Contacts with the Arabs and the Expansion of Islam

The connection between the two sides of the Red Sea had started from the earliest dawn of history. MacMichael's pioneering *History of the Arabs in the Sudan*<sup>58</sup> has been the

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found in the work of Robert O. Collins and Robert L. Tigner, *Egypt and the Sudan* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967).

<sup>56</sup> On the spread of Christianity in Sudan and North Africa, see for instance William V. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (New Jersey: Princeton Press, 1977), 433-438. Also, Shillington, *History of Africa*, 66-68.

<sup>57</sup> Collins, *Egypt and the Sudan*, 44-45.

<sup>58</sup> H. A. MacMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, vol. 1 (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1922).

baseline for the historical studies of Arab interaction with Sudan, and will be largely followed here. According to MacMichael, from ancient time, trade in spices, ivory, gold, and slaves flourished between Arabia and the ports of Egypt, Sudan, and East Africa.<sup>59</sup> MacMichael concluded that Arab immigration, whether in search of trade or pasture had led to the implanting of the definite Arab strain in the population of the northern Sudan.<sup>60</sup>

The Arabs did not try to penetrate into the interior of Sudan or Central Africa, or to settle in these regions. Therefore, they stayed on the coastal plain, where they established their centers of trade. In this context, one might question the Arabic reluctance or failure to advance deep into the black continent. In fact, there are two main reasons that explain this reluctance: first, the geographical obstacles. The Arabs were familiar with the desert, but not with the equatorial forest. This was dense and unhealthy, and so was avoided by the camel riders. Furthermore, this inaccessible interior was guarded by swamps, snakes, painful insects, and finally a hot and humid climate.<sup>61</sup>

Second was the mundane motive. Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs were only interested in trade and pasture. They were not inspired by an ideological motive such as spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, as their interests could be achieved on the coast, there was no need to push their way into the unsafe jungle. As it was not the responsibility of traders to capture their slaves or hunt for ivory, they relied on indigenous African chiefs

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>61</sup> Z. A. Marsh and G. W. Kingsnorth, *An Introduction to the History of East*

to supply them with the slaves and ivory they wanted. Thus, it was safer for them to conduct their business on the coast, where the desired commodities would be brought by the indigenous people.<sup>62</sup>

However, with the coming of Islam in the seventh century, things changed. The Arabs, now united by the bond of religion, were determined to expand the land of Islam. Muslim armies overran the lands to the east and the west. Egypt was conquered in 639 and then became the military base for Muslim campaigns westward and southward in Africa.<sup>63</sup>

Two years after the conquest of Egypt, the Arabs tried to occupy Sudan. Twenty thousand men were sent under the command of Abdulla Ibn Sa'ad to conquer Sudan. The Arab troops marched southward to Danqula, the capital of the Maqurra Christian state, but they suffered heavy casualties and so retreated.<sup>64</sup> However, as the spirit of conquest was very high among the Arab Muslims at that time, another attempt to conquer Sudan was made in 651. This time, Ibn Sa'ad's expedition was more successful. A peace treaty was signed between the Arabs and the ruler of Maqurra in which the latter agreed to pay tribute to Muslims:

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*Africa*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 49.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 8,29, 32. Also, the nature of slavery is treated in Shillington's work *History of Africa*, 174-178.

<sup>63</sup> MacMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, 155. Also, Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 156-157.

Each year you are to deliver 360 slaves which you will pay to the Immam of Muslims from the finest slaves of your country, in whom there is no defect, they are to be both male and female. Among them is to be no decrepit old man or woman or any child who has not reached puberty. You are to deliver them to the Wali of Aswan.<sup>65</sup>

While the treaty was in favor of the Arabs, it gave the state of Maqurra another 600 years of life, until it collapsed in the fifteenth century before Arab raiders and a Mamluk military expedition from Egypt. The Arabs, then a dominant group, began to migrate and settle southward, intermarrying with the Nubians and introducing to them both Islamic religion and Arabic culture.<sup>66</sup> However, it is evident that the power that won the victory for Islam was not Arab soldiers, but Arab merchants and particularly missionaries, "Arab holy men" who planted the seeds of Sufism in Sudan. The conversion of the Funj is the best example of the success of those missionaries.<sup>67</sup> What distinguished the work of those missionaries is the kind of Islam they introduced to Sudanese people. The missionaries emphasized the way of God through the mystical exercises of Sufism. J. Spencer Trimingham writes:

They initiated their followers into the Sufi path they themselves followed; but since Sufism at this time was at a very low ebb, for mysticism in Islam is not only its highest but also its most degraded form, it was materialized in the form of the cult of mysterious powers, now Islamized in the form of supernatural powers, therefore, personal allegiance and object

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<sup>65</sup> Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 451.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 550. Also, a useful analysis of the spread of Islam in north Sudan is provided by Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 242.

<sup>67</sup> Collins, *Egypt and the Sudan*, 46.

reverence for the Shaileh was the thing that mattered.<sup>68</sup>

Two religious schools of thought appeared in Sudan based on Sufi mystical ideas: the Khatmaih and the Mahdist brotherhoods. Those two major religious movements have dominated Sudan's political environment from their establishment in the nineteenth century until this moment. Regardless of their rivalries and open hostility, the overwhelming majority of Sudanese people belong to either the Khatmaih or Mahdist sects. More discussion of these movements will be presented in the following pages as well as in the subsequent chapters.

#### Egyptian - Ottoman Rule, and the Mahdist Revolution

In 1820, Muhammad Ali, viceroy of Egypt under the Ottoman Turks, sent an army under the command of his son, Ismail, to occupy Sudan. There were personal, political and economic reasons why Muhammad Ali invaded Sudan. His first motive was slaves that Sudan could provide recruits for his army. In a letter to his treasurer, Muhammad Ali wrote: "You are aware that the end of all our efforts and this expense is to procure Negroes. Please show zeal in carrying out our wishes in this capital matter."<sup>69</sup>

A second motive was the exploitation of the resources of Sudan, such as gold, mines,

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<sup>68</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1999), 195-196.

<sup>69</sup> Ronald Oliver and Anthony Amore, *Africa since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 32.

and ivory, for his schemes of modernization in Egypt. Third, there was the motive of<sup>82</sup> political expediency. In the early days of his rule over Egypt, Ali's most dangerous opponents had been the Mamluks; after their power in Egypt had been destroyed, they had taken refuge in Sudan where they started rebuilding their strength. Therefore, Ali decided to eliminate their remnants in Sudan. Finally were the conditions of Sudan itself: weak and vulnerable, but vast and rich. By adding Sudan to his authority, Ali would become a regional power.<sup>70</sup>

By 1825, Egypt claimed most of present Sudan. However, it was unable to establish effective control of southern Sudan. Thus, that region remained an area of fragmented tribes subject to frequent attacks by slave raiders.

While the conquest of Sudan was accomplished with little bloodshed, its administration was not. As Ali occupied the country to exploit its human and natural resources, he established a brutal administration that led to several uprisings including the murder of his son Ismail.<sup>71</sup> Describing part of the practices of the Egyptians in Sudan at that time, Richard Hill writes:

There was an unsettling novelty about the practices of the new masters of the north. The Egyptians interfered with everything, taxed everybody. By applying a new system of taxation the Egyptians disrupted the economic life of the people.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Richard Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan: 1820-1881* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 7.

<sup>71</sup> Amore, *Africa since 1800*, 32. Also, Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan*, 16.

In the subsequent decades, the unhappy people of Sudan continued to groan under the tyranny of Egypt. However, in the late years of the nineteenth century, two ominous developments altered the course of events in Sudan. First, under Western pressures, particularly from Great Britain, Egypt had to curtail slavery in Sudan. Ismail, the Khedive of Egypt, commissioned English officer General Charles George Gordon to lead a crusade against the slave trade and slavery.<sup>73</sup> Gordon arrived in Sudan in 1877. He was received enthusiastically by thousands of Sudanese people who looked upon him as their savior.<sup>74</sup>

The second development was the Madhist Revolution. In 1881, an Islamic preacher named Muhammed Ahmed Ibn Abdulla proclaimed himself the Mahdi, "the rightly guided person" who would fill the land with justice as it had been filled with injustice by the Egyptian's oppression and misgovernment.<sup>75</sup> Al-Mahdi was inspired by a vision of a truly Islamic society. He was deeply offended by what he considered the infidelity of the Ottoman and Egyptian rulers. Al-Mahdi's mission was to purify his country from the immorality of the Egyptians and to establish an Islamic state similar to the first Islamic state founded by

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<sup>72</sup> Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan*, 14.

<sup>73</sup> Bernard M. Allen, *Gordon and the Sudan* (London: MacMillian and Co. Ltd, 1931), 116.

<sup>74</sup> Percy F. Martin, F.R.G.S., *The Sudan in Evolution: A Study of the Economic Financial and Administrative Conditions of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (New York: Negro University Press, 1970), 20.

<sup>75</sup> John Obert Voll and Sarah Potts Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multi-Cultural State* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), 39.



the prophet.<sup>76</sup>

Al-Mahdi began to unify tribes in Western and Central Sudan. The Khatmiah as a religious movement opposed Al-Mahdi as its followers had an interest in maintaining Egyptian rule in Sudan. Khatmiah was not only a religious ally of the Egyptians, but also benefited from the growing commercialism. The Mahdists put Khatmiah traders out of business. Thus, Khatmiah adherents saw the Mahdists as a threat in both a spiritual and commercial sense.<sup>77</sup> The conflict between those two religious movements has not ended. Al-Mahdi's followers were able to address the grievances of many Sudanese people and convince them to join the movement. Moreover, some southerners cooperated with the Mahdi in order to expel the Turkish-Egyptian garrison and free themselves from foreign control and from predatory raids.<sup>78</sup>

In 1883, Mahdist forces armed, only with sticks and spears, destroyed a well-armed Egyptian force of 10,000 men. The enthusiasm of the Mahdist troops more than made up for their primitive weaponry. They were viewed as soldiers of God who could never be defeated. Their victory was hailed as a miracle. Many Sudanese people saw that victory as

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<sup>76</sup> Rudolf C. Slatin Pash, C.B., *Fire and Sword in the Sudan: A Personal Narrative of Fighting and Serving the Dervishes, 1879-1895*, Translated by Major F. R. Wingate (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 126-127.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989 The Unstable State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), 24

<sup>78</sup> Ann Mosley Lesch, *Sudan: Contested National Identities* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 28.

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a sign of divine approval. Consequently, they joined the banner of the Mahdist movement.<sup>79</sup> Al-Mahdi became the virtual ruler of Sudan. The next step was to capture Khartoum, the capital of the country. In 1884, Mahdist troops marched to the gates of Khartoum and besieged the city. In an effort to save the Egyptian forces in Khartoum, the British government sent General Gordon to Sudan.<sup>80</sup> Gordon tried hopelessly to negotiate with Al-Mahdi. His offer of peace and the recognition of Al-Mahdi as the King of Kordofan were rejected. The event added considerably to Al-Mahdi's power and prestige:

The Madhi was now honored almost as a god. The fear of his name spread like wildfire throughout every province and district in Sudan. He was now regarded as the true Mahdi, every Muslim believed in him and all doubt was put aside.<sup>81</sup>

In June 1885, the Mahdist troops captured Khartoum, and Gordon was killed in a horrible way. The fall of the city signaled the triumph of the Mahdist movement. Al-Mahdi died shortly thereafter, his state survived for another 13 years.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, members of his family continued to play a significant role in Sudan's politics in the years to come.

#### The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium 1898-1956

In 1882, England occupied Egypt to suppress a nationalist movement, the Arabi

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<sup>79</sup> Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multi-Cultural State*, 40-41.

<sup>80</sup> Allen, *Gordon and the Sudan*, 239.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>82</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 95.

revolt, which was hostile to foreign interests in Egypt. Among the consequences was the occupation of Sudan. After the occupation of Egypt, Britain sought control over Sudan to protect the sources of the Nile—without which Egypt would not survive—not from an African state but from rival European powers, particularly France.<sup>83</sup> When a French expedition in 1898 reached Fashoda in southern Sudan, General Kitchener, the General Governor of Sudan, set out for Fashoda, where he met the French commander Marchand and told him that “the presence of a French force in the valley of the Nile was regarded as a direct infringement of the rights of the Egyptian government and of Great Britain.”<sup>84</sup> Eventually, the French decided to leave. From that time until independence in 1956, Sudan remained under Anglo-Egyptian rule. In sum, British interests in Egypt led to the occupation of Sudan. In fact, Sudan has been called the key of Egypt, for whoever controls the sources of the Nile holds Egypt at his mercy.<sup>85</sup>

In 1898, an Anglo-Egyptian army under the command of General Kitchener was sent to occupy Sudan. Kitchener's army of about 25,000 men with steamboats, infantry, and other modern equipment met 60,000 men armed with spears, sticks, and a few guns outside the city of Omdurman. After a few hours, the battle was over. The Mahdist troops were

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<sup>83</sup> On the rivalry between Britain and France over Sudan, see for instance David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987).

<sup>84</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 117.

<sup>85</sup> Henry S. L. Alford and W. Dennistown Sword, *The Egyptian Sudan: Its Loss and Recovery* (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 40. It is not a coincidence that the Aswan dam, “The first dam on the Nile River,” was built in 1898 immediately

decisively defeated with heavy casualties. More than 11,000 Sudanese were dead and 16,000 wounded. On the Anglo-Egyptian side, 49 killed and 382 wounded.<sup>86</sup> Gordon was avenged, and it was a glorious day for the imperialists. Winston Churchill, who took part as a subaltern,<sup>87</sup> rejoicing in the victory, left this comment about the battle:

The infantry fired steadily and stolidly, without hurry or excitement, for the enemy were far away and the officers careful. . . . The rifles grew hot – so hot that they had to be changed for those of the reserve companies. And all the time out on the plain on the other side bullets were shearing through flesh, smashing and splintering bone, valiant men were struggling on through a hell of whistling metal, exploding shells, and spurting dust – suffering, despairing, dying.<sup>88</sup>

Churchill went further to emphasize the Western superiority in firearms, noting “Thus ended the battle of Omdurman – the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians.”<sup>89</sup>

Having occupied Sudan, the British had to administer it. The British were in a dilemma. In the first place, they were not ready to recognize Egypt’s claims in the country on the grounds that they were convinced that the Mahdist revolution was the outcome of sixty years of oppressive Egyptian rule in Sudan. At the same time, they could not annex

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following the conquest of Sudan. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 653.

<sup>86</sup> Sword, *The Egyptian Sudan*, 236-279. Also, Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 632 and Collins, *Egypt and Sudan*, 116-117.

<sup>87</sup> Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 632.

<sup>88</sup> Winston Churchill, *The River War: An Account of the Re-Conquest of the Soudan* (London: Prion, 1997), 195.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 218.

Sudan and administer it alone as this would violate Egypt's historical claims and its substantial military contributions in the war.<sup>90</sup> The solution to this dilemma was the "condominium," which in theory meant a joint sovereignty over Sudan. Thus, both the British and the Egyptian flags would be hoisted side by side. In fact, during the era of condominium, Sudan was controlled by British officials. They formulated policies and supplied most of the top administrators, especially the governor general, the highest authority in the territory.<sup>91</sup>

In Sudan, as in most British colonies in Africa, the British adopted the system of indirect rule through native chiefs and leaders. Since the ultimate aim of colonization was the exploitation of the resources of colonies rather than the improvement of the lives of the people, indirect rule or native administration proved to be workable. It was cheaper, efficient, less coercive, and more popular. Kitchener, the first governor-general of Sudan, had written of the necessity to gain the trust of the principal men and through these collaborators to control the whole population.<sup>92</sup>

Kitchener, the hero of Omdurman, was preoccupied by the centrality of religion in Sudan's political life, and this was influential in determining his policies toward Sudan and

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<sup>90</sup> M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1889-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13.

<sup>91</sup> A number of works have been written on the British policy of Africa in general. See for instance, Sir Andrew Cohen, *British Policy in Changing Africa* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1959). And also, George Padmore, *Africa: How Britain Rules Africa* (London: Wishart Books Ltd., 1936).

Islam in general. David Fromkin has given a vivid picture of Kitchener's understanding of Islam:

Kitchener, like most Britons who have lived in the East, believed that in the Muslim world, religion counts for everything. . . . They regarded Islam as a single entity: as an "it" as an organization. They believed that it obeyed its leaders. Kitchener and his colleagues believed that Islam could be bought, manipulated, or captured by buying, manipulating or capturing its religious leadership.<sup>93</sup>

There is no doubt that the conqueror of Sudan was haunted by the Mahdist movement that had brought down Egyptian rule in Sudan. It was a religious movement aiming at nothing less than establishing an Islamic state according to the principles of pure Islam. Kitchener wanted to capture Islam and its symbols to ensure that no such religious movement would challenge his rule in Sudan. Thus, it is not surprising that following Kitchener's victory at Omdurman, he razed the Mahdi's tomb and scattered his bones in the Nile River.<sup>94</sup>

Indirect rule proved to be efficient for the British, but not for the Sudanese people. More than preserving the traditional forms of political authority, it created and fostered tribalism and rivalry among the different ethnic and religious groups in Sudan.

Finally, the British introduced Western values and practices. They introduced

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<sup>92</sup> Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 360.

<sup>93</sup> David Fromkin, *A Peace To End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 96-97.

<sup>94</sup> See Mark Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet: The Struggle for Islam* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 145.

Western education, civilian administration, and replaced Islamic laws with secular ones.

Thus, the first secularization of Sudanese society occurred under the British aegis.<sup>95</sup>

### British Policy in the South

Much has been written about British policy in the south and its fatal legacy to the Sudanese people. Most scholars and historians pointed to the closed-door policy that the British implemented to separate the south from the north.

In the early years of the British rule, the British neglected the poor and remote south as it was "inconvenient and expensive death traps, a buffer zone between the Nile and Britain's African rivals."<sup>96</sup> Consequently, the British made little attempt to administer a region about whose history, societies, tradition, and most importantly language, they knew nothing at all.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, prolonged national resistance, poor communications, and shortages of funds and supplies hampered the British control of the south.<sup>98</sup>

However, with the end of World War I, the British formulated a new policy with the ultimate aim of separating the north from the south. The ostensible reason for this policy of isolation was to eliminate Islam and Arabic influences. According to the "Closed District Order" of 1925, the south was declared a closed district into which outsiders could go only

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<sup>95</sup> Louis J. Cantori and Arthur Lawrie, "Islam, Democracy, the State and the West," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1992): 50.

<sup>96</sup> Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 133.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

<sup>98</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 119.

with a special permit.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the British encouraged Christian missionaries to proselytize and greatly restricted Islamic missionaries. English was the official language in the south and efforts were made to discourage the learning and use of the Arabic language.<sup>100</sup> The closed-door policy was a divide and rule strategy similar to those adopted by the British imperialists in most of their colonies in Africa and the Middle East.

When the British left in 1956, they had sealed off the south from the north and created a wide gap if not a barrier between the two regions. In sum, British policy was problematic since it did not create and foster economic and political development in the south to obtain self-determination. By the same token, it did not create an effective base for south-north cooperation and integration. The scars of the British policy can be observed in Sudanese politics today.

### National Resistance and Independence

Given the historical association between Egypt and Sudan, Sudanese nationalist aspirations were largely influenced by the nationalist sentiments in Egypt. Nationalist aspirations in Egypt appeared in the early years of the twentieth century. Mustafa Kamil and Saad Zaghlul were the undisputed leaders of the nationalist movement in Egypt until the end of World War I. While the Egyptian nationalist movement was confined to the Western-

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<sup>99</sup> Lesch, *The Sudan*, 32. Also, Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 405.

<sup>100</sup> Daniel Boamah-Wiafe, "Physiographic and Cultural Diversities in Modern Africa: The Case of the Republic of Sudan," *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 13, no. 7 (September 1982): 93. See also, Shillington, *History of Africa*, 292-293.



educated elite and had a secular stamp, the Sudanese nationalist movement had to invoke the image of Islam so as to gain the support of the Sudanese people. The first nationalist movement in Sudan arose in 1921, when Ali Abd al Latif founded the United Tribes Society (UTS) to work for self-determination. Abd al Latif was arrested and released in 1924. After his release, Abd al-Latif founded the White Flag League (WFL), dedicated to driving out the British and establishing unity with Egypt. Demonstrations spread throughout Sudan and were brutally suppressed. All hopes of independence were shattered.<sup>101</sup>

In 1942, a group called the Graduates General Congress, made up of graduates of the Gordon College and the Secondary Schools, sent a request to the British government demanding self-determination. The request was rejected; however, national aspirations were strong enough that the British government could not ignore them.

Later, the nationalist movement split into two factions: the pro-Egyptian camp whose concern was to be free from British domination, so it advocated the unity of the Nile Valley; and a second group that advocated full independence as it considered Egypt as imperial a threat as Britain. This group received encouragement from the British authorities. In 1953, after Nasir's revolution, an Anglo-Egyptian agreement provided for Sudan to become self-governing and to have the choice to choose between unity with Egypt or to become independent. In 1956, the Sudanese parliament voted unanimously for independence.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Collins, *Egypt and the Sudan*, 91-126.

<sup>102</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 164. Also, Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 645.

Sudan became independent after 57 years of British rule, a period shorter by far than any previous period of imperial domination in Sudan's history. The post-independence period will be detailed in the upcoming chapters.

## CHAPTER 3

### ISLAM AND SECULARISM

While much has already been written and said about Islam and secularism, there is still no final answer to the question: "Is Islam secularizable?" The relationship between religion and politics and the role and place of religion in society have long been hotly debated subjects in the Islamic world among three schools of thought: the adaptationist reformers, the secularist Westernizers and the Islamic fundamentalists.

Unlike the West, where the issue of religion had been settled for a long time,<sup>1</sup> Islamic intellectuals have been attempting to resolve this problem since the early eighteenth century, so far to no avail. Therefore, the Islamic world, torn by the forces of these three schools of thought, faces a profound dilemma. The deep-seated antagonism among the adherents of these schools has made the Islamic world more divided today than it was three centuries ago.

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<sup>1</sup> The idea that religion and politics should be separated can be dated back to the beginning of Christianity, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, Matthew 22:21. In modern times, the West came to view religion as an enemy to science, and as an obstacle to modernization. Thus, secularism is a prerequisite for modernization and a modern state is necessarily a secular state. There is a wealth of literature on religion and development. For a full treatment see Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Political Development* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970). From another perspective, see Terrance G. Carroll, "Secularization and States of Modernity," *World Politics*, vol. 36, no 3 (April, 1984): 362 - 382.

Following is a brief discussion of the main outlines of the ideas of these different schools.

### The Adaptationist Reformers

The adaptationist reformers emphasize the need to create a balance between Islamic law and human realities. They want to reconcile the *Sharia* with Western culture. In other words, they try to combine the two—a task that is very hard, if not impossible, as both civilizations are contradictory in many fundamental ways.

The adaptationists argue that Islam is in harmony with reason, science, and development. Thus, Muslims can and should profit from Western experience and remain committed to their Islamic identity.

The earliest adaptationist thought in the Islamic world can be dated back to the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789 -1807).<sup>2</sup> Thence until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, successive Ottoman Sultans tried to emulate Europe, especially in the military field so as to preserve the Empire.

A leading figure in the development of the adaptationist school was Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1839-1897).<sup>3</sup> Al-Afghani was highly critical of Islamic scholars who divided

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson, *Turkey: A Short History*, 78.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Afghani is a controversial figure in Islamic history. Elie Kedourie in his work *Afghani and Abduh* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1966) questioned his motives and his piety. Kedourie suggests that Al-Afghani was a freemason, a homosexual, a troublemaker and a subverter of Islam. However, this doesn't negate the fact that Al-Afghani was a reformer with a lasting influence on the reformist movement.

scientific knowledge on religious lines into Muslim science and European science. Also, he asserted that there is no contradiction between science and Islamic faith. Furthermore, Al-Afghani put reason on at least an equal footing with divine aspiration. Finally, he argued that the holy Quran should be reinterpreted in a way that fit the contemporary conditions of Muslim society.<sup>4</sup>

The compatibility between Islam, reason, and modernity was central in the ideas of Muhammed Abduh, an Egyptian scholar and a follower of Afghani. In his work, he provided a reinterpretation of Islam, explaining how Islam could guide a modern society. He felt that the basic purpose of his life was:

To liberate thought from the shackles of taqlid, and understand religion as it was understood by the elders of the community before dissension; to return, in the acquisition of religious knowledge to its first sources, and to weigh them in the scales of human reason . . . and to prove that, seen in this light, religion must be accounted a friend of science.<sup>5</sup>

Also, Abduh drew a distinction between duties of God, *Ibadah* and social duties arising from interpersonal relations, *Mumalat*.<sup>6</sup> He went further in reconciling Islam and modernity and argued that each generation had the moral duty to interpret scripture for itself

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See also Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798 - 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 117-127. Also Keddi, 45-48.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 148.

and formulate new laws appropriate to its needs:

Quran and hadith laid down specific rules about worship; about relations with other men; they laid down for the most part only general principles, leaving it to men to apply them to all the circumstances of life<sup>7</sup>.

A key figure in the development of the reformist ideology is the writer and statesman Khayr al-Din Pasha from Tunisia.<sup>8</sup> Khayr al-Din's basic goal was to reform Islamic society in a way that enabled it to achieve progress yet maintain its Islamic identity. He believed that there is no reason to reject or ignore something that is correct or demonstrable simply because it comes from others.<sup>9</sup>

This line of thought, begun by Afghani and Abduh in the eighteenth century, was continued by other Islamic philosophers in the following centuries. Major reform leaders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries included Muhammad Rashid Rida in Syria,<sup>10</sup> Taha Hussayn of Egypt and finally Said Nursi of Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

The earlier intellectuals regarded Islam not as an absolute, constant system, but as a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>8</sup> For a brief but fine discussion of the ideas of Khayr al-Din Pasha, see Leon Carl Brown, *The Surest Path: The Political Treatise of A Nineteenth Century Muslim Statesman* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>10</sup> See Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arabic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> A useful article on the ideas of Said Nursi is written by M. Hakan Yavuz, "The Assassination of Collective Memory: The Case of Turkey," *The Muslim World*, vol. 89, no. 314 (July - October 1999).

dynamic and creative force compatible with science and development. They believed in reconciliation between faith and reason. They argued that religion should be flexible to cope with new challenges. Their goal was nothing less than a total reconstruction of Islamic society. In other words, they wanted to adapt Islamic rules and general principles to contemporary social, political, educational, and economic needs.

The adaptationists were criticized by both the Islamist conservatives and the radical Westernizers. The conservatives criticized the adaptationists for the compromises that were implicit in their adaptations. Furthermore, their adaptations did not influence the course of events and could not halt the decline of the Islamic world, and Europe's military and political interference. The radical Westernizers, on the other side, held the Islamists, both the adaptationists and the fundamentalists, responsible for the weakness and backwardness of the Islamic world. The radical Westernizers viewed Islam as an enemy of progress and development, thus it should be disestablished. In the end, the conditions of Muslims in the twentieth century paved the way for the development of two ideologies: the secularist Westernizers and the Islamic fundamentalists.

### **The Radical Westernizers: The Secularists**

While a clear call for a divorce between Islam and politics did not appear in the Islamic world until the beginning of the twentieth century, the earliest secular thought in the Islamic world dated back to the ninth century. Al-Kindy (801-866), the philosopher with whom the history of secular thought in the Islamic world begins wrote:

We should not be shamed to acknowledge truth from whatever source it comes to us, even if it is brought to us by former generations and foreign people. For whom who seeks the truth there is nothing of higher value than truth itself.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Razi, another classical Islamic philosopher, emphasized the role of reason to attain knowledge.<sup>13</sup> This line of thought was continued by other Islamic philosophers, especially Al-Farabi.<sup>14</sup> Like the earlier adaptationists, the early moderate secularists were attempting to incorporate Islamic law and modern science and technology. To some historians, these philosophers had planted the seeds of secularism in the Islamic thought, though it took hundreds of years for these seeds to grow and produce pure secular ideas. Another factor that contributed to the emergence of secularism in the Islamic world was the French Revolution. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, there was no clear call for complete separation between the mosque and the state. However, this began to change in the nineteenth century. Qasim Amin (1863-1908), an Egyptian scholar, was the first Muslim thinker to call for the secularization of society.<sup>15</sup> Amin developed the social dimension of the secularist movement by concentrating on the position of women in Islamic society. He vigorously advocated the emancipation of women and supported education for them. Amin

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<sup>12</sup> Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 76.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising that most of the Islamic scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were from Egypt. Egypt was a major religious and intellectual center in the Islamic world. The existence of Al-Azhar University there had largely contributed to this such role.



also criticized Islamic customs and practices such as veiling, segregation, arranged marriages and woman's lack of power over divorce. Amin went further in his secular ideas and called for abolishing polygamy.<sup>16</sup>

After Amin, the secularist movement took a new direction. This time it was inspired by the nationalist ideas.<sup>17</sup> Secularism flourished in the Islamic world in the writings of a generation of nationalist figures who were Christians such as Shibli Shumayyil, Farah Anton, Negib Azuri and Qustantin Zurayq.<sup>18</sup> These writers professed socialism and nationalism as new ideologies. Later, this line of thought was continued in the works of both Muslims and Christian nationalists such as Sati al-Husri, Ziya Gokalp, Taha Hussayn, and Michel Aflaq.<sup>19</sup> They were active writers and scholars, and often were involved in politics. They came to the conclusion that "society and religion both prospered best when the civil authority was separated from the religious, and when the former acted in accordance with the needs of human welfare in this world."<sup>20</sup>

To the earlier secularists, Islam, as a political force, had to be marginalized, if not

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<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of Amin's ideas, see for instance Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West, the Formative Years 1857-1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970). Also John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, eds. *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> Further discussion of the development of nationalism in the Islamic world will be presented in chapter five, which covers Islam and Nationalism.

<sup>18</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939*, 245-259.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 312-342.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 343.

eliminated in Islamic society. Religion was just a personal matter and must be separated from politics. The secularists believed that anything that stands in the way of modernity, including faith, must be brushed aside.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the fundamentalists, who relied on the golden past to justify their arguments, the secularists took refuge in the present world. Europe advanced, they argued, because of scientific knowledge and individual freedom. They looked at France and its revolution as a source of inspiration.<sup>22</sup>

The secularists hold the fundamentalists responsible for the mass ignorance that characterized the Islamic world from the fifteenth century onward. Islamists, who controlled education, resisted such innovations as the printing of books as being un-Islamic. A twentieth century historian provides an account of the reaction surrounding the introduction of printing in the Ottoman Empire:

At the first rumor of the proposed innovation alarmed throughout Constantinople. The many thousands of scribes, living by copying books, saw their profession in peril. The theologians found the project profane; the emotions of human intelligence, they alleged having always been handed down to posterity by writing, ought not to be subjected to any less carefully made transmission.<sup>23</sup>

Secularists view things in a way that is uninfluenced by Islamic values. They advocate equality between men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims. Secularists go to

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<sup>21</sup> Pipes, *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> Kirkwood, *Turkey*, 129

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Amin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press* (New York: Columbia University, 1914), 22.

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war or make peace for reasons of state and national interest not for religious motivations.<sup>24</sup> In sum, the secularists view religion as an enemy of humanity and development. They see a zero-sum relationship between Islam and secularism, and reject the idea of reconciliation between the two.

In the last one hundred years or so, secularism began to dig deep roots in the Islamic world. It was under the impact of both Muslim intellectuals inside and European influence outside that most Islamic countries adopted secular values, practices, and institutions. However, in the middle of the twentieth century, secularism began to decline and lose its prestige in the Islamic world. The reaction against the secularizing tendencies is expressed in the emergence of Islamic radical movement throughout the Islamic world.

### **The Islamic Fundamentalists<sup>25</sup>**

The fundamentalists' understanding of the nature of Islamic state and society has been particularly influenced by the writings and teachings of three major ideologists: Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928;<sup>26</sup> Al-Banna's contemporary Mawlana Abu Ala Mawdudi, (1903-1979), the founder of the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan; and finally Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966).

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Pipes, *In the Path of God*, 121.

<sup>25</sup> The terms "fundamentalists" and "Islamists" are used synonymously.

<sup>26</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Egypt in 1928. Later it had branches in Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and most of Middle East countries, where it played a significant political role.

Al-Banna was convinced of the total self-sufficiency of Islam and the dangers of secularism and Westernization. This danger came from both the Egyptian secularized elite<sup>27</sup> and the British occupation of Egypt. Al-Banna rejected outright the concept of secularism or the idea of separation between Islam and politics. On the contrary, Al-Banna and many of the Islamists saw a union between the two. Al-Banna put it this way:

We believe the provisions of Islam and its teachings are all-inclusive encompassing the affairs of the people in this world and hereafter. And those who think that these teachings are concerned only with the spiritual and ritualistic aspects are mistaken in the belief because Islam is spiritual and a ritual, a nation and nationality, a religion and a state, spirit and deed, holy text and sword.<sup>28</sup>

A similar conclusion was reached by Ruhallah Khomeini forty years later:

As for those who consider Islam separate from government and politics, it must be said to these ignoramuses that the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet contain more rules regarding government and politics than in other matters.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, Islam makes no distinction between the religious and political realms. As John L. Esposito observed, the Islamic community was both spiritual and temporal, church and state. "Islam is not only a system of beliefs, it is also a form of society and a way of life.

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<sup>27</sup> As mentioned earlier, the leading figures of secularism in the Islamic world were mostly from Egypt.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet: The Struggle for Islam*, 83.

<sup>29</sup> Dale F. Eckelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey:

Muhammed was not only a Prophet, but also he was a statesman, a teacher, a ruler and a soldier. He made war and he made peace.<sup>30</sup>

While the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood explained the decline of the Islamic world as due to Westernization, he saw the cure for the disease in a return to Islamic teachings. Al-Banna never advocated violence as a means of change in society.<sup>31</sup> It was not until the 1960s that the Islamists' struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state was combined with violence to attain that goal. This change was under the influence of the writings of Sayyid Qutb.<sup>32</sup> Qutb is referred to as the true ideological father of modern Islamic fundamentalism. Qutb's book *Signposts on the Road* is viewed by the fundamentalists as an Islamic version of Lenin's manifesto *What Is to Be Done?*<sup>33</sup>

Unlike Al-Banna, who believed in peaceful means to reestablish the Islamic state, Qutb called explicitly for the overthrow of secular government with violence. In his work,

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Princeton University Press, 1996), 49.

<sup>30</sup> There is a substantial literature on the life and deeds of Prophet Muhammed. See for example, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammed: Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press 1961).

<sup>31</sup> See for example, Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

<sup>32</sup> Qutb was a prolific author. He wrote more than twenty four books. Some of his works were translated into English, Persian, Turkish and many other languages. His literary and ideological legacy formed the basis of fundamentalist thought in the Islamic world.

<sup>33</sup> Qutb is a main pillar in the formation of fundamentalist thought and activism. Gilles Kepel developed this point at length in his work, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, Trans. by John Rothschild (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

*Signposts on the Road*,<sup>34</sup> Qutb argued that many Muslim leaders like Nasir who called themselves Muslims were in fact nonbelievers; hence, their governments were un-Islamic. Therefore, real Muslims had a religious duty to overthrow them by force.<sup>35</sup>

Qutb argued that Muslims are in a new era of *Jahilyya*—the pre-Islamic time, or deviation from the right path. Therefore, an Islamic revolution is a necessary action so as to eliminate this *Jahilyya*. The outcome of the Qutbist thought was the creation of thousands of Moslem fighters and strugglers against the tyranny of *Jahili* governments in Egypt as well as in most Islamic countries. Secular governments, on the other side, led campaigns of persecution and oppression, not to mention massacres against the followers of Qutb in most Islamic countries.

Qutb was deeply influenced by the writings of Mawlana Abu Ala Mawdudi. Mawdudi's works were translated from English into Arabic and deeply influenced Muslim scholars in the Arab world, especially in Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

Like Al-Banna, Mawdudi asserted the self-sufficiency of Islam and the comprehensiveness of Islamic life. This position was at the heart of his rejection of nationalism and secularism. These Western ideas were alien to Islam and ill suited to be the

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<sup>34</sup> Qutb wrote this while imprisoned. There, he and many other Muslim Brothers were tortured and persecuted. Naturally, the harsh prison experience profoundly influenced his thought. Eventually, Qutb was executed with other members of the Muslim Brotherhood on the grounds of plotting against Nasir. Since then, Qutb has been referred to as the martyr of the Islamic revival.

<sup>35</sup> Judith Miller, *Reporting From A Militant Middle East: God Has Ninety-Nine Names* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) 59.

basis of the Islamic state. Mawdudi believed that an Islamic revolution was necessary to establish an Islamic state and society. To achieve that goal, he established the Jamaat-i-Islami, which became a significant political movement in Pakistan.<sup>37</sup>

The above-mentioned leading figures of Islamic fundamentalism believed that Islam is perfect, complete, comprehensive, and timeless. It can build a sound system of social justice, economics, politics, education, and legislation. It is the right path and Muslims should find solutions to all problems they face in its framework.

The Islamists rely on the golden past of the Islamic state to support their argument. When Muslims adhered strictly to the teachings of Islam, they were superior to other nations. They established a great and rich civilization, while Europe was in the "Dark Age." The Islamists explain the decline of the Islamic world by the fact that Muslims deviated from the right path and followed foreign ideas and laws. As the Islamists diagnose the disease, they present the prescription: if Muslims want to restore their greatness, salvation is in returning to the path of God:

If Muslims want to get out of all situations they are in, what they must do is join forces, believe sincerely in God (He is exalted), act in accordance with God's book and the teachings of his messenger.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 146.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance, Aziz Ahmed, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>38</sup> Rudolph Peter, *Jihad: In Classical and Modern Times* (Princeton: Marks Winter Publisher, 1996), 100.

The Islamists discredit all man-made ideologies including liberalism, nationalism, secularism and socialism. The failure of these ideologies can be seen in almost all the Islamic world. In other words, the Islamists believe that whatever is made by humankind is far from perfect. Therefore, Muslims should look for a spiritual cure for their problems. Not surprisingly, the Islamic movement from the islands of Indonesia to the desert of North Africa adopted the slogan "Islam is the solution, Quran is the constitution."

Like the secularists, the Islamists see a zero-sum relationship between secularism and Islam and reject the idea of reconciliation between the two. To the Islamists, secularism is a pagan concept; it is alien to Islam, and so secularism will never be a deep-rooted ideology in the Islamic world.

In sum, the Islamists and the secularists continue to struggle over the moral leadership of the Islamic world. Their conflict is still going on today, and with much greater intensity. Unfortunately, in contemporary times, the debate between the Islamists and secularists has taken a violent form. From Egypt to Bangladesh, secular figures such as Nagib Mahfouz, Farag Foda, Taslima Nasrin and many others had been either attacked or assassinated by the Islamists. The Muslims' quest for an ideology, a purpose, and identity in the modern world continues.

The following comparison outlines the arguments of all sides on many significant themes:

- 1. Religion and Politics**



**The Islamists:** Religion and politics are inseparable. Islam provides Muslims with identity, guidance and authority. All Islam is politics.

**The Adaptationists:** While Islam plays an extraordinary role in Muslim politics, it must be interpreted in a modern way that takes into consideration Muslims' present needs. In other words, Islam makes no distinction between religion and politics in theory; however, it does in practice.

**The Secularists:** Religion is a personal matter and must be separated from politics. State and society should follow secular policies.

## 2. Sovereignty

**The Islamists:** Sovereignty belongs to God, who is the source of legitimacy. Therefore, Muslims must apply only God's laws in their daily life.

**The Adaptationists:** Muslims must pick the most attractive ideas of sovereignty such as justice, equality, accountability and so forth. By the same token, Muslims must avoid the worst aspects of sovereignty such as secularism and racism.

**The Secularists:** Sovereignty belongs to the people, who are the source of legitimate authority. Thus, the people must set out their own rules if they want to become rich and powerful. In other words, man-made laws take precedence over God's laws.

## 3. Nationalism

**The Islamists:** The Islamists reject nationalism as a Western idea alien to Islam. It is another Western conspiracy to weaken and divide the Islamic community. Islam binds Muslims together regardless of their race, language, territory, class, etc.

**The Adaptationists:** Nationalism is compatible with Islam. Therefore, Muslims must reconcile this ideology with their faith. If nationalism is a political force, Muslims should retain this force in their quest for strength and progress.

**The Secularists:** The secularists have a strong belief in nationalism as a powerful force to unite and mobilize people. It is a European gift for the world, as it was the vehicle for self-determination and nation building.

#### 4. The West

**The Islamists:** The Islamists are anti-Western. The West is the historical enemy of Islam. There is a huge chasm between Islam and the West and so Muslims must always be alert to threats from the West, and its ideas.

**The Adaptationists:** The adaptationists advocate selectivity in dealing with the West. Muslims should not view the West as a rival and threat only, but also as an example and a source of inspiration. In other words, Muslims must know what to take and what to reject from the West.

**The Secularists:** The secularists are pro-Western; they admire the West as the incarnation of modern civilization. Thus, Muslims must view the

West as a friend, a source of inspiration and guidance in all aspects of life.

## **5. The Decline of the Islamic World**

**The Islamists:** The Islamists explain the collapse and decline of the Islamic world in theological terms. Muslims' failure is explained by their departure from Islamic teachings. Consequently, it can be cured by return to the sources of its strength: the path of God or the Islamic teachings.

**The Adaptationists:** The adaptationists explain the decline in a combination of internal factors related to Muslims themselves such as corruption, oppression and instability and external factors that can be summed up by an international environment hostile to Muslims.

**The Secularists:** Muslims' decline is the outcome of theocracy, oppression and corruption. Muslims' strength can be achieved by adoption of science and technology.

## **6. International Relations**

**The Islamists:** The world is divided into territory of Islam (*Darul Islam*) and territory of war (*Darul-Harb*) and there is a permanent state of war between the two. Therefore, it is impossible for Muslims to cooperate or integrate with the territory of war.

**The Adaptationists:** The Islamic division of two worlds is insufficient, as Muslims are not

united in one world or in a single state. At the same time, Western classification of an ethnic, ideological or territorial basis is not completely accepted. Regardless of these classifications, Muslims must view each other as brethren.

**The Secularists:** The world is divided into different nations and states. Muslim states should integrate into the world and promote peace and security.

## 7. War

**The Islamists:** War is *Jihad* or holy war. It is an obligation for all Muslims to fight against the infidels. War can be waged only in the path of God and dying in that path is a glorious death.

**The Adaptationists:** Adaptationists have a strong belief in just war. They believe that a just war is a war to end exploitation, oppression, or corruption. Thus, a war can be waged based on its legality, not on its holiness.

**The Secularists:** States and armies go to war for national interest, not for religious or ideal goals.

## 8. Peace in the Middle East

**The Islamists:** The Islamists reject outright the peace process on the grounds that Palestine, from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea, is an Islamic territory, and so it is an obligation for all Muslims to fight the aggression of the Jews.

**The Adaptationists:** The adaptationists have developed a pragmatic position towards peace in the Middle East. On one hand, they do not support the peace process and its aftermath such as normalization with Israel. On the other hand, they do not reject it as they do not have an alternative. Therefore, they compromise and accept the status quo.

**The Secularists:** They support the peace process as they consider peace as a must for the people of the region to develop and progress.

## 9. Democracy

**The Islamists:** While democracy is alien to Islam, the Islamists developed a tactical adjustment to this idea. Therefore, democracy is a means to get to power and implement hidden agenda. It is one man, one vote, one time.

**The Adaptationists:** The adaptationists try to reconcile democracy with Islam, and so Muslims must balance between *Sharia* goals and human realities. For example, Muslims must not break away from their rulers, or overthrow them. At the same time, Muslim rulers have a mandate to rule according to Islamic laws. In other words, the adaptationists admire both democracy and the Islamic rules of the political game.

**The Secularists:** The secularists have a profound admiration for democracy. It is the best form of government. It is a safety value against oppression, corruption, and tyranny. The secularists are frustrated by the

democratic record of the Islamic world. This view toward democracy is also shared by Muslim Marxists, who, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, began to call for free elections, human rights, and other democratic values.

## 10. The View of Non-Muslims

**The Islamists:** The non-Muslims and minorities are viewed with suspicion and hatred. The Islamists always record the history of non-Muslims cooperating with the European powers during times of occupation. Therefore, non-Muslims cannot enjoy the same rights as Muslims. Also they cannot govern Muslims.

**The Adaptationists:** Non-Muslims enjoy the *Dhimi* status, which means they live in the Islamic state with limited privileges. They are protected by the state as they pay taxes, but they cannot assume key positions in the state. The adaptationists proudly point to Muslims' record of tolerance towards non-Muslims and contrast it with the intolerant attitude of the European imperialists.

**The Secularists:** The Secularists advocate the equal status of non-Muslims and Muslims in the Islamic state in accordance with their strong beliefs in democracy, secularism, and nationalism.

## 11. The Positions of Women

**The Islamists:** The Islamists believe in polygamy as part of their strong belief in *Sharia*. They reject the idea of equality between men and women. They believe that a woman's place is in the home and so women must be segregated and veiled.

**The Adaptationists:** The adaptationists try to reconcile the Western concept of "feminism" or "Women's Liberation" with Islamic teachings. For example, their position towards polygamy is Western as they argue that no one can possibly treat two, three, four women with equity and conclude that Islam prohibits polygamy. However, women cannot assume key political and military positions in the state.

**The Secularists:** The secularists reject polygamy, and they have a strong belief in equality of men and women. They emphasize women's rights in education, employment, dress, and political representation.

## 12. Population Policy

**The Islamists:** Reject the theories of family planning and birth control. Such ideas are part of the Western conspiracy against the Muslim population.

**The Adaptationists:** Argue that Muslims must take advantage of every opportunity to develop and grow. Therefore, social planning, health care, contraceptives and the like are desirable as long as they benefit Muslims.

**The Secularists:** Accept all theories of limited resources and overpopulation.

Therefore, they encourage family planning and the use of contraceptives.

### **Reconciling Islam**

The previous schools differ on all issues concerning the Islamic world. The differences range from the role of women in society to the view of non-Muslims and minorities in the Islamic world. However, all of them affirm that Muslims must put an end to their misfortune and decline. Whether Muslims can reform themselves without abandoning the principles of their faith, or accommodate their religion within the realities of their societies, as well as the outside world, remain major themes in Islamic debate and discourse.

A brief look at the Islamic world reveals the following fact: neither the Islamists in Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, or Afghanistan, nor the secularists in Turkey, Tunisia, Iraq, or Algeria succeeded in coming to terms with the problems of their societies. The Islamists, like the secularists, were extremists in their ideologies. Thus, they offered only partial answers to their nation's needs. Consequently, a reasonable argument can be made that it is only the adaptationist thought that can provide a moderate solution to Muslim problems and free them from extremism. The compatibility between Islam and politics, reason, and modernity is central in the arguments of the adaptationist school.

It is the author's belief that Islam as a religion is flexible and adaptive to changed conditions, and the principles of Islam consider such change a certainty. For example, the



days have gone when states were based on religion and the world was divided between the territory of Islam (*Darul Islam*) and the territory of war (*Darul-Harb*). Now, states are based on nationalism and so Islam has to adapt to historical circumstances. According to the Egyptian reformer Ali Abd al-Raziq:

Islam did not determine a specific regime, nor did it impose on the Muslims a particular system according to the requirements of which they must be governed; rather it has allowed us absolute freedom to organize the state in accordance with the intellectual, social, and economic conditions in which they were found, taking into consideration our social development and the requirements of time.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, Islam is compatible with human needs and Muslims are free to choose and change their sociopolitical arrangements, and reconcile them with the principles of their faith. In other words, Islam is what Muslims make out of it. It is subject to their interpretation and understanding. Thus, it can be a religion of tolerance and peace, in harmony with reason and science, compatible with nationalism, democracy, and development, and advocate peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims. Also, if Muslims so choose, it can be a religion of war and violence, based on the pursuit of domination and power, incompatible with democracy, nationalism, and development, and advocate a hostile attitude toward non-Muslims.

In this study, the cases of Turkey and Sudan are instructive. In Turkey, Ataturk forced secularism on the Turkish people and thought that this would be their ticket to enter

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<sup>39</sup> In Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988. 131.

the civilized world. Decades later, secularism has not fulfilled its promises. It has declined in acceptability in Turkey and is unlikely to serve indefinitely as an ideological basis for the Turkish state. Thus, one can argue that the solution to Turkey's problem lies in integrating Islam in Turkish nationalism and reconciling it with the Turkish needs.

In Sudan, the ruling elite took Islam to the extreme. It declared Islam as the only basis of identity in a multi-religious country. In doing so, it failed to take into account non-Muslims as an essential component of the country's political community. This failure led to the adoption of an inappropriate solution and resulted in a catastrophe in the country. Thus, one can argue that the appropriate solution required a reconciliation of the Islamic character of the state without denying the southern Sudanese equal membership of the nation.

In sum, secularization in Turkey and Islamization in Sudan each represent a radical departure from the essence of Islam. Furthermore, secularization and Islamization were forced on the people from above. Both the Islamists and the secularists captured the state and used its apparatus to implement their ideas. This uncompromising policy is contradictory to the teachings of Islam and the wishes of the people of Turkey and Sudan. Thus, it is unlikely to work in either country, as will be examined in this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### SECULARISM IN TURKEY AND SUDAN

#### Turkey's Secular Experience

Modern secularism in Turkey is a product of centuries of contacts with Europe. As has been mentioned earlier, the winds of secular ideas began to blow across the Islamic world since the French Revolution in 1789. The French Revolution, Bernard Lewis observed, was very influential upon the contemporary Muslim peoples in general and had a lasting and a profound influence upon those in Turkey in particular.<sup>1</sup>

The first seeds of secularism were planted in Turkey in the early years of the nineteenth century. However, the policies and behaviors of the European powers outside the Empire and the attitudes and activities of the conservatives inside caused several setbacks to the development of secularism in Turkey as well as the rest of the Islamic world.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it was only in the early twentieth century that secularism became a dominant idea in Turkey at the hands of Ataturk.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 183.

<sup>2</sup> As had been mentioned in chapter two, the hostile attitude towards secular ideas in the Islamic world was motivated by the hostile policies of the imperial European powers towards the Ottoman Empire.

Ataturk was one of the Ottoman soldiers who lived in Europe and returned home with an obsession with European ideas, especially secularism and nationalism.<sup>3</sup> Early in his life, he made up his mind towards two rivals: religion or Islam in particular and Europe or the West. Ataturk was born with a horror of all religious fanaticism and he viewed Islam as the real enemy of his people:

The enemy lay within their own ranks. It was the Muslim religion, which oppressed them and stunted their growth, shutting them off from the more advanced and enlightened ways of the Christian people. The Ottoman Empire was a place where the joys of heaven were reserved for non-Muslims, while Muslims were condemned to endure the shades of hell.<sup>4</sup>

Ataturk believed that heaven is on earth, not in the after-life as most Muslims believe. Therefore, his vision of change and progress was essentially one of religious reform. As a secularist, he saw Islam as a barrier to happiness, progress, and modernity. Consequently, Islam must be eliminated from the sociopolitical structure of Turkey. A complete separation between the mosque and the state must be achieved if Turkey was to take its place in the civilized world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ataturk served in Sofia in Bulgaria as a military attaché, where he was introduced to the graces and refinement of Western civilization. He saw Western civilization in terms of irreligion, science, and nationalism. For the biography of Ataturk, see for instance Lord Kinross, *Ataturk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal: Father of Modern Turkey* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>5</sup> Kinross, *Ataturk*, 55.

Ataturk launched a program of eliminating Islam from the life of the Turkish people.

Following is a brief account of Ataturk's secularization program.

In 1923, Turkey was proclaimed a republic. Its sovereignty belonged to the people.<sup>6</sup> As a secular state, the second step was to eliminate the old theocratic state. Thus, the Caliphate was abolished. The Caliphate was a link between Turkey and the rest of the Islamic world. However, according to Ataturk's vision, the future belonged to the West, not to Islam. He saw the Caliphate as a symbol and a rallying point for the dark forces of religious reaction.<sup>7</sup> In March of 1924, the Caliphate was abolished.<sup>8</sup> A Turkish statesman expressed his joy as "the bridge attaching Turkey to the Middle Ages was blown up."<sup>9</sup>

Ataturk continued his drive for secularism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as the historic office of *Sheikh al-Islam* was abolished. All religious schools were transferred to the secular arm. The tombs and shrines of saints were closed.<sup>10</sup> Of these acts Ataturk said:

To seek help from the dead is a disgrace to a civilized community. I flatly refuse to believe that today, in the luminous presence of science, knowledge, and civilization in all its aspects, there exist, in the civilized community of Turkey, men so primitive to seek their material and moral well-being from the guidance of one or another Sheikh.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 84.

<sup>7</sup> Kinross, *Ataturk*, 438.

<sup>8</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 460.

<sup>9</sup> Kinross, *Ataturk*, 439.

<sup>10</sup> Davison, *Turkey: A Short History*, 149-151. Also, Kirkwood, *Turkey*, 254.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 404.

After laying down the political foundations for a secular state, he pushed his social, legal, and educational programs. In 1926, a form of the Swiss civil code was adopted and the *Sharia* abolished. In the process, polygamy, and Islamic laws that regulate divorce and inheritance were abolished. Women were given equal rights in all aspects of life.<sup>12</sup> Ataturk believed that modernization required a complete emancipation of women:

Can half a community ascend to the skies; while the other half remains chained in the dust? The road of progress must be trodden by both sexes together marching arm in arm as comrades.<sup>13</sup>

Ataturk saw Islamic traditional dress as a bar to the freedom and dignity of women. Therefore, he led a campaign against the veil.<sup>14</sup> Another campaign was against men's headdress, the fez. It was Muslim headgear that distinguished them from non-Muslims. Thus, it meant a great deal to them.<sup>15</sup> It was a symbol of Islamic identity. However, according to Ataturk, it was "an emblem of ignorance, negligence, fanaticism, and hatred of progress and civilization."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it had to go. Ataturk issued the so-called "Hat Law,"

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<sup>12</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 470-473.

<sup>13</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 93.

<sup>14</sup> Kinross, *Ataturk*, 476-478. Also, Toynbee, *Turkey*, 243.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the impact of the abolishment of the fez on the Turkish people, see Richard D. Robinson, *The First Turkish Republic: A Study in National Development* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), 83-84.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 263.

which made the wearing of the fez a criminal offense.<sup>17</sup>

In Ataturk's program of Westernization, another link to the Islamic world was removed: the Arabic language. Arabic scripts, which had been used by the Turks since their conversion into Islam, were replaced by the Roman alphabet.<sup>18</sup>

The final part in Ataturk's agenda to transfer Turkey into a European-style secular state was the calendar. Turkey must be in line with the West in all aspects of life. The Islamic calendar gave way to the Western calendar. Friday, which was the official holy day for Muslims, was replaced as a day of rest by the Christian Sunday,<sup>19</sup> and finally New Year's was celebrated on the first of January every year.

With these radical measures of secularization, Ataturk believed that Turkey had become legally, politically, and culturally a European-style secular state. There is no doubt that Ataturk took giant steps to move Turkey Westward. The key questions in this regard would be: "Was Ataturk consistent in his program?" and "Were Ataturk and his successors able to transfer Turkey from one civilization to another and if not, why not?" Another important question: "Was the secularization of Turkey as complete as believed?" An evaluation of the secularization project will offer some answers to these questions.

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<sup>17</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 473.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 427-429.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 111.

### The Ambivalence of Ataturk

Ataturk was opposed to religion, which he held responsible for the backwardness and misfortunes of the Muslims. Consequently, he initiated his secular program as a salvation for the Turks. However, Ataturk was ambivalent in his secularized orientation. He accepted the merits of religion and made decisions on a purely religious basis when it suited his purposes.<sup>20</sup>

During the War of Independence, Islam was highly regarded by Ataturk and was used as a rallying cry against the Christian Greeks. Ataturk considered the War of Independence a holy war. Furthermore, Ataturk adopted the title *Gazi*, which means warrior for the Islamic faith.<sup>21</sup>

The compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece is another example of Ataturk's ambivalence and opportunism. After the end of the War of Independence, one of the major problems that confronted Turkey was that of large Greek minorities in Turkey and Turkish minorities in Greece. After the Greek invasion of 1919, it became difficult for the Greeks and Turks to live together. Thus, by the Treaty of Laussane in 1923, a forced exchange of population took place after which no Greeks

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<sup>20</sup> It is ironic that playing the Islamic card by Ataturk in Turkey is roughly equivalent to Sudanese politicians, especially Numeiri and Turabi, as will be examined later in this chapter.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 248.



remained in Turkey and no Turks in Greece.<sup>22</sup> Religion was the criterion for this mass population transfer. In other words, Atatürk associated Turkish identity with Islam, which was contrary to his secularization project.

While these events demonstrate early contradictions of Atatürk's secular project, they were not the only problems that the secularization project had, as will be discussed in the following section.

### The Secularization Project and the Insolvable Troubles

Atatürk's idea of establishing a modern secular state in the West's image, based on constitutional avenues and military and political institutions, had presented a number of insolvable problems of enduring influence on the Turkish people.

#### **First: The Dual Identity Crisis**

While Atatürk's program was in many ways revolutionary, it did not for many years trickle down to all of Turkish society. The Kurds remained marginalized and isolated and so retained their own identity.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, for the majority of Turkish people, Islam remained an essential part of their culture and identity. Following Atatürk's death, there were rumors of a religious

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<sup>22</sup> Kinross, *Atatürk*, 406. Also, McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introduction to History to 1923*, 236.

<sup>23</sup> Further discussion of Kurdish identity will be carried out in Chapter Six, which will discuss Islam and nationalism in today's Turkey.

restoration.<sup>24</sup> However, such aspirations were not tolerated by the Turkish state at that time, and so it took a long time until the Turkish people were allowed to voice their religious aspirations.

Since 99 percent of Turkey's population was Muslim, it was not a surprise that the majority viewed Islam as the major base of their identity, and so they view their country as part of the East and the Islamic world and not part of Europe. As it shares with the East its culture, history, and most importantly, its Islamic religion, it will never be part of Europe.

These thoughts are supported by Europe's rejection of Turkey's application to join the European Union. The debate over Turkey's accession to the European club frequently concludes that Turkey's non-admittance is founded on religion. In an interview with a German magazine, president Ozal asked, "Why we are not yet in the European community? The answer is simple. You are Christians and we are Muslims [sic]."<sup>25</sup>

Secularization, as many Turkish people began to see, does not only mean a separation between mosque and state, it also meant the abandonment of their faith, culture, history, and identity. Worse than that, it also meant an admission of inferiority. In reaction, many Turks rejected Western cultural superiority and began to reassert the role of Islam and develop a great respect for its values and institutions.<sup>26</sup> Such changes in the Turkish mood

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<sup>24</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 411.

<sup>25</sup> For a fine analysis of Turkish attitudes to the West and Europe in particular, see for instance David Kushner, "Self-Perception and Identity in Contemporary Turkey," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 32, no. 2 (April, 1997): 219-233.

<sup>26</sup> Halim Kara, "Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities,"

were encouraged by the failure of the Kemalist project. As a Turkish scholar wrote:

With the global crisis of modernism and the rising challenges against the universal myths of Western civilization, the promises of the Kemalist project have begun to be questioned. There is a resurgence of Islamist political organization and a renewed attempt to devise an Islamic ideology as an alternative to Kemalist nationalism.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, from the late 1960s until the present, Islam became the leading force of change in Turkey. This is reflected in the appearance and success of Islamic oriented political parties that compete with Ataturk's secularism.

The rise of the Islamic political parties was not only due to a desire to restore the role of Islam in Turkey, but it also was an expression of economic and class frustration.<sup>28</sup> A Turkish sociologist summarized the attractiveness of the Welfare Party in the following words:

The Welfare is a vehicle that is carrying the marginalized, down trodden, and neglected to the center of power. It will never lose its grip because people were not represented before. No political party represents the people at the political or popular level and there are not grass roots organizations to influence the state.<sup>29</sup>

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*Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 19, no. 1 (April, 1999): 132-138.

<sup>27</sup> Haldun Gulap, "Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party," *The Muslim World*, vol. 89, no. 1 (January 1990): 23.

<sup>28</sup> A recent survey found that 41 percent of those who voted for the Islamist party consider themselves secular and have great respect for Ataturk. See for instance, Sami Zubaida, "Turkish Islam and National Identities," *Middle East Report*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> Debbie Lovatt, "Islam, Secularism and Civil Society," *The World Today*, vol. 53, no. 8-9 (August-September, 1997): 227.

In sum, the majority of the Turkish people showed a strong desire to return to Islam—to restore its role and move it from the periphery to the center. In doing so, they demonstrated a strong hostility towards the secularist project. However, such aspirations were not tolerated by the secularist elite. Unlike the rest of the Turkish people, who continue to show strong allegiance to Islam, the secular elite, supported by the military, continues to show hostile attitudes to Islam and strong commitment to Atatürk's legacy.

The secular elite struggles not only to maintain secularism as the dominant ideology in the state, but also tries to force the Turkish people to accept secularism as a basis for their identity. This divides the Turkish society into two opposing groups:

The Kemalist version of secularism has become the basis of identity for the white Turks. The opposing ideology provided by Islamic networks serve as a foundation for the black Turks. Democratization empowers the black Turks and Kurds, yet they are then forced out of power in the name of protecting the state—ironically, the very democracy that gave them a voice.<sup>30</sup>

As the major battle lines have been drawn between a Europeanized secular elite and the Islamists, Turkey is split into two forces with conflicting aspirations and different agendas. The secular elite emphasized the Europeanization and secularization of Turkey. The Islamists, on the other side, struggled to make Turkey more Eastern and more Islamic. Consequently, Turkey is in the midst of an identity crisis. In fact, Turkey is more fragmented because it is torn by other lines dividing the country: new Turkey vs. old Turkey,

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<sup>30</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 24.

Kurds against Turks, and the have-nots battling against the haves. The dichotomies between these conflicting groups polarized the society and opened the door for violence.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, the state as a whole has not found its proper place in the family of the nations.<sup>32</sup> Turkey took giant steps to integrate with the West; however, it remains an ally and a follower, but not a partner. Turkey is a key member of NATO. It is also a member of the European Customs Union, but not a member of the European Union. Turkey was the first Islamic state to recognize Israel, the Jewish occupant of Islam's third holiest city, and later signed a military pact with Israel.<sup>33</sup> Turkey has liberal economic and political systems. It participates in most of Europe's cultural activities. Therefore, politically, militarily, and economically, Turkey is part of the Western world.<sup>34</sup>

On the other side, Turkey is a member of the Islamic Organization Conference, 99 percent of its population are Muslims, it is located in the Middle East more than in Europe, and it shares with that region its religion, culture, and history. Therefore, in religious, historical, and geographical senses, Turkey is a Middle Eastern country.

Bearing in mind the previous contradictions, it is not a surprise that Turkey has a dual identity. Furthermore, it pays a price for that dual identity. Turkey is rejected and

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<sup>31</sup> Jamie Dettmer, "Will Turkey Go East or West," *Insights on the News*, vol. 15, no. 19 (August 1999): 25.

<sup>32</sup> Kushner, "Self Perception and Identity in Contemporary Turkey," 5.

<sup>33</sup> "The Turkish-Israeli Affair," *The Economist*, vol. 348, no. 8080 (September, 1998): 157.

<sup>34</sup> Kara, "Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities," 136.

isolated by its Ottoman history from the West and by its anti-Islamic policies from the East.

## **Second: The Constitutional Dilemma**

The constitution of 1928 was stripped of all religious elements. In 1937, secularism was introduced into the constitution as a new ideology for the Turkish people. Thus, it became dominant over all other constitutional principles. In order to protect the secular nature of the state, the constitution contained provisions that could be held incompatible with the spirit of human rights, democracy, and freedom.<sup>35</sup> The most prominent provisions in the constitution are those that regulate the dress: the hat law and the veil.<sup>36</sup> While the constitution made religious faith a private affair and allowed the Turkish people to change their faith if they wanted to do so, this tolerant spirit was not available when it came to dress. Democracy and human rights are considered among the pillars of Western culture; however, Ataturk violated these principles when he forced Turkish men and women to dress in a Western way.

Unfortunately, the succeeding constitutions of 1960 and 1982, which are still used today, are not far different from Ataturk's constitution of 1928. It is widely agreed that the present constitution is based on a political philosophy that is clearly incompatible with the principles of democracy and human rights. The present constitution contains within it a

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<sup>35</sup> It is worth noting that such principles were not in Ataturk's mind, though such principles were the basic foundation of the modern European state. What Ataturk had in his mind was a strong repressive state that would bring civilization to his people.

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, *Turkey*, 210.

strong bias towards secularism to the degree that religious freedom and freedom of dress are not guaranteed in the constitution.<sup>37</sup>

The uniqueness of the Turkish concept of secularism can be best demonstrated by the headscarf case of Merve Kavaki. Kavaki, a newly elected member of parliament in 1999, was denied the right to wear a headscarf in parliament. The constitutional court stated concerning this issue, "any freedom incompatible with secularism is forbidden to claim." Kavaki's action was criticized as a challenge to the secular state. Eventually, Kavaki lost her seat in the parliament.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, the headscarf and veiling of women have emerged as the most visible symbols of the Turkish life. The Turkish people continue to challenge the secular laws and the dress code in particular and protest against them. According to reports, in 1998, approximately 140,000 persons protested the ban on wearing headscarves in universities by linking hands to form a human chain in more than 25 provinces and several townships countrywide. However, such desires were not tolerated by the secular state and hundreds of protesters were arrested.

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<sup>37</sup> For an interesting discussion of the restrictions on dress and religious expression in the Turkish Constitution, see for instance Mustafa Erdudan, "Religious Freedom in the Turkish Constitution," *The Muslim World*, vol. 89, no. 3-4 (July-October, 1999): 377-388.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

According to the secular mentality, freedom of dress, though part of human rights, will never be respected in Turkey. [It is] a charge that the Europeans continue to use in justifying their rejections of Turkey's membership in the European Union.<sup>39</sup>

### **Third: The Civilian-Military Relationship**

While Ataturk was determined to separate the military and civilian spheres in the new state, the supremacy of secularism made this separation impossible. The generals are the self-proclaimed saviors of the Kemalist secular republic. In the last four decades, the generals have intervened four times to save secularism in Turkey.<sup>40</sup> The guardians of the Kemalist project view the struggle between the secular and religious forces as a matter of life or death for Turkey. As a formal divorce of the military from political activity is very difficult in Turkey, one wonders whether Turkey is really a democracy. The army does not hesitate to step in every time a democratic election results in an Islamic victory, thus it constitutes the major deterrent to the establishment of a genuine democratic state similar to those in Europe. Consequently, unlike Ataturk's expectations, the road to Europe became full of thorns.

In sum, there is much evidence that the secularization of Turkey was never quite as complete as was sometimes believed. Furthermore, Ataturk's project of transforming Turkey

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<sup>39</sup> Annual report on *International Religious Freedom in 1999: Turkey*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. (September 1999), 4.

<sup>40</sup> A good reference on the efforts of the generals to protect the secular nature of the state is the work of Howe Marvin, *Turkey Today: A Nation Divided Over Islamic Revival* (Perseus: Westview, 2000).



into a European nation proved to be a difficult task. Finally, the whole project of secularization is now under attack from all sides, as will be discussed in the following part.

### The Future of Secularism in Turkey

The challenges to secularism in Turkey demonstrate the irreconcilable hostility between secularism and Islam. The Islamists in Turkey use political Islam to pose a serious challenge to secularism. In 1996, the Turkish republic for the first time had a prime minister, Erbakan, whose political philosophy was based on Islam.<sup>41</sup> To the secularists, Atatürk's vision of a secular state in the West's image lay in near ruins. Eventually, they engineered a political coup that removed the prime minister and deprived the Islamists of the fruits of their electoral triumph. Even when the Islamists remain outside government, the sentiments that brought them to power will be a force to be reckoned with on the Turkish political scene for some time to come. In this country, the key question to consider, therefore, is whether secularism will survive the challenge or not.

As has been mentioned earlier, at the beginning of the last century, the outlines of debate moved from development and catching up with the West to issues of identity, values, faith, and culture. In Turkey, in the face of the failures of its extant project of secularization,

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<sup>41</sup> Erbakan rejects Turkey's dependence on the West, and he advocated closer ties with the Islamic countries. During his term, he visited the newly independent Islamic countries in the former Soviet Union, Libya, and Iran. He also signed a \$23 billion gas deal with Tehran. See Geges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests*, 213. See also, Marvin Howe, "The Islamist Agenda in Turkey," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, vol. XVII, no. 7 (October-November, 1998): 18.

the Islamists became the voice of the silent majority of the Turkish people. As a Turkish journalist put it:

Trapped between a past to which they could not return and a future without promise, millions of city poor directed their hopes to heaven, but more so to its earthy representation in the Islamist solidarity networks.<sup>42</sup>

The attractiveness of the contemporary Islamic movement in Turkey stems from its ability to address social and political problems such as identity, justice, and political participation.<sup>43</sup> The Islamists promised the Turkish people an escape from the pains of their corrupt, repressive, and exploitive world and to take them to a world of justice, happiness, and equality. Consequently, they were able to mobilize millions of poor Turkish people who had nothing to lose but their pains. A Turkish author explained the attachment to Islam in the following words:

At a time of stress it is natural that individuals hark back to what they know, or believe they know best. In a Muslim country, this is currently religion, but it could be anything from nationalism to communism. Islam has replaced communism as the representative of the underprivileged masses and the demonstration of both is strikingly similar.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, the deterioration in the moral and social order (drugs, crime, prostitution, and decline of the family), the pervasive corruption, oppression, and absence

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<sup>42</sup>Ertugral Kurkca, "The Crisis of the Turkish State," *Middle East Report*, vol. 26, no. 2 (April-June, 1996): 5.

<sup>43</sup>Yavuz, "The Assassination of Collective Memory: The Case of Turkey," 200.

<sup>44</sup>Lovatt, "Islam, Secularism and Civil Society," 227.

of stability, all discredit the secular ideology. Therefore, it became less attractive and less convincing. Furthermore, in this atmosphere of failure and deprivation, religious ideology can be more responsive to the needs of people and so can achieve its goals much more successfully than secular ideology. As the Turkish Islamist author states,

For the first time since the rise of modernism, the world has fallen into serious doubt as to the validity and accuracy of the wide-spread conviction that all problems can be solved within the Western paradigm.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the bankruptcy of secularism, another reason should be considered in analyzing the shift away from secular thought in Turkey as well as the rest of the Islamic world. This factor is linked to the natural cyclical pattern of ideological development. As Mannheim had argued, ideologies do not appear in a vacuum, but rather interact with one another. Not only do successive generations of the same society naturally tend toward opposite ideologies, but ideologies also play out their natural life span. They cease to respond to the needs of the masses and they lose their ability to provide people with sense, guidance, and a basis of identity. Therefore, ideologies by their very nature lose their ability to charm and attract over time. In a society where the need for a powerful ideological response for spiritual and temporal problems remains high, as one ideology declines, another rises to fill the ideological gap.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Gulalp, "Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party," 22.

<sup>46</sup> This entire analysis is largely based on Karl Mannheim's work, "The problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), 278-320.

The rise and fall of communism in East Europe and the Soviet Union supports Manneheim's argument. Therefore, according to Manneheim's perspective, the decline and bankruptcy of secularism in Turkey and the rise of political Islam is part of the natural patterns of ideological changing and should not come as a real surprise.

However, it is not to be understood from the previous argument that secularism will disappear from Turkey overnight. It is fairly accurate to say that the military and the secular elite who control most of the levels of power in Turkey have a blind belief in secularism and a strong commitment to Ataturk's legacy. Therefore, it is widely agreed that for some time to come, secularism will remain in Turkey with an iron fist. The recent historical record of Turkey supports this conclusion.

### **Islam and Secularism in Sudan**

Islam plays a dominant role in Sudan's politics. Throughout Sudan's modern history, Islam has been the major factor that has affected its evolution. With the coming of Islam, the nature of Sudanese society changed profoundly. Not only was Sudan sharply divided along the lines of religion, a Muslim north and non-Muslim south, but it has also been devastated by continuous civil war, instability, poverty and revolutions.

As Africa's largest country, Sudan is one of the most diverse religiously and ethnically. The prominent role of religion in Sudan's public life has made it very difficult to reconcile the country's multi-religious identity. Consequently, religion or religious policies made by its leadership became the underlying factor behind the country's tragedy.

The role of Islam in Sudan cannot be understood without a reference to the Mahdist movement and its aftermath. The Mahdist movement was originally a religious revolution against the apparently irreligious Ottomans. Al-Mahdi established a theological state that ruled Sudan from 1881 to 1897.<sup>47</sup> In other words, modern Sudan's first experiment in statehood was in the shape of an Islamic state. Thus, the seeds of Sudanese nationalism were planted in an Islamic context. Many Sudanese view Al-Mahdi as the father of Sudanese nationalism.<sup>48</sup>

Following the collapse of the Mahdist state, Mahdist sentiments grew strongly among the Sudanese people, and most importantly the Mahdist family continued to have power and influence. In fact, the Mahdist tradition was transformed into well-organized political power. In this context, it is worth noting that the British policy during the condominium greatly contributed to the popularity and the lasting influences of the Mahdi's family in Sudanese politics.

Among the pillars of imperial British policy was the principle "Divide and Rule." The British were masters at exploiting ethnic and religious differences in their colonies. In Sudan, the principle was not only applied by separating the north from the south, but was also applied among the northern Muslims.

The British sponsored a counter rival movement to Mahdism. This was the

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<sup>47</sup> Among the best sources on the Mahdist revolution is P. M. Holt's work, *The Mahdist State in Sudan 1881-1889* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

<sup>48</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 49.

Khatmaih sect, which was founded by the Mirghani family and opposed al-Mahdi. The Khatmaih, regardless of religious aspiration, did not find any problem in cooperating with

the British as long as they would gain more power and prestige.<sup>49</sup> Under the British rule, the Khatmaih became an organized group with mass followers.

However, with the beginning of World War I, the British shifted their support towards Mahdism. This time, the British sought the support of Mahdism—the historic anti-Ottoman movement—in their war against the Ottoman Empire. Like its rival, Mahdism began to work closely with the British. Consequently, the Khatmaih and Mahdists exclusively dominated the political scene of Sudan.<sup>50</sup> Their success and influence were not to be attained without British support. As a Sudanese scholar wrote, “essentially, the legacy of the nineteenth century accorded both orders, with enough influence for them to become the major players in sectarian politics.”<sup>51</sup>

In this context, it is obvious that both power groups have politicized Islam. They cooperated with the British to achieve political gains in pragmatic and Machiavellian ways divorced from religion. Unfortunately, this strategy has characterized the policies of these

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<sup>49</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, “British Policy Towards the Ansar in Sudan: A Note on an Historical Controversy,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.33, no. 4 (October 1997): 691-692.

<sup>50</sup> This entire analysis is largely based on Warburg’s work, “British Policy Towards the Ansar in Sudan: A Note on an Historical Controversy,” 675-692.

<sup>51</sup> Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 27.

groups in the postindependence period. In this case, the Sudanese people were the victims of such pragmatism.<sup>52</sup>

Consequently, it is clear that sectarianism in Sudanese politics was a British invention. The Mahdists and Khatmaih have persisted as major political forces in Sudan. In the 1940s, with the development of political parties, these traditional organizations were transformed into vehicles for political action and so they formed political parties. The Mahdists founded the Umah party and the Khatmaih founded the Democratic Unionist Party.<sup>53</sup>

The Umah and the Democratic Unionist parties remain dominated by tribal identification and family ties. Therefore, they were unable to broaden their political base and attract the Sudanese masses, especially the intellectuals. Furthermore, while both parties were based on religious ideology, they maintained secular behaviors and advocated pragmatic rather than ideological policies. As a result, the road was open to create new ideological and antisectarian political parties. They include the communists and the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>54</sup>

The Sudanese communists were originally students who studied in Egypt and

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<sup>52</sup> Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1990), 52.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Woodward, "Sudan: Islamic Radicals in Power" in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism*, ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), 97.

<sup>54</sup> Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle, *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence* (London: James Currey, 1995), 37.

returned home with communist ideas. In Sudan, where Islam runs deep, the communists adjusted themselves to that reality. They had a flexible attitude towards religion. They argued that Islam and communism were ideological allies against imperialism.<sup>55</sup> In any way, the communists remained an elitist party in Sudan until the 1970s.

Similar to the communists, the Muslim brothers of Sudan were an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Like the communists, they remain an elitist political party. It took them decades to acquire a mass following.<sup>56</sup>

To sum up, Mahdist and Khatmaih and their rivals the communists and the Muslim Brotherhood, the major political actors in Sudan, have failed to develop in a way that could transcend family, tribal, religious, or ethnic loyalties and could be a basis for Sudanese unity.<sup>57</sup> This outcome proved to be tragic for Sudan in the subsequent years.

### Islam and Secularism in the Era of Independence

When Sudan achieved independence in 1956, the two holy families of Mahdi and Merghani were the major political actors in Sudan. Therefore, they had to form a coalition government after years of bitter rivalry. This coalition, writes Sidahmed, "was led by greed,

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<sup>55</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 121.

<sup>56</sup> Woodward, "Sudan: Islamic Radicals in Power," 98.

<sup>57</sup> John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 357.



a scramble for power and personal interests."<sup>58</sup>

From the very beginning, two major issues have challenged this alliance: A permanent constitution and the southern problem. A national committee was established to draft a constitution. As soon as the committee started its work, it received a memorandum from the attorney general of Sudan urging it to adopt an Islamic constitution:

In an Islamic country like the Sudan, the social organization of which has been built upon Arabic customs and Islamic ways and of which the majority are Muslims, it is essential that the general principles of the constitution of a such country should be derived from the principles of Islam.<sup>59</sup>

Contrary to such expectations, what was drafted by the committee was a secular constitution with Islam as the official religion of the state. In adopting a secular constitution, it is evident that the sectarian leaders were not enthusiastic for an Islamic constitution, as they preferred to conduct their policies in a secular form. They were preoccupied by their interests and never conducted policies on a purely religious basis. In doing so, they have deepened the hatred and suspicion of the Sudanese people in both the north and the south. Moreover, they opened the door for the military, which was discontented with such pragmatism and opportunism.

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<sup>58</sup> Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan*, 58.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 63.

## Islam and Secularism and the Generals

In 1964, General Ibrahim Aboud led the first military coup in the modern history of Sudan. As in every military takeover, the coup was justified by the failure of the former regime. This part concentrates on Aboud's Islamic policies in Sudan.

Aboud tried to impress the Islamists of Sudan; therefore, he pursued a vigorous Islamization policy in the south. Mosques, schools, and Islamic centers were established in the south, and Arabic became the official language. The day of the rest was changed from Sunday to Friday, the Muslim's day of rest.<sup>60</sup> Aboud believed that Christianity was an alien religion that foreign missionaries had imposed on the south. Therefore, according to the Missionary Societies Act, the work of the missionaries was restricted and all foreign missionaries were expelled from Sudan.<sup>61</sup> Aboud went further in fighting Christianity and imposing Islam, and so he pressured the chiefs of southern tribes to convert to Islam and to order their followers to also convert.

Aboud believed that cultural (Arabic Islamic) integration would be the base for ideological unity in Sudan. Therefore, no room was allowed for cultural diversity. Rather than national integration, Aboud's policies of Islamization unified the southern resistance and led to the establishment of the Anya-Nya, who sought self-determination for the region.<sup>62</sup>

In the north where the majority is Muslims, Aboud did not make any fundamental

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<sup>60</sup> Mosley, *The Sudan*, 39. Also Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 188.

<sup>61</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 189. Also Deng, *War of Visions*, 139.

changes with regard to the role of religion in the state. In this case, the concentration on his policies in the south is a testimony to the fact that the south was the only area in which the Islamists and the military accept the merits of Islamization.<sup>63</sup>

However, Aboud was unable to impress the Islamists and so his regime came to an end with a public uprising in which the Islamists and the communists made a coalition and played a pivotal role.<sup>64</sup>

### **Islam and Secularism and the Civilians**

As before, the conventional rivalry continued between the two major political parties. Furthermore, the Umah party had split inside between the young al-Sadiq al-Mahdi (son of the deceased leader of the Umah, Sayid Sadiq al-Mahdi) and his uncle al-Hadi al-Mahdi, who represented the old guard politicians.<sup>65</sup> This split weakened the position of the Umah party vis-à-vis other political parties, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, from the 1960s onward, the Muslim Brotherhood began to play a more influential role in Sudan's politics. This role is evident by the success of the Muslim Brotherhood in forcing the government to ban the Communist Party and to adopt an Islamic constitution.

As mentioned earlier, the Muslim Brotherhood cooperated with the communists

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<sup>62</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 188.

<sup>63</sup> Abdel Wahab El. Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemma for Islam in Africa," *African Affairs, Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. 89, no. 356 (July 1990): 373.

<sup>64</sup> Woodward, "Sudan: Islamic Radicals in Power," 98.

against Aboud. However, with the removal of Aboud, the Muslim Brotherhood turned against their former allies and pressured the government until the Communist Party was banned.<sup>66</sup>

With regard to the Islamic constitution, as mentioned earlier, from the 1960s onward, the Islamists—represented by the Muslim Brotherhood—began to play a dominant role in Sudanese politics. In line with this feature, the draft constitution of 1968 was largely the outcome of Islamist pressures. The Islamists justified the need for an Islamic constitution on the grounds that the constitution should represent the will of the people and since the majority are Muslims, their will should prevail.<sup>67</sup> It is ironic that such justification was secular and democratic.

The secularists along with the southerners who acknowledge the realities of the Sudanese society came to a different conclusion. They preferred a nonreligious constitution on the following grounds:

To establish a system of government and law on the basis of a certain religious ideology would jeopardize the principle of equality of all citizens before the law and hamper the political and legal rights of citizens of religious minorities.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan*, 110.

<sup>66</sup> For an interesting analysis of the dissolution of Sudanese Communist political party, see Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 94-95.

<sup>67</sup> Sidahmed, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 105.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

While such reasoning takes into consideration the multireligious composition of Sudanese society, the Islamists were able to impose their will on the rest and an Islamic constitution was adopted. In doing so, all hopes of cooperation and coexistence with the southerners vanished and the civil war continued with little hope of resolution. Moreover, it drove Sudan into another period of turmoil, which ended in another military takeover.

### Islam and Secularism in Numei's Era

In May 1969, Jaafar Numei seized power in a bloodless coup supported by key army units. The question that poses itself in this regard is how did Numei, who started as a secular socialist, end up appealing for Islamic support? This shift culminated in the implementation of Islamic laws and the attempt to establish an Islamic state.

In an attempt to answer this question, this part looks into two areas: the internal political and ideological development of Numei's regime, including the rise of the Islamists' influence in the Middle East in general and Sudan in particular; and the personal and pragmatic motives beyond Numei's religious awakening. It seems that the two processes have combined to explain Numei's shift from secularism to Islamism.

### **The Developments of Numei's Political System and the Rise of the Islamists**

After assuming power, Numei, inspired by socialist sentiments, proclaimed the establishment of a secular democratic republic dedicated to independent Sudanese

socialism.<sup>69</sup> The shift towards socialism was in keeping with the trend in most newly independent African states at that time. Furthermore, he criticized the Islamists and declared that one of the objectives of his coup was to tear off the "yellow paper," in a reference to the Islamic constitution (mentioned earlier).<sup>70</sup>

Numeri made an alliance with the communists, who held prominent positions in his first government. The next step was to crush the Islamists, who posed a real threat to his power. In 1970, his forces violently crushed the Mahdist movement in their headquarters on Aba Island. Reports estimated the casualties among the Mahdist movement at 12,000 including their leader, the Imam al-Hadi, grandson of the Mahdi.<sup>71</sup>

With the removal of the Islamists from the scene, Numeri turned against his former allies, the communists, who were crushed as violently as in the Aba Island incident.<sup>72</sup> Having suppressed the Islamists and the communists, Numeri moved to confront the two thorny issues that had caused the collapse of several past governments: the status of the south and the role of religion in the state.

In the case of the south, Numeri closed the file of the south by what came to be

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<sup>69</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 242-249.

<sup>70</sup> Sidahmed, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 132.

<sup>71</sup> For a detailed analysis of the struggle for power between Numeri and the Ansar, see Mansour Khalid, *Numeri and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: IPI Limited, 1985), 10-21.

<sup>72</sup> Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan* (New York: Prager, 1976), 261-263.

known as the Addis Ababa Agreement.<sup>73</sup> The question of religion and politics was resolved in the constitution of 1973, which, for the first time since independence, stressed the dual Arab and African identity of Sudan and confirmed the respect for Islam, Christianity and the noble aspects of traditional African spiritual beliefs.<sup>74</sup>

While these measures were able to bring peace and stability to Sudan for the first time since independence, opposition to his regime continued unabated. Numei's rule was threatened by the Islamists, who were supported by Libya's Qadafi and Saudi Arabia.<sup>75</sup>

Numei observed the rise of the Islamic movement in the Middle East. He also lost a close friend, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated by radical Muslims.

Also, the Iranian revolution had a regional impact. All these events made Numei believe that if he was to survive, he must mend fences with the Islamists. In line with this thought, nothing better than Islam, the religion of the majority, could serve as the base of legitimacy for his regime. Consequently, Numei moved towards reconciliation with the Islamists in what came to be known as the National Reconciliation.<sup>76</sup> The Islamists, represented by Hassan Turabi, found no problem in cooperating with Numei to further their interests.

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<sup>73</sup> Further discussion of the Addis Ababa Agreement and its impact on Sudan will be presented in chapter six, which examines Islam and nationalism in Sudan.

<sup>74</sup> Khalid, *Numei and the Revolution of Dis-May*, 46-47.

<sup>75</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 327. Also Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 207.

<sup>76</sup> For an analysis of the National Reconciliation, see Khalid, *Numei and the*

Turabi justified this Machiavellian means by the principle "Necessity knows no rule or law."

In other words, Turabi's principle was more pragmatic than dogmatic and motivated by material gains more than by religious zeal.<sup>77</sup>

### Numeri's Religious Awakening

While this process demonstrated how Numeri's move towards Islamization was dictated by particular circumstances of the time, it was combined with a religious reawakening of Numeri personally. Various explanations have been put forward for Numeri's sudden Islamism.<sup>78</sup> According to Mansour Khalid, who served in key government positions under Numeri, Numeri met with a Sufi, a very religious man, who claimed to have communicated with the spirit of the Prophet Muhammed. The Sufi told Numeri that the prophet had appeared to him in a dream and informed him that Numeri was destined to save the Islamic nation.<sup>79</sup>

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*Revolution of Dis-May, 170-176.*

<sup>77</sup> Hayder Ibrahim Ali, "Islamism in Practice: The Case of Sudan," in *The Islamist Dilemma: The Political Role of Islamist Movement in the Contemporary Arab World*, ed. Laura Guazzone (UK: Ithaca Press, 1995), 194.

<sup>78</sup> Another argument states that Numeri was very desperate as he had only daughters and no son to inherit his throne. He sought help from doctors at home and abroad but to no avail. Finally, he took refuge with a saint who told him that if he established God's law on earth, he would have an heir. Obviously, Numeri believed the saint and began to act accordingly. The full story is available in Judith Miller's work, *God Has Ninety-Nine Names: Reporting From a Militant Middle East*, 137.

<sup>79</sup> Khalid, *Numeri and the Revolution of Dis-May*, 279. Also, see Francis Deng,



Obviously, Numeri, now the believer, accepted the Sufi's advice and began to act according to the revelation. As Khalid continued, "Numeri could now say that he alone had achieved what both Mahdism and Khatmaih had failed to achieve in generations – establishment of God's kingdom on earth."<sup>80</sup>

While this story explains Numeri's shift to Islam as a result of divine revelation, it is believed that any theory that ignored the political motives behind Numeri's Islamism misses the point. Consequently, Numeri had political and pragmatic motives for his Islamic tendencies. Based on this argument, Numeri's step was a tactic to divert the attention of his people from the regime's failure and corruption.<sup>81</sup> Either way, it is clear that Numeri's movement was basically an exploitation of religion for political gains.

Regardless of the reasons, he proceeded with his program of Islamization. First, he quit drinking alcohol and ordered his ministers and senior officials to follow suit. Then he published a book called *Why the Islamic Method?* in which he praised Islam as the best way to achieve Sudanese unity.<sup>82</sup> Finally, working with Turabi, the attorney general, Numeri proclaimed the September Laws in which the *Sharia* became the basis of the Sudanese legal system in both the north and the south for Muslims, Christians, and Animists alike.

The September Laws were bitterly resented by all Sudanese political forces, with the

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*Seed of Redemption: A Political Novel* (New York: Lillian Press, 1986), 205-207.

<sup>80</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 310.

<sup>81</sup> John Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 232.

<sup>82</sup> Miller, *God Has Ninety-Nine Names*, 136.

exception of the Muslim Brotherhood. Those Muslims who differed with Numei were to pay a heavy price. Among those was Muhammed Taha, a saintly man in his late seventies who developed a different vision of Islam from Numei's.<sup>83</sup> Taha was arrested, convicted, and executed.

Taha's execution shocked the Sudanese people who asserted that the execution had nothing to do with Islam.<sup>84</sup> However, Numei and his allies, namely the Islamists, continued to believe that these laws had improved the morals of the Sudanese people and so should be followed in other parts of the world.<sup>85</sup>

Meanwhile, Turabi continued to cooperate with Numei so as to achieve his own interests, which meant empowering and expanding his organization – the Muslim Brotherhood. Contrary to Turabi's hopes, this alliance did not last long. Numei sensed the

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<sup>83</sup> For a most respectful and objective analysis of Taha's views on Numei's policy, see Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, *The Second Message of Islam* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

<sup>84</sup> On Taha's trial and execution, see Abdullah Ahmed An-Naim, "The Islamic Law of Apostasy and its Modern Application: A Case from the Sudan," *Religion*, vol. 16 (1986): 197.

<sup>85</sup> In an interview with Judith Miller, a correspondent for the *New York Times* in the Middle East, Numei told Miller that Khartoum was the safest city in Africa and if the American had amputated a few hands now and then, they would be safer. See Miller, *God has Ninety-Nine Names*, 140.

Islamists' plot to replace the fighting Imam (Numeiri) with the scholarly Imam (Turabi).<sup>86</sup>

Numeiri cracked down on the Islamists, Turabi and the key leaders of his organization found themselves behind bars.<sup>87</sup> With the removal of Turabi and his men from power, Numeiri lost his last power base and accelerated the collapse of his regime. As Numeiri suppressed the Islamists, his days in power were numbered. Numeiri was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 1985 by his chief of staff, General Swir al-Dahb.

### Islam in the Post-Numeiri Era, 1985-1989

There are striking similarities between the politics of post-Numeiri Sudan (1985-1989) and those of post-Aboud Sudan (1964-1969). The trend of events is almost identical. Political instability and civil war in the south brought down Aboud's and Numeiri's regimes. Then a series of short-lived coalition governments brought to an end the military takeover.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to this replay of the politics of the 1960s, the underlying problems were also the same: the role and place of religion in the state and society and the war in the south.

As this chapter is mainly concerned with religion and politics, it will outline the major issues related to religion in this part and the war in the south will be analyzed in chapter six of this

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<sup>86</sup> Lesch, *The Sudan*, 57. Also Khalid, *Numeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May*, 390-394.

<sup>87</sup> Sidahmed, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 139.

<sup>88</sup> Peter K. Bechtold, "More Turbulence in Sudan: A New Politics this Time," in *Sudan: State and Society in Crisis*, ed. John O. Voll (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.

study.

As the generals promised to return power to the civilians and honored their promise, for the first time in modern Middle Eastern history elections were held and the civilians came back to run Sudan after more than 16 years of military rule. The critical question in this context is why the September Laws, viewed by the Sudanese people as a "falsification of Islam, the expression of an absolutist power, and an affront to human dignity,"<sup>89</sup> were not abrogated by the elected government. In an attempt to answer this question, one must outline the various views of Sudanese groups toward the September Laws.

As in the 1960s, the Sudanese people were polarized into the Islamists and the secularists and the major challenges were the same: the issue of *Sharia* and the war in the south.<sup>90</sup>

### **The Islamists**

The Islamic camp was divided among the same traditional groups: the Mahdists, the Khatmaih, and the Muslim Brotherhood, which was reconstituted as the National Islamic Front (NIF). Following is a brief analysis of the position of each group.

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<sup>89</sup> Jean Francois Ryer, "The Islamization of Law as a Political Stake in Sudan," in *Sudan After Numei*, ed. Peter Woodward (London and New York: Rutledge, 1991), 141.

<sup>90</sup> For a discussion of the situation in Sudan following the removal of Numei, see for instance Kamal Osman Salih, "The Sudan, 1985-1989, the Fading Democracy," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 28, no.2 (1990): 199-224.

## The Mahdists

The position of the Mahdists toward the September Laws is best represented by its political party, the Umah Party. The Umah Party had been led by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi since the mid 1960s. When al-Mahdi was in the opposition, he was very resentful of these laws. Later in his election manifesto, in 1986, al-Mahdi promised to cancel the laws upon assuming power.<sup>91</sup> However, when he became prime minister, his tone had changed. He suspended part of the laws, but did not abrogate them. This move was criticized by the Islamists for going too far and by the secularists for not going far enough. Al-Mahdi was caught between the hammer of the Islamists and the anvil of the secularists. He continued maneuvering without taking decisive action.<sup>92</sup>

## The Khatmaih

As has been mentioned earlier, the Khatmaih's Islamism is historically associated with political expediency. Like its rival Mahdists, the Khatmaih's position towards the September Laws was vague and pragmatic.

The Khatmaih made an alliance with the NIF at one time and advocated an Islamic state; however, it also concluded a peace agreement with SPLM in which it agreed to

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<sup>91</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 368.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

abrogate the September Laws.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, the Khatmaih's position was ambiguous and characterized by a degree of inconsistency.

### The NIF

The NIF is the only group that had a clear sense of direction and a very stable position towards the September Laws. The NIF is the hard-line wing of the Islamists. It adopted the slogan "Islam is the solution."

The NIF asserted that the creation of an Islamic state based on Islamic teachings was among the objectives of independence. According to Turabi:

The Sudanese people have longed for Islamic law since independence. The embodiment of Islamic values in Sudanese society was the objective of independence. . . . Sudan has been so late in liberating itself from western pressures and it must now ask for forgiveness by returning to God's law.<sup>94</sup>

### The Secularists

The secular camp consists of the southerners, Sudanese communists, trade unionists, feminist groups, and other activists of civil society.

The secularists called explicitly for a separation between state and religion. Religion,

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<sup>93</sup> The religious and political position of the Khatmiyya during Numeiri's regime (1969-1985) is discussed in Ahmed Al-Shahi, *Themes from Northern Sudan* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986).

<sup>94</sup> Lesch, *Sudan*, 80.

to them, is a matter of personal affair and should not be imposed by the state or the law. They rejected the concept of a religious state and called for a secular, civil, democratic state.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, the secularists were not in a position to influence the decision-making or trend of events in Sudan. Consequently, their efforts were to no avail and their ideas remain wishful thinking in Sudan.

In the end, it is clear that the question of religion and state remains one of the most controversial issues in Sudan. The failure to repeal the September Laws indicates the extent to which religion had assumed central stage in Sudanese politics. It also shows the failure of the Sudanese elite to adopt positions that take into consideration the aspirations of the various ethnic and religious groups within their country. It was in this atmosphere when the army took over again, however, this time, the army was backed by the Islamists, the NIF in particular, as will be discussed in the following part.

#### Political Islam in Sudan Since 1989

Political Islam had been associated with Sudan since 1989, for it was in that year a coup led by general Omar Al-Bashir took place with the support of the NIF. The nature of the coup, the political programs of the coup leader, and its impact on the Sudanese state and society are examined in this part.

The coup of 1989 was carried out by middle and lower ranking officers, so there

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<sup>95</sup> Ahmed Al-Shair, "Response to Numeri's Policies: Some Observations on Social and Political changes in Northern Sudan," in *Sudan after Numeri*, ed. Peter Woodward, 156.

must have been a political force behind the new regime. The critical question became whose coup was it? In the beginning, the identity or the political color of the new regime was not clear. The coup was received with initial welcome regionally and internationally. Egypt and Saudi Arabia hailed the new power-holders in Sudan and sent large amounts of oil and food to support the new regime.<sup>96</sup>

By the same token, the West welcomed the new regime. *The London Times* was very optimistic about the new regime in Sudan and expected an end to the civil war:

Given the failure of the civilian government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, the arrival of the military government promising an end to the war can be welcome. When the Sudanese has peace, it shall be able to decide whether its long-term interests are best served by a military rule.<sup>97</sup>

Unfortunately, this initial welcome turned into universal hatred when it became clear that the NIF was the only power behind the new regime. However, Al-Bashir tried to mask his political color and continued to deny the NIF's role in the coup.<sup>98</sup> In his first policy statement, he declared that his revolution of national salvation had a Sudanese goal and pan-

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<sup>96</sup> Sadia Jamal, "Under Bashir's Boot," *New Africa* (July, 1990): 9.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Nyot Kok, *Governance and Conflict in the Sudan, 1985-1995: Analysis, Evaluation and Documentation* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient Institute, 1996), 99.

<sup>98</sup> Two weeks after the coup, Al-Bashir declared that he would head a secular government and he would not enforce Islam against non-Muslims. He went further and declared "We have no relations with the NIF before, during or after the coup. We have no intention of cooperating with them." For more information about the deceit and tactics of the coup leaders, see for instance, Graham Thomas, *Sudan: Struggle for Survival* (London: Dark Publishers, 1993), 105-106.



Arabist orientation but not Islamist.<sup>99</sup> On the other side, Turabi, the father of the new political regime, was arrested shortly after the coup. Furthermore, Turabi, in an attempt to emphasize his disassociation with the regime, did not play any role in the government until 1996 when he was elected speaker of the parliament.

The previous tactics and maneuvering implemented by Al-Bashir and his ally Turabi were unable to mask their close associations. The timing of the coup was dictated by the NIF. The coup was carried out when al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the prime minister, was close to reaching an agreement with the SPLM in which the September Laws would be canceled. The NIF rejected the peace initiative as it viewed it as a betrayal of the Islamist mission.<sup>100</sup>

With the success of the coup, the NIF moved to the forefront of Sudanese politics. It controlled the top positions of the state to the extent that it began to function as a shadow government. The NIF embarked upon its programs to reshape the Sudanese state and society according to its Islamic agenda.<sup>101</sup>

At the state level, following the coup, religion became the guiding principle of the government policies: "Religion is one." Islam is the religion guiding the overwhelming mass of society. It is the law that inspires and guides the government laws, regulations, and

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<sup>99</sup> Sidahmad, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 190.

<sup>100</sup> Gabriel R. Warburg, "The Sudan under Islamist Rule," in *Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*, eds. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Efraim Inbar (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 33.

<sup>101</sup> William Langewiesche, "Turabi's Law," *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 274, no.2 (August, 1994): 27.

policies.<sup>102</sup>

Consequently, Islamic laws were implemented in all aspects of life regardless of the price, which included civil war, human rights violations, international hatred, and economic bankruptcy. Furthermore, the Sudanese state adopted anti-Western rhetoric. Sudan became the harbor and sponsor of Islamic organizations struggling to establish Islamic states in the Middle East. This policy put Sudan on the United States' list of terrorist states and earned Sudan regional and international isolation.<sup>103</sup>

At the social level, with the Islamization of laws, the Sudanese people were subjected to harsher sanctions than the September Laws proclaimed by Numeiri. Violations of human rights for both Muslims and non-Muslims since Al-Bashir seized power in 1989 are well documented by human rights organizations.<sup>104</sup> In 1993, the U.S. State Department *Country Reports on Human Rights for Sudan* noted "the NIF dominated regime pursued religious, ethnic, and ideological discrimination in almost every aspect of society."<sup>105</sup>

After more than a decade of the revolution, the Islamists have brought about almost the exact opposite of what they promised. At the internal level, the revolution was not for everybody, only those in power—the NIF and its members were able to reap the fruits.

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<sup>102</sup> Kok, *Governance and Conflict in Sudan, 1985-1995*, 273.

<sup>103</sup> "Is Sudan terrorism's new best friend?" *Time*, vol. 142, no. 9 (August 1994): 30.

<sup>104</sup> See the *Annual Report of Amnesty International for the years, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1996* (London: Amnesty International Publications).

<sup>105</sup> The U.S. Department of State, *Country Human Rights Reports 1993: Sudan*

Instead of alleviating the people's suffering and promoting their welfare, the NIF's policies have hurt almost everyone in Sudan. The civil war has worsened, the economy is in shambles, and the society is oppressed and intimidated by a police state. At the international level, with the application of the NIF's program of political Islam, Sudan became regionally and internationally isolated. Sudan supported Iraq in 1990, and lost a major source of financial support from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Egypt severed its relations with Sudan in 1995 after its involvement in an attempt to assassinate Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak during a visit to Ethiopia in June 1995.<sup>106</sup> Sudan's relations with Algeria, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia are very difficult. These countries charged Sudan with involvement in their internal affairs.

In the international community, Sudan remained isolated. The European Union condemned Sudan for its human rights record and its aggressive policies in the region. U.S.-Sudanese relations reached their nadir in 1998, after the bombing of the U.S. Embassies in East Africa. The story of the U.S. attack on Sudan has already been told.

To sum up, since the Islamists came to power in 1989, dissatisfaction with their policies ran deep in Sudan as well as abroad. The lessons of the Sudan, writes Ramsay, the former British ambassador to Sudan, is of the corrosive effects of a religion traduced and

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(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

<sup>106</sup> For an excellent analysis of Sudan's relations with Egypt since 1989, see Hilal Khashan, "The New Arab Cold War," *World Affairs*, vol. 159, no. 4 (Spring 1997): 158-168.

misrepresented for political ends.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, the Sudanese people have lost faith in Turabi's experiment as it turned to be worse than the rule it replaced. The target of the NIF was to control power as an effective tool of Islamization. In other words, politics rather than religion were at the top of the movement's agenda. As a Sudanese scholar put it:

In its eagerness to lay its hands on power, the Sudanese Islamist movement seems to have endorsed and legitimized the game of politics with all of its cynicism and shameless pursuit of partisan interests at the expense of religious morality and principles.<sup>108</sup>

In the final analysis, several things are striking about Islam in Sudan. Foremost among these is the complete exploitation of religion for material and personal gains. The lust for power, access to government, and personal interests takes precedence over the religious zeal. In the pre-independence period, it had been mentioned how both religious groups – Khatmaih and Mahdist – had reconciled themselves with secularism. They chose to work with the British, who were alien non-Muslim invaders. By the same token, in the post-independence period, the cause of Islam suffered heavily because of the pragmatism and opportunism of the Islamists. In other words, the Islamists of Sudan are more pragmatic than dogmatic. They switch allegiance and compromise faith and prove that they are interested in many things other than religion. In doing so, the Islamists of Sudan were not only paying lip service to Islam, but also had presented Islam in a very ugly way.

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<sup>107</sup> Allan Ramsay, "Sudan: Past and Present," *Contemporary Review*, vol. 277, no. 1618 (November 2000): 306.

<sup>108</sup> Sidahmed, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 224.

## CHAPTER 5

### ISLAM AND NATIONALISM

Like secularism, nationalism was and still is a major ideological and philosophical challenge to the Islamic world-view. To many Muslim intellectuals, it is viewed as a serious threat to Muslims' faith, identity, and life. For a host of other nationalist figures, the merits of nationalism are easy to find, as nationalism is viewed as a source of inspiration and a unifying ideology for the establishment of a political entity that is rich, strong and progressive. The question then arises: why do some Muslim intellectuals praise nationalism and reconcile it with Islam while others denounce it and view it as another Western conspiracy against the Islamic world?

This confusion over the role of nationalism in Muslim life is not difficult to understand if one recalls what has happened in the Islamic world since the winds of nationalism began to blow across it in the early nineteenth century. In this regard, it is the contention of this chapter that nationalism, which was born after the French Revolution in 1789,<sup>1</sup> was then an alien idea to Muslims. However, in the course of the nineteenth century, nationalism, this powerful ideological force, became very attractive and familiar to Muslims,

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<sup>1</sup> Roy C. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: Movements and Regimes* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1992), 194.

and in the twentieth century it became a dominant idea among many rulers and thinkers in the Islamic world.

Following is a brief analysis of Muslims' different responses to nationalism.

### **First Response: Rejection**

The very first response to nationalism in the Islamic world came from the Ottoman Empire. As the ideas of the French Revolution began to spread in the Empire, an Ottoman statesman warned his people against French blandishments and wrote:

The known and famous atheists, Voltaire and Rousseau, and the other materialists like them, had printed and published various works consisting of insults and vilification against the pure prophets and great kings, of the removal and abolition of all religion, and all allusions to the sweetness and equality and republicanism.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude toward the French Revolution and its ideas, including nationalism, should not surprise us as many Muslims reject outright the idea of nationalism on the following grounds:

First, nationalism is an alien secular idea that is incompatible with the nature of Islam as a transnational religious ideology. Muslims all over the world are one community united by the bond of faith and the law of Islam, regardless of differences in language, history, blood, or territory. Therefore, neither country nor nation, but religion is the core and ultimate determinant of identity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 30.

Islam is sharply resistant to nationalism, ethnicity, and racism. The Quran confronts those issues by contending that the standards of excellence have nothing to do with nation, country, or race but are founded on moral and religious piety. God says:

O people! We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female. And have made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The noblest among you is the most pious. Allah is all-knowing.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, it is God's will that the world be divided into different nations and religions. God says, "If Allah so willed, He could make you all one people."<sup>5</sup>

The Prophet also emphasized the prominence of piety in his farewell address and declared that there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, except through piety and fear of God.<sup>6</sup>

In light of the above, it is evident that race, territory, language, etc., has no significance whatsoever in the Islamic faith. Religion is the decisive factor in expressing or determining identity. The primacy of religion has discredited any other factor. This primacy of the sense of religious identity makes the Egyptian Muslim see the Egyptian Christian, not to mention the Egyptian Jew, as a stranger. However, he sees the Iranian Muslim or the Indian Muslim as a brother.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, all Muslims of all races in all parts of the world are members of the same

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<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Quran*, Section 49, A, 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Quran*, Section 16, A, 92-94.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Ali A. Mazrui, "Islamic and Western Values," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 5 (September - October 1997): 127.

great Islamic community. Also, they are superior to non-Muslims. This sense of group solidarity and pride among Muslims is drawn from the Islamic vision of the world.

According to that vision, the world is sharply divided into the House of Islam (*Darul Islam*) and the House of War (*Darul Harb*). The House of Islam is all those lands under Islamic sovereignty. The House of War is all those lands and communities outside the territory of Islam. In theory, the two houses are in a perpetual state of war.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the battle lines are drawn on a theological basis.

The House of Islam was established first by the Prophet and his successors. The city-state that the Prophet created in Medina was expanded into a large empire. It was a transnational, religiously defined state and community. In this state, Muslim Arabs are brethren of Muslim Africans, Persians, and so on. More than that, the unbelieving Arabs who shared the language, land, history, blood and many more things with the believing Arabs became strangers and so were excluded.<sup>9</sup> This situation continued for centuries.

With the advent of nationalism in the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire represented the House of Islam and Christian Europe the House of War. More, there was a constant state of war between the two houses. The Ottoman Empire, as pointed out earlier, was a warrior state that expanded the frontiers of Islam and defended Muslims against the

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<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 112.

<sup>8</sup> A useful article on this subject is written by Majid Khadduri, "Islam and the Modern Laws of Nations," *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 50, no. 2 (April 1956): 358-372.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 82.



encroachments of Europe. Furthermore, the Ottomans viewed themselves as Muslims and viewed the Europeans as infidels.<sup>10</sup>

Second, as mentioned earlier, nationalist sentiments began to reach the Islamic world at a time when there was a perpetual state of war between Muslims and Europe. The timing of the spread of nationalist ideas made many Muslims believe it part of a Western conspiracy against the Islamic world. Many antinationalists argued that the West used nationalism as a weapon of disintegration against the Ottoman Empire – the House of Islam. Therefore, it was purposely exported by the West to facilitate the process of dividing the Islamic world. In consequence, nationalism was viewed as a religious and political threat.<sup>11</sup> The sympathizers with nationalism were very discredited and viewed with hatred and suspicion. As they were inspired by the West or the House of War, they could not be trusted. Any ideas that come from the House of War raise doubts for Muslims. Muslims must ignore such ideas of secularism and nationalism and avoid anything that might weaken their unity and make them vulnerable to Western domination.

This hostile attitude towards the House of War—its ideas as well as its people—was very powerful to the extent that the advocates of reform who criticized the Sultan in the Ottoman Empire were discredited as the priority was the unity and strength of Islam not reform. As Afghani wrote:

In the face of Western encroachments, unity of all Muslims around the Sultan is the most important thing. The reforms could come later, but attacks

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<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 202.

<sup>11</sup> Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 65.

on the Sultan could only weaken the primacy goal of unity.<sup>12</sup>

The shift of loyalty from the transnational Islamic state to the narrow modern nationalist ideas of Arabism, Turkism, Kurdism and the like was viewed as a betrayal of the Islamic cause. Peter Mansfield pointed out that religious loyalties were still much stronger than secular nationalist ideas. Arabs, as a major ethnic group in the Empire, did not think in terms of overthrowing the Empire, which was the sole protector of the Islamic world.<sup>13</sup> There is no doubt these feelings were shared by other ethnic groups throughout the Empire.

The idea that sets aside one group of Muslims—Arabs, Turks, Kurds, etc.—and puts them in confrontation with any other group of Muslims, Persians, Africans, Indians, etc., was completely rejected by Muslims. Furthermore, European nationalism was seen in terms of destruction, war, selfishness, and intolerance:

Nationalism as a religion inculcates neither charity nor justice, it is proud not humble, and it signally fails to universalize human aims. . . . Nationalism's kingdom is frankly of this world, and its attainment involved tribal selfishness and vainglory, a particular ignored and tyrannical intolerance and war. Nationalism brings not peace but war.<sup>14</sup>

With such an ugly image, nationalism was the last idea that Muslims needed to borrow from Europe. Furthermore, the Islamic world, as many thinkers argued back then,

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<sup>12</sup> Cited in Niki R. Keddi, "Pan-Islamism as Proto-Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern History*, vol.14, no. 1 (March 1969): 25.

<sup>13</sup> Mansfield, *The History of the Middle East*, 125.

<sup>14</sup> William W. Hadad and William Ochsewald, *Nationalism in a Non-National State, the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977), 8.

must not look to the West for solutions to its problems. Muslims must look for answers to their problems in their own culture, history, and, most importantly, religion.<sup>15</sup>

Third, nationalism was discredited on the grounds that it was a secular idea. Secularism is the major base of nationalism. If Islam completely rejects secularism as mentioned earlier, the logical conclusion would be that Islam rejects nationalism as well. Nationalism requires the separation of religion and politics. It shifts sovereignty from God to people. The nation is the source of authority and legislation. As a result, the *Sharia* ceases to be the source of legislation. In Islam, sovereignty belongs to God, who is the sole source of legitimate authority.<sup>16</sup> The anti-nationalist intellectuals called for the rule of God's law in a nonnational state uniting all Muslims through one Islamic community under submission to God. Therefore, nationalism is contradictory to the nature, mission, and universal message of Islam.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, the attitudes of Muslims towards nationalism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be summarized by saying that nationalism was incompatible with Islam and so it was completely rejected. Muslims saw a zero-sum game between Islam and nationalism and acted accordingly. Islam was a formidable rival to nationalism and the historical context in which nationalism emerged was not conducive to accept it.

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<sup>15</sup> Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Majid Khadduri, "From Religious to National Law," in *Modernization of the Arabic World*, eds. J. H. Thompson and G. R. O. Rsischauer (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 72.

However, pan-Islamism, as a movement that emerged towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, was utilized by the Ottoman leaders for essentially political purposes alien to the original concept and thus cannot be treated as part or continuation of it.

Ottoman pan-Islamism was primarily a reaction to Western imperialism. The Ottoman Empire, during the regime of Sultan Abduhamit II (1876-1909), employed pan-Islamism as a political means to secure the loyalty of Muslims and gain their sympathy and support against European aggression. It was close to propaganda used by the Ottomans to mobilize the Muslims and enlist them in their cause.<sup>19</sup> In other words, it was exploited by the Ottomans for motives associated with political expediency rather than the cause of Islam. In doing so, the Ottomans encouraged others to follow their path. An article in *The American Historical Review* suggests that the British, like the Russians, Germans, and French, made use of pan-Islamic sentiments when circumstances seemed to favor it, as in combating the Russian advance in Central Asia. The Germans also gave their blessing to the idea when they found it suitable to their imperial goals.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the Arabs in the twentieth century played a similar game.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The history of the Ottomans' pan-Islamic claims is summarized in Bernard Lewis, "The Ottoman Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: A Review," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 1 (April 1965): 291-294.

<sup>20</sup> Lee, "The Origin of Pan-Islamism." Also, David Forkmin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> The Arabs, in their conflict with England and France in the early years of the last century and Israel later, have appealed to pan-Islamism for help and support. In 1990, Saddam Hussein sought support by appealing to fellow Muslims all over the world.

Furthermore, pan-Islamism, in contrast to its goal, the unity of all Muslims all over the world, paved the way for the development of other nationalisms in the Islamic world. As pan-Islamism was geared against the enemies of the Ottoman Empire, namely the Western imperialist powers, it emphasized the importance of unity of Muslims, the necessity of restoring their glorious past, superiority to others and finally a deep hostility towards the West:

Pan-Islamism included several features: hostility to the West, and particularly to Western conquest and exploitation, identification with a glorious age in the past, statements of the superiority of the indigenous culture, this case Islam to all others [sic], and an appeal to both conservatives and liberals for the common goal of unity and strength.<sup>22</sup>

These features are nearly all common to all nationalisms. Given the fact that pan-Islamism or Muslim unity could not be realized, many Muslims, especially the Arabs and the Turks, began to believe that if pan-Islamism was ever to be attained, pan-Arabism and pan-Turkism were necessary prerequisites.<sup>23</sup> These ideas marked a turning point in the history of the Islamic world. They opened the gate for a new mode of thinking that ended by completely accepting nationalism after its penetration of the Islamic world.

### **The Final Response: Adoration**

In this stage, nationalism had penetrated the Islamic world. This part will examine the rise of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire up to its break up, and the formation of the

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<sup>22</sup> Keddi, "Pan-Islamism as Proto-Nationalism," 26.

<sup>23</sup> Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 74.

Turkish Republic. It will also look at the development of Arab nationalism as a major nationalist movement that produced disastrous results for the Empire. The following is an analysis of the development of these two nationalisms.

### **Turkish Nationalism: From Empire to Nation**

As pointed out earlier, nationalism was not a vital force for the Ottomans until the nineteenth century. Until then, the Turks, like the Arabs, the Kurds, and other elements of the Ottoman Empire, rejected the emergence of specific racial or ethnic identities at the expense of Islam.<sup>24</sup>

As time went on, however, many intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire came to realize the necessity to adjust to the new realities imposed by European dominance. This meant the necessity of borrowing from the West in order to defend the Empire.<sup>25</sup> Nationalism, at this stage, was viewed as one of the sources of European strength and success. Thus, it should be adopted as a remedy for Muslims' weakness, failure, and division.<sup>26</sup>

The Ottomans were challenged by a grave problem. Who were they? Turks, Muslims, Ottomans? The Ottoman Empire was a European, Asian, and African power. Thus, it was not an easy task to identify the Empire or its subjects. As far as the Ottomans

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<sup>24</sup> Caesar E. Farah, "Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1918," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 8.

<sup>25</sup> Dawn, "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origins of an Ideology," 377.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, 184.

were concerned, they were just Muslims. They never called themselves "Turks," nor did they call their country "Turkey." The words "Turk" and "Turkey" were used only in Europe.<sup>27</sup> Mark Sykes, who had traveled extensively in the Ottoman Empire, began one of his books by asking:

How many people realize, when they speak of Turkey and the Turks that there is no such place and no such people in the sense that there are such countries and such peoples as Prussia and the Prussians, Scotland and the Scotch?<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the term "Turk" had been almost a term of abuse in the Empire. As a British observer of the Ottoman values and institutions wrote:

The surest way to insult an Ottoman gentleman is to call him a Turk. His face will straight way wear the expression a Londoner assumes, when he hears himself frankly styled Cockney. He is no Turk, no savage, he will assure you, but an Ottoman subject of the Sultan, by no means to be confounded with a certain barbarian's styled Turcômons.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> Sir Mark Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage: A Short History of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1915), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Davy, *The Sultan and His Subjects* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1907), 209.

However, when the ideas of the nation and the national homeland as the basis of political identity and sovereignty began to penetrate the Empire, and exercise a continuing fascination on many Turkish intellectuals, the term Turk lost its negative connotations. Furthermore, pan-Turkism became the base of a new ideology in the Ottoman Empire. This marked a turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire as well as the whole Islamic world. The four main Ottoman thinkers to consider are Namik Kemal, Yusuf Akura, Zia Gokalp and finally Atatürk.

Namik Kemal is considered the first Turkish ideologue of nationalism in the nineteenth century. Like Arabic nationalists, the first generation of Turkish intellectuals considered Islam as a major component of Turkish nationalism. Thus, Kemal believed that Islam should be the basis of Ottoman nationalism.

As Bernard Lewis points out, Kemal included Arabs and Persians in his call for Ottoman pride.<sup>30</sup> As the attachment to religion endured, and provided the basis for a sustained challenge to nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, Kemal could not avoid Islam as a fundamental element in the historical identity of the Ottomans.

Kemal's ideas marked the penetration of nationalism among Turkish intellectuals. Therefore, Kemal's ideas paved the way for the emergence of a pure nationalist idea from other Turkish thinkers.

The intellectual who played a prominent role in the development of Turkish nationalism is Yusuf Akura. Akura started writing in the 1890s. He belonged to a new

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<sup>30</sup> Bernard Lewis, "History Writing and National Revival in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Affairs*, vol. 4 (1953): 218.



generation who took it upon themselves to revolutionize the Turks and familiarize them with the merits of nationalism. In his work "An Essay on the Historical Foundation of the Ottoman Empire," he wrote: "The Young Turks [sic] attempts to found an Ottoman nation is a cul-de-sac. Nationalism is the only road to take."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, unlike Kemal, Akura believed that the acceptance of nationalist ideas inspired by the French Revolution in Europe was based on consciousness of language, race, and ancestors but not on religion.

Akura's ideas culminated in pan-Turkism, which aspired to unite all the Turkish peoples in one state. Pan-Turkism meant that the Empire could survive only on the basis of solidarity of a nation united by a common language.<sup>32</sup> It was the first time in Muslims' recorded history that the unity of language took precedence over the unity of religion. With this dramatic change, the Ottomans, now the Turks, began their endeavor to follow exactly the path of Europe.

The shift towards adopting a strong Turkish identity was not accepted by many Turkish intellectuals or the Turkish masses. It was by no means agreed that Turkish nationalism replaced pan-Islamism. However, those Turkish leaders who were in favor of that approach and had other priorities than the Islamic cause were able to push their agenda. Therefore, a policy of Turkification was adopted in the Empire. Based on this policy, the Turkish language replaced the Arabic language in the whole Empire,<sup>33</sup> and non-Turks such

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<sup>31</sup> Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 72.

<sup>32</sup> Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 309.

<sup>33</sup> Sidney Nelterler Fisher, *The Middle East: A History* (New York: Alfred A.

as Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and the like were replaced with Turks in the important administrative posts.<sup>34</sup> This policy aimed at the domination and consolidation of the Turkish people in the Empire. It was secular and nationalist rather than Islamic. Many Muslim-Arabs and non-Arabs rejected it as racist and anti-Islamic. Furthermore, most of the leaders of this policy were Freemasons, with close ties to the Jews of Salonika.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, they were viewed as traitors and subversives but not nationalists. However, the policy of Turkification was an important phase in preparing minds and spirits for the emergence of Turkish nationalism.

A key figure in the development of Turkish nationalism is Zia Gokalp. Gokalp believed that there was a fundamental contradiction between Islam and Turkish nationalism, so he called for a separation between the two.<sup>36</sup> Gokalp went further in emphasizing the secular face of nationalism and declared, "the interests of the Turkish nation are always dearer to him than those of Islam."<sup>37</sup> Gokalp is considered as the father of Turkish nationalism; his ideas became the policies of Kemal Ataturk later. He is described as the

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Knopf, 1969), 345.

<sup>34</sup> For an illuminating discussion of the impact the policy of Turkification had on Arab nationalism, see Philip S. Khoury, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Political Life: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *The American Review*, vol. 96, no. 5 (December 1991): 1374-1395.

<sup>35</sup> Mansfield, *History of Middle East*, 128. Also Forkmin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, 42.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

inspirer and the best-qualified theoretician of the national movement called Turkism.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned above, Ataturk was deeply influenced by Gokalp's ideas. Therefore, Islam was no longer a crucial component of Turkish nationalism. On the contrary, it was an obstacle in the road and so had to be moved aside. In Ataturk's nationalist program, language, history, and ethnicity were given prominence, while Islam was discredited. Once the War of Independence was completed, Turkish nationalism under the leadership of Ataturk hit back at the Ottoman past and pan-Islamism with a vengeance as has been explained earlier. Pan-Islamism was abolished from the Turkish agenda. To Ataturk and Gokalp, the burden of Islamic leadership had proved too heavy for Turkey. Consequently, it would be an exaggeration to say that Turkey could play any significant role in the Islamic world after the disestablishment of Islam by Ataturk.<sup>39</sup>

The divorce between Turkey and Islam at the hands of Ataturk, in adopting secularism or nationalism, marked the beginning of what has become a continuing tension between the two Turkish identities: the one Islamic in its culture, history, and aspirations, the other Western in its orientation. It defines itself not in religious, but in racial and national terms. As empirical studies have proven, it was not an easy task for the Turks to develop

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<sup>38</sup> Webster, *The Turkey of Ataturk: Social Process in the Turkish Reformation*, 154.

<sup>39</sup> In fact, to many Muslims throughout the world, the year 1924, when the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey at the hands of Ataturk, is a black year in history. To Turkey, the same year is the point of no return in reconciling Islam and Turkish aspirations.

national sentiments at the expense of loyalty to the Islamic community.<sup>40</sup> During World War I, the Turks had proclaimed "*Jihad*" (holy war) against the Allies and called Muslims to fight in the Islamic cause. Even in the War of Independence, Atatürk had appealed to Islam so as to gain the support of the Turkish masses. However, the idea of a territorial state of Turkey, the fatherland of a nation called the Turks, was by no means acceptable to the Kurds. They are a people who are not Turks, and long accustomed to religious rather than ethnic loyalty to the state.

In the end, it is worth noting that nationalism played a major role in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire was destroyed from within by nationalist forces. However, it was not possible for this powerful ideological force to destroy the Empire without the participation of the Western powers. It is widely agreed that most of the Ottoman subjects were not seeking separation. Rather, they would have preferred to remain within an Ottoman state if that political entity continued to exist in the following years.<sup>41</sup> The fate of Arab nationalism is just one example in this case, as will be discussed in the following part of this chapter.

### **The Development of Arab Nationalism**

Like Turkish nationalism and other nationalisms in Asia and Africa, Arab

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<sup>40</sup> See for instance, Frederick W. Frey, "Socialization to National Identification Among Turkish Peasants," *The Journal of Politics*, vol.30, no. 4 (November 1968): 934-965.

<sup>41</sup> Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 138.

nationalism was a reaction against Western encroachments and conquests, and to a lesser degree against the last years of the Young Turks' rule.<sup>42</sup>

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the Arabic world came under the rule of various European imperialist powers. The African part was subjugated before the Arab East as part of what came to be known as the "Scramble for Africa." Most of the Arab East remained under Ottoman rule until World War I (1914-1919), which was then replaced by European domination and conquest; namely, by France and Britain. Consequently, the earliest nationalist sentiments emerged in the African part before the Arab East. However, nationalism as an ideology was born in the Arab East. Like Turkish nationalism, the foundations of Arab nationalism have changed over the course of time. In this context, Arab nationalism developed into three main phases.

#### The First Phase: Islamic and Arab Identity

The first phase of Arab nationalism can be dated back to the early years of the nineteenth century. It was represented by the nationalist movements that appeared in North Africa. It was directed against the intrusion of France and England as the major colonial powers in the region. While Islam was known to be hostile to nationalism as providing an incompatible focus of loyalty, this early stage of Arab nationalism was characterized by a strong Islamic component. "Islam," writes John Esposito, "played an

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<sup>42</sup> Quatuert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*, 209.

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important role in the development of anti-colonial independence movements.”<sup>43</sup> This role can be seen in the Mahdist revolt in Sudan (1881-1897), in Morocco and Tunisia and most importantly in Algeria.<sup>44</sup>

These movements were nationalist and anti-imperialist at the same time. While their concern was self-determination rather than the creation of an Arab national state, they fought to get independence and to maintain their Arabic-Islamic identities.

### The Second Phase: Less Arab More Islamic Identity

Arab nationalism as an ideology and a political force that emphasizes the identity and group solidarity of the Arab nation started in the Arab East.

As mentioned earlier, the policy of Turkification had largely contributed to the development of Arab nationalism. Arab disappointment found expression in a form of nationalist movement that strived to emphasize the merits of the Arabs and their special role in Islam. “The Arabs,” writes Albert Hourani, “were the matter of Islam, the human means by which Islam expanded in the world. The Prophet Muhammed was an Arab, the language

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<sup>43</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, 60.

<sup>44</sup> In Algeria, the first nationalist movement was led by a religious man named Abdal-Qadir. Under his leadership, resistance to the French took the form of holy war against the infidels. After Abdal Qadir, the banner of *Jihad* or holy war was carried by another religious leader, named Ben Badis. Ben Badis stood for affirming the Arabic-Islamic identity of Algeria in the face of French policies of assimilation. He adopted the slogan “Islam is my religion; Arabic is my language; Algeria is my fatherland.” For more information on the role of Islam in Algeria, see John Ruedy, *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1994), 76. Also Shillington, *History of Africa*, 176-177.

of the Quran is Arabic, and the Arabs are the guardians of the holy places."<sup>45</sup> In light of such a view, Rachid Rida argued that the glories of Islam could only be restored through the Arabs. In the article entitled "The Civilization of the Arabs," Rida wrote:

To care for the history of the Arabs and to strive to revive their glory is the same as to work for the Muslim union which only obtained in past centuries thanks to the Arabs, and will not return in this century, except through them, united and in an agreement with all the races.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, Rida did not see any contradiction between Islam and nationalism on one hand. On the other hand, he tried to combine Islam and Arab nationalism. He went further in reconciling both and argued that Arab unity is a necessary step towards the larger Muslim unity.

The compatibility between Islam and Arabism is central in the ideas of al-Kawakibi (1849-1902). In his work "The Excellences of the Arabs," al-Kawakibi provides a list of twenty-six reasons to prove the superiority of the Arabs and why they should be leaders of the Islamic world.<sup>47</sup> Like Rida, al-Kawakibi offered a new interpretation of the role of the Arabs, explaining how the Arab unity could be a solid base for Muslim unity.

While al-Kawakibi was the man who sowed the seeds of these high thoughts of the Arabs, it was Sati Al-Husari<sup>48</sup> who did most to popularize these ideas in the minds and hearts

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<sup>45</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 300.

<sup>46</sup> Sylvia G. Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-80.

<sup>48</sup> Among the best studies about al-Husari is William L. Cleveland, *The Making of*

of the Arab masses. Al-Husari continued the line of thought that started with Rida and al-Kawakibi. Thus, he argued that Arab nationalism and Islam are in harmony and also Arab nationalism is easier to bring about than Muslim unity, and the latter is not capable of realization except through Arab unity.<sup>49</sup>

This line of thought was continued by a host of other writers who shared Al-Husari's views. The list includes prominent figures in the modern history of Arab thought, such as Amin Faris, Shakib Arslan, Abdul Rahman Al-Bazaz, Abdul Aziz Al-Duri, and others.<sup>50</sup>

In this phase of Arab nationalism, Islam was a fundamental element in the historical identity of the Arabs. In other words, Arab nationalism was based on Islam and seen only through religious or Islamic glasses.

In light of the above analysis, it is clear that the extraordinary role of Islam as a major component of Arab identity left no room for secular ideas such as national unity based on language, race or history, and of course, there were no intentions of changing the place of religion in the society. In other words, Arabic nationalism in its second phase was less national and more religious or, in particular, less Arabic and more Islamic.<sup>51</sup>

Consequently, the intellectuals mentioned above were more reformers than

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*an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thoughts of Sati al-Husari* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 43, 45.

<sup>50</sup> See for example, David Dien Commings, "Religious Reformers and Arabists in Damascus," *International Journal of the Middle East Studies*, vol. 18 (November 1986): 405-425.

<sup>51</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 317.



revolutionaries. They did not call openly for a secession of the Arabs from the Ottoman Empire. They believed that the remedy of the sick Empire could be achieved by reconciliation between the Arabs and the Turks. Both are Muslims and the Islamic world needed both of them in the face of the European aggression. Therefore, these voices could be interpreted as an Arabic appeal to the Ottomans to acknowledge the special position of the Arabs in Islam and to treat them accordingly.<sup>52</sup>

### The Third Phase: More National Less Religious, More Arab Less Islamic

Arab nationalism in its third and final stage of evolution as both an idea and a movement with philosophy, institutions, and political aims is a twentieth-century phenomenon.

It was in this stage that the Arabs developed a theory on the basis of which they were able to define the meaning of Arab nationalism, what constitutes the Arab nation, the boundaries of this nation, and finally its eternal mission.<sup>53</sup>

According to George Antonieus, the seeds of Arab nationalism were sowed by Arab Christian intellectuals, who established secret societies that worked for the independence of the Arab countries and their liberation from the Turks. The first of these societies was the Syrian Scientific Society, established in 1857. Antonieus hailed the society as the first

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<sup>52</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 193.

<sup>53</sup> We cannot within the bounds of this study discuss all these concepts. For further discussion, see Hisham B. Sharabi, *Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World: The Middle East and North Africa* (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966), 95, 97.

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outward manifestation of a collective national consciousness and the cradle of a new political movement.<sup>54</sup>

The Syrian Scientific Society was the first of a series of secret societies established in the Arab East that demanded the independence of the Arabs from the Ottoman yoke.<sup>55</sup> These societies were composed of young Arab nationalists who took pride in being Arab and attempted to rally Arabs—Christians, Muslims, or Jews—around a pro-Arab and anti-Ottoman program.

Along with the activities of these societies, there were the efforts of other intellectuals such as Negib Azouri, Qustantin Zuraq, Michel Aflaq and many others who contributed valuably to the maturity of Arab nationalism by their brilliant works.<sup>56</sup>

To most of these intellectuals, nationalism was a true substitute for religious faith. Therefore, it was under the impact of the writings of these intellectuals that national feelings began to take a secular form. In the words of an Arab secular nationalist, "the Arabs existed

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<sup>54</sup> One of the members of the society, Ibrahim Yazeji, composed a poem exhorting Arabs to remember their past greatness and awake and rise "Arise, ye Arabs and awake." This poem is viewed by Antonieus as a nationalist manifesto. Antonieus marked this event as the date of birth of Arab nationalism. See George Antonieus, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Norwich: Jarold and Sons, Ltd.), 54, 55, 60.

<sup>55</sup> The historians of Arab nationalism mention several of these societies, the most prominent were: Arab Renaissance (1906), The Literary Club (1910), and the Society of the Young Arab Nation (1911). Many historians attribute to these societies the authorship of the first revolutionary ideas of the Arab East. See Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History, Nation and State in the Arab World* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2000), 74-82.

<sup>56</sup> See Peter Mansfield, *The Arabs* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 195-228.

before Islam and before Christianity."<sup>57</sup> The Arabs were Arabs before they became Muslims.

In other words, they are Arabs first and Muslims second. Furthermore, in this stage, religion is viewed as a factor of division and so, in the name of unity and Arab nationalism; it must be removed from the scene.

In light of the above analysis, it is clear that Arab nationalists at this stage saw a zero-sum game between religion and nationalism. As the secular nationalists believe that anything that stands in the way of nationalism, nation building, and Arab unity—even Islam—must be pushed aside, Islam was restricted to private life and separated from politics.

As the Arabs continued their drive for nationalism, they decided to break away from the Ottomans, and Arab nationalism culminated in the Arab Revolt in 1916, led by Sharif Hussein against the Turks.<sup>58</sup> The Arabs were betrayed by England and France, as the promises of independence were never fulfilled. Worse, Arab lands were occupied and partitioned. Like the consequences of Turkish nationalism for the Ottoman Empire, Arab nationalism came to be a complete disaster for the Arabs.

In the end, it is clear that nationalism was not a European gift presented to the Arabs or Turks on a silver platter but rather a part of the European hostility towards these peoples. According to many historians, the British supported Arab nationalism for anti-Islamic reasons. They formed the post-war Middle East with the objective of creating a rival for

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<sup>57</sup> Haim, *Arab Nationalism*, 36.

<sup>58</sup> Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, 156.

pan-Islamism.<sup>59</sup> This rival is Arab nationalism, Turkish nationalism, Persian nationalism and the like. In regard to the Arabs, the British went further and supported the creation of the Arab League as a response to growing public opinion calling for Arab unity. This organization became a weapon against Arab unity. Its charter emphasizing the independence and the sovereignty of the twenty members of the league made the road to unity full of thorns.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, the goal of creating one Arab state is a myth. As an Egyptian politician once asked, "if you add one zero to another and then another, what sum will you get?"<sup>61</sup> Also one can argue that Arab nationalism is now dead.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the vices of this idea can be seen in most Arabic countries with ethnic groups other than Arabs, as in Iraq, Algeria, and finally Sudan, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

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<sup>59</sup> Elie Kedouri has put forward this argument repeatedly in his many writings, perhaps most notably in his book, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987). See also, Mansfield, *The Arabs*.

<sup>60</sup> For a thoughtful treatment of the Arab League, see the work of Robert W. MacDonald, *The League of Arab States: A Study in the Dynamics of Regional Organization* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>61</sup> Haim, *Arab Nationalism*, 47.

<sup>62</sup> From Saudi Arabia to Morocco, Arab leaders pay lip service to Arab nationalism as they are more strongly committed to Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, and Jordanian nationalism than to Arab nationalism. The Arab regimes have never favored the idea of a single Arab nation state.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **ISLAM AND NATIONALISM IN TURKEY AND SUDAN**

#### **Islam and Nationalism in Turkey and the Kurdish Question**

In Chapter Five, it was mentioned that Atatürk's attempt to establish a secular, European-style state was being challenged by what could be called a retreat from secularism. This retreat was seen as part of a growing reaction against secularism, and of the rise of the Islamic movement. At the same time, another potentially important force challenging the very structure of the state and its legitimizing Kemalist ideology exist in the rise of Kurdish nationalist aspirations. These two challenges deepen the crisis of Turkey. This part focuses on the Kurdish question and try to answer several questions: "Who are the Kurds?" "What do Kurds in Turkey want and what is the response of the Turkish government?" "What impact does the conflict have on Turkey and the Kurds?" And finally, "Can this conflict be resolved peacefully?"

This study attempts to offer satisfactory answers to these questions; thus, it provides significant information to explore the Kurdish question.

After Arabs, Turks, and Persians, the Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kurds have become the largest stateless group of ethnically distinctive people who share a common language, history, and common aspirations to bind them together in an acknowledged homeland. The Kurds constitute a nation.<sup>1</sup>

There are some 25-30 million Kurds, more than half live in southeastern Turkey. The rest are scattered through northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, and northeastern Syria, with a minority in Europe as a result of migration.<sup>2</sup> The area where Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran meet—where the vast majority of the Kurds live—is generally referred to as “Kurdistan,” “Land of the Kurds.”

The Kurds have their own language, Kurdish. This language has managed to survive policies of assimilation, especially in Turkey, and all oppression and bans to which it has been exposed. The great majority of Kurds, about 75 percent, are Sunni Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the Kurds have their own history. From the tenth century onwards, the Kurds have played a significant political role in Islam. The most famous Kurdish leader was

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<sup>1</sup> James Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1998), 7.

<sup>2</sup> There is no accurate number for the Kurds. Sources differ widely because of the criteria of ethnicity and language. Furthermore, statistics may be manipulated for political reasons.

<sup>3</sup> David McDowal, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 10.

Saladin, the founder of the Ayyubid state. Saladin drove the Crusaders from Jerusalem and defeated Richard the Lion-hearted in the late twelfth century.

The question, thus, is why have the Kurds, with their rich history, culture, and aspirations, not attained their freedom, even though they have waged resistant struggles since the beginning of the twentieth century and paid a high price for it?

While the answer to this question requires a wide research into the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey and its neighbors Iraq, Iran, and Syria, for the purposes of this study, emphasis will be on the Kurdish struggle in Turkey, where more than half of the Kurds live.

### What Do the Kurds of Turkey Want?

Kurdish demands in Turkey have changed over time due to several internal and external events. Kurdish aspirations today are different from those many decades ago, and are likely to change yet further, depending on events. Kurdish demands will be studied in three major phases.

#### **The First Phase: The Kurds and the Ottomans**

In the age of nationalism, in the nineteenth century, the Kurds, like many other ethnic groups, were subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike other ethnic groups, which tried to break away from the Empire under the influence of nationalism, the Kurds were happy as citizens of the Islamic state. They thought of themselves more as Muslims than as Kurds. Their Islamic identity was wider and stronger than the Kurdish identity and so separation

was not on the agenda of Kurdish leaders. Islam as a source of identity superseded Kurdish identity. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire, which was the embodiment of the principles of Islam, was under attack by European Christian forces. In consequence, the Kurds saw the unity of the Islamic state as of greater importance than a Kurdish national state.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, one can argue that the constant state of conflict between Christian Europe and the Ottomans pushed the Kurds into the arms of the Ottoman Empire.

Toward the end of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds were unhappy with the new ideas of the Young Turks, who brought new secular concepts like "nation" and "state," in place of "*Umah*" and "Empire." "This is the end of Islam," exclaimed a Kurdish leader on hearing of the revolution of the Young Turks in 1908.<sup>5</sup>

In World War I, the Kurds saw the struggle between the Ottoman Empire and the hostile European powers as purely religious. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Kurds joined the Ottoman "*Jihad*" against the infidels.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the Kurds were loyal subjects, and nationalism or separation were not favored ideas. The Kurds were very comfortable when they viewed themselves as Ottoman subjects rather than as Kurds.

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<sup>4</sup> Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 1 (Winter 1997): 62.

<sup>5</sup> McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 96.

<sup>6</sup> Based on this vision of the war, around two million Armenians, Ottoman subjects but Christians, were massacred by the Kurds of Turkey during the war. It was a case of genocide for the Armenians. By the same token, the Armenians slew any Muslims that fell into their hands. McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 105.



## The Second Phase: The Kurds and Ataturk

With the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire became ancient history, and the map of the Middle East was redrawn, this time with the possibility of establishing a Kurdish state inspired by Woodrow Wilson's twelfth point, which emphasized self-determination for oppressed people. According to the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, the state of Kurdistan was to be established in the region under the supervision of the League of Nations.<sup>7</sup> The treaty gave the Kurds new hope for independence. However, it was never implemented. Furthermore, Turkey was occupied by the various European powers and efforts were concentrated on driving the invaders away from Turkey. Ataturk, the leader of the War of Independence, established excellent contacts with a number of Kurdish leaders. Ataturk convinced them to join his struggle to liberate the homeland from the enemy. In order to gain the support of the Kurds, Ataturk stressed the unity of the future state as an Islamic entity.<sup>8</sup> As a Kurdish historian notes, the Kurds "got entangled in the Turkish *Jihad* against unbelievers."<sup>9</sup>

The Kurdish contributions to the War of Independence (1919-1923) are well known.

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Bowring, "The Kurds of Turkey: Defending the Rights of a Minority" in *Nationalism, Minorities and Diasporas: Identities and Rights in the Middle East*, eds. Kirsten E. Schulze and others (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers 1996), 25.

<sup>8</sup> Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," 62.

<sup>9</sup> A. R. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London: Collet's Publishers, 1965), 44.

The total Kurdish death toll, including the civilians, was about one million.<sup>10</sup> What is generally unknown is what the Kurds expected from the outcome. The Kurds sided with Ataturk on the grounds that he was anti-imperialist, pro-Islamic, and had a multi-ethnic vision of Turkey's future.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, by liberating Turkey from the invaders, the Kurds would avoid ending up under European rule. The Kurds were unaware of Ataturk's actual aims.

After Ataturk drove the Greeks from the Turkish homeland of Anatolia, the Kurds thought that Ataturk would fulfill his promises to them. They hoped that he would establish a binational state or a national state with a recognized and distinct Kurdish minority, not to mention establishing the identity of the state as Islamic. However, these hopes were dashed when Ataturk revealed his real intentions. The point here is that the Kurds were betrayed by Ataturk, since his nationalist objectives conflicted with theirs.

The first blow to Kurdish hopes came in 1923, in the Treaty of Lausanne. Unlike the treaty of Sevres, where the Allies were able to impose their terms upon the defeated Ottoman Sultan, at Lausanne, Ataturk was in a commanding position after his victory over Greece. Therefore, independent Kurdistan was not accepted by Turkish representatives. The Treaty of Lausanne failed even to mention the Kurds. It included assurances of cultural and linguistic minority rights without mentioning any of the minorities by name:

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<sup>10</sup> McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 109.

<sup>11</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 44.

No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the courts.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that the imperialistic interests in Kurdistan were not compatible with establishing an independent state for the Kurds in that region. British thinking was that "an independent state for the Kurds would almost certainly destabilize British interests in Iraq."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Kurdistan was divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The Kurds were betrayed by Ataturk as they had sided with him until his victory, and by the European powers who artificially divided Kurdistan. However, the Kurds bear part of the responsibility, as Richard Falk suggests:

The lack of any effective appearance of unified resistance to the treaty marked a turning point in the fortunes of the Kurds, given that it ratified a political framework that effectively distributed the Kurdish people among five distinct political entities.<sup>14</sup>

One year after signing the treaty of Lausanne, another blow to Kurdish hopes came through new measures taken by Ataturk. In Ataturk's program to create a new nation, he embarked upon a racist policy, which proposed to assimilate, rather than to integrate, the

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 142.

<sup>13</sup> Schulze, *Nationalism, Minorities and Diasporas: Identities and Right in the Middle East*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Falk, "Problems and Prospects for the Kurdish Struggle for Self-Determination after the End of the Gulf and Cold Wars," *Michigan Journal of International Law*, vol. 15 (1994): 595.

Kurds. Ataturk and his followers argued that the Kurds "were mountain Turks" who lived in east and southeast Turkey but not in Kurdistan.<sup>15</sup> Ataturk's vision of Turkey defined the Turkish nation as a sum of citizens without any consideration to differences in race, language, history, etc. As a result of this definition of nation, Kurdish existence was completely denied. Cultural differences were perceived as a threat to national unity and were strictly prohibited.<sup>16</sup> The Kurdish language, the practice of Kurdish culture, even the concepts of "Kurdish" and "Kurdistan" were forbidden. The Kurds were not allowed to use Kurdish names. As these measures were not enough to change the Kurds into Turks, they were supplemented by other policies to assimilate, dominate, and suppress the Kurds. These measures included: land confiscation from the Kurds, with the explicit purpose of distributing it to Turks, who were being resettled in Kurdish areas; the deportation and displacement of thousands of Kurds to western Turkey as well as outside the country; and the levy of an education tax in Kurdistan to discourage the Kurds from education and keep them backward.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the whole region of Kurdistan was sealed off from the rest of the country and the Kurds were brutally suppressed.

The final blow to Kurdish hopes came in early 1924. By April 1924, Ataturk had abolished the Caliphate, religious courts, and religious schools and declared Turkey a fully secular state. In doing this, Ataturk made enemies of every Kurd who had sided with him

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<sup>15</sup> Jonathan C. Randal, *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness? My Encounters with Kurdistan* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 14.

<sup>16</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," 63. Also, McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 208.

to drive out the invaders from the homeland. With the destruction of the Caliphate, Ataturk severed the last bond between the Kurds and the Turks.<sup>18</sup> The disestablishment of Islam in Turkey deeply offended the Kurds and their patience with Ataturk came to an end.

While Ataturk believed that his reforms had transformed Turkey "overnight" from an Islamic state to a secular one, the Kurds, who adhered strictly to Islam, saw things differently. The destruction of Islam at the hands of Ataturk gave the Kurds justification to rebel so as to restore the Islamic identity of the state.<sup>19</sup> The first attempt to restore Turkey's Islamic identity produced Shaikh Said's revolt in 1925.

#### Shaikh Said's Revolt 1925

As the Kurds were not comfortable with Ataturk's vision of nationalism and his secular program, they voiced their discontent in a series of revolts in the 1920s and 1930s. The first revolt was led by Shaikh Said in 1925. The abolition of the Caliphate convinced Said and many Kurds that Ataturk's program of secularism and his vision of nationalism were a real threat to the Kurds.<sup>20</sup> In consequence, Said declared *Jihad* against Ataturk and his government. It was natural for Said, as a Kurdish Muslim, to invoke Islam to rally the Kurds against the secular government. Said's call for *Jihad* was strongly accepted by the Kurds. Within a very short period of time, Said's forces overran

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<sup>18</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Umit Cizre Sakalli Ogu, "Kurdish Nationalism from an Islamist Perspective: The Discourse of Turkish Islamist Writers," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 1 (April 1988): 79-82.

<sup>20</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 45.

one-third of Turkish Kurdistan. The Turks took draconian measures to suppress the revolt. Martial law was proclaimed in all of Turkish Kurdistan. The air force and ground troops were sent to suppress the revolt. The repression was, as David McDowall put it, "extremely brutal," establishing a pattern of Turkish response to Kurdish uprisings that has continued to the present. Tens of thousands of Kurds were massacred or driven into exile. Hundreds of villages were burnt or razed.<sup>21</sup> Because Islam was the leading force in the revolt, the government closed all pilgrimage sites, religious shrines, and all religious schools.

With such a brutal response from the Turkish state, one might ask what did the insurgents want? The answer to this question divided Kurdish scholars: one group asserted that the revolt was of more religious and less nationalist nature. Said and many Kurds were motivated by religious zeal, and were against the secularizing reforms of Ataturk. Their objective was to restore the Islamic character of the state, which was destroyed by Ataturk's secular program.<sup>22</sup> Other scholars argued that Said's revolt was mainly nationalist and concluded that Said was an ardent nationalist. Thus, the revolt was primarily a nationalist affair and not a religious one.<sup>23</sup> A third assessment of Said's revolt combined both the nationalist and the religious motives. The first concern of Said and his followers was Islam,

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<sup>21</sup> David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1992), 37.

<sup>22</sup> For an analysis of Shaikh Said's revolt, see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheik Said Rebellion, 1880-1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

<sup>23</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran*, 46.

which binds all Muslims together and forms their true identity and solidarity. By the same token, Said wanted to liberate his people from Turkey's oppressive rule. Therefore, it would be a mistake to regard Said's revolt as a purely religious movement and ignore the nationalist cause. Van Bruinessen suggested that:

The primary aim of both Shaikh Said and the Azadi leaders was the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. The motivation of the rank-and-file was mixed . . . for them the religious factor may have predominated. The planners, and leaders of the revolt, at any rate, thought that the religious agitation would be more effective in gaining mass support than the rationalist propaganda alone. Partly for this reason, Shaikhs were chosen as figure-heads for the revolt.<sup>24</sup>

Unrest continued in the 1920s and later. The next major revolt, known as the Mount Ararat uprising, took place in 1930. The Mount Ararat uprising represented a further move from religious zeal to nationalist. As David McDowall wrote, "It was the first time a nationalist organization, rather than a Shaikh or agha, had taken so central a role."<sup>25</sup>

Like Said's revolt, the Mount Ararat uprising was brutally crushed. Furthermore, the Turkish state continued its harsh policies of forced assimilation, cultural proscription, and mass deportation for the Kurds. This led to the Dersim revolt in 1937, the third major uprising in Kurdistan in about two decades. Said Riza, the leader of the revolt, mentioned the following reasons for the uprising:

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<sup>24</sup> Matira Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structure of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), 186.

<sup>25</sup> McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 37.

The government had tried to assimilate the Kurdish people for years, oppressing them, banning publications in Kurdish, prosecuting those who spoke Kurdish, forcibly deporting people from fertile parts of Kurdistan for uncultivated areas of Anatolia where many had perished. The prisons were full of non-combatants, intellectuals were shot, hanged or exiled to remote places. . . . Three million Kurds demand to live in freedom in their own country.<sup>26</sup>

Like the previous revolts, the Dersim was crushed in a ruthless way. W. G. Elphinston, a British historian and an eyewitness to the revolt, reported that about 40,000 Kurds, including women and children, were killed. Thousands of families were deported, and hundreds of villages were destroyed.<sup>27</sup>

Dersim marked the end of Kurdish revolts against the Kemalist state for almost five decades. From 1937 until 1984, when the Kurdish Workers Party (PPK) launched its first attack against Turkish military troops, armed rebellion ceased in Kurdistan.

### **The Third Phase: The Resurgence of Kurdish Nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s**

The memory of Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s remained strong, and so when the Kurdish Workers Party (PPK) emerged in 1984, it was able to enlist the support of millions of Kurds throughout Turkey and Europe. The recent re-emergence of Kurdish nationalism was produced by a combination of factors, both internal and external.

At the international level, it was the failure of the Turkish state to come to terms with Kurdish demands. This failure manifested itself in what Kurds perceived as the denial of

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<sup>26</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 208.

<sup>27</sup> Nizzan Kendal, "Kurdistan in Turkey," in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, ed. Chaliand Gerard (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1993), 58.



their very existence. Until recently, Kurdishness was a non-issue for the Turkish authorities, civilian and military. Since the establishment of the Republic, it has sought to eradicate Kurdish uprisings by a combination of military repression, forced assimilation, and co-optation.<sup>28</sup>

The disappointment of the Kurds was also exacerbated by economic hardships. Kurdistan is rich in agriculture, mineral resources, and deposits of petroleum. These are the engines of development. Still, Kurdistan is the least developed part of Turkey and the majority of Kurds in the southeast live in grinding poverty. Therefore, Kurdish nationalism was only part of the problem. The unequal distribution of wealth between the Kurds and the Turks fueled much of the political protest.<sup>29</sup>

At the international level, the end of the Cold War and the establishment of new states on the territories of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia demonstrated that peoples' aspirations could be fulfilled by political struggle. Another factor could be the emergence of an active Kurdish diaspora, especially in Western Europe. These Kurds provided financial and other forms of support for Kurdish organizations in Turkey.<sup>30</sup>

In sum, the Kurdish nationalist sentiments in the 1980s were born of economic deprivation, social injustice, as well as from ideas of self-determination and ethnic identity,

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<sup>28</sup> For a detailed analysis of Turkish domestic policy towards the Kurds, see Philip Robins "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue," *International Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 4 (1993).

<sup>29</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 434.

<sup>30</sup> Osten Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999), 41.

all of which combined to create the conditions for the emergence of the PPK as a Kurdish mass movement.

### The PPK and the Renewal of the Struggle

In contrast to Kurdish uprisings in Turkey thus far, the PPK was a popular political party that had the following characteristics:

- It represented a complete departure from old religious loyalties as it based its program on a secular ideology: Marxism-Leninism.<sup>31</sup>
- The object of the party was the establishment of a separate secular state in Kurdistan. It aimed at driving the Turks out of Kurdistan and establishing a socialist state, not at the restoration of the Islamic identity of Turkey.<sup>32</sup>
- The armed fight that the PPK led was based on revolutionary violence as a means of achieving self-determination. As the PPK attacked the army garrisons, it was the first time in 50 years that Kurdish rebels were shooting back.
- The PPK was able to enjoy support regionally and internationally. Regionally, the PPK was able to establish military bases in Syria, Iraq, and Iran, and enlist the support of Kurds in these countries. At the international level, it owned a broad network in Europe that performed intensive activity there.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 418.

<sup>32</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diaspora: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities*, 159-160.

- The PPK struggle was not only against the Turkish state but also against those Kurds who had exploited Kurdish people for their personal interests.<sup>34</sup>

Within a very short period of time, the PPK was able to mobilize a large proportion of the Kurds in Turkey and posed a serious challenge to the Turkish state.

### **The Government's Response**

Denial and repression were the characteristics of the government's response to the Kurdish insurrection. The basis for the military option for handling the Kurdish problem had been laid in Turkey's founding years in the 1920s. From that time on, the use of military power combined with assimilatory policies were the core of Turkish policy to any Kurdish uprising. The 1980s and 1990s were no exception. Accordingly, draconian measures were taken to eradicate the "terrorists." These included large-scale military operations, forced evacuation, destruction of Kurdish villages in PPK-controlled territory, and finally severe human rights violations against Kurds in western Turkey.<sup>35</sup>

The Turkish effort to end the war was very simple: massive assault by security forces, as one Kurdish writer put it "all stick and no carrot."<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, this policy failed to repress the PPK's ability to mount deadly assaults. Then, there was a necessity to look

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<sup>34</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 419.

<sup>35</sup> Gulistan Gurbey, "The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey Since the 1980s," in *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, ed. Robert Olson (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 51.

for other options.

### Reconciliatory Gestures

The Ozal years (1983-1993) saw the beginning of an opening for the Kurdish problem. President Ozal took some positive measures towards ending the war and solving the Kurdish issue. He lifted the ban on the Kurdish language in Turkey. Moreover, he tried to initiate a dialogue with the PPK so as to end the war. Finally, Ozal sought to achieve equal economic development between east and west Turkey in what came to be known as the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP).<sup>37</sup>

However, Ozal's reconciliatory approach was not accepted by the Turkish political elite and the military, nor by a large portion of the Turkish masses. Ozal was among the few Turkish politicians who had moved to recognize Kurdish rights and aspirations.<sup>38</sup> Shortly before his death in 1993, he sent a letter to his prime minister, Sulayman Demiral, in which he warned, "The Turkish republic is facing its gravest threat yet. A social earthquake could cut one part of Turkey from the rest, and we could all be buried beneath it."<sup>39</sup>

The earthquake that Ozal referred to was the Kurdish problem. Ozal realized that the key to a solution to the national Kurdish issue was recognition of the existence of the Kurdish people within Turkey, with their own language, culture and their share of the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 122-113.

<sup>38</sup> Fuller, "Turkey" Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," 67.

<sup>39</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 1.

Turkish pie. Ozal's new orientation on the Kurdish issue was a great opportunity to integrate the Kurds and solve the problem. Unfortunately, the political elite and the military missed the opportunity because they believed only in the military solution.

The contradictory policies of the Turkish elite were not only manifested in their belief in eradicating the Kurds, but also in their attempt to use religion as a means to discredit the PPK fighters. While the founders of the Republic rejected religion as a unifying force in the state, in the early 1980s, religion was brought back to the forefront of Turkish politics. As mentioned earlier in this study, religious sentiments had flourished all over Turkey in the last two decades. As the PPK based its ideology on Marxism-Leninism, the Turkish elite used religion as a weapon to fight the PPK. The government claimed that the PPK's ideology was anti-Islamic and the PPK was portrayed as satanic. The politicizing of religion by a secular state led the PPK to counter that strategy by emphasizing social liberation within the context of Islam.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Ceasefire of 1993**

As the government gained the upper hand in the conflict, it continued to take hardline positions and refused to acknowledge the Kurdish reality. For their part, the Kurds realized that they could not achieve their goal by military means. The PPK showed flexibility and adjusted to this reality. Accordingly, it turned its back from the ultimate aim of establishing an independent state in favor of federalism within the Turkish borders. Ocalan declared:

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 433.

Our goal is not to divide Turkey, but to share it. I do not see it as either reasonable or necessary that a Kurdish region should be detached from the country as if cut by a knife. But the Kurds will determine their own fate.<sup>41</sup>

In 1993, Ocalan announced a unilateral ceasefire and called for a national dialogue.

Ocalan emphasized that repression alone was incapable of ending the violence. The use of force did not allow the Kurds or the Turks to solve the problem. Thus, it proved that the solution had to be a political one. However, the Turkish government missed this opportunity. Rather, it escalated repressive measures against the Kurds. The Turkish government, dominated by the military, believed that the only answer to the Kurdish question was to wipe out all the PPK fighters. In doing so, the Turkish government closed the door to another opportunity to end the conflict peacefully and encouraged the Kurds to resume their struggling. Ocalan, the leader of the PPK, became a charismatic figure for his people, but the most wanted man in Turkey. Ocalan lived in exile after 1984, mostly in Syria. In 1998, the Turkish government pressured Syria to turn him over to Turkey. Ocalan left Syria and after several attempts to get political asylum in Europe, he fled to Kenya, where he was captured and brought back to Turkey. Ocalan faced trial and received the death sentence. The European Union pressured Turkey not to carry out the sentence.<sup>42</sup> Ocalan became the Mandela of his people and his capture fueled a growing sense of anger,

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<sup>41</sup> Aliza Marcus, "Turkey's Kurds After the Gulf War: A Report from the Southeast," in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, ed. Gerard Chaliand, 241.

<sup>42</sup> For an analysis of the impact of the Kurdish problem on Turkey's relations with Europe, see Mattem Muftaler-Bace, "The Impact of the European Union on Turkish Politics," *European Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 159-179.

frustration and hostility against the state.<sup>43</sup> The Turkish government, on the other side, claimed that the capture of Ocalan would mark the beginning of the end of the Kurdish problem. These claims rapidly evaporated as incidents of violence have continued to be reported daily in Turkey.

### The Impact of War

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all the scars of war on Turkey and so only a brief analysis will be presented. Since 1984, more than 37,000 people have been killed, the majority of them from Kurdistan, where all the fighting takes place.<sup>44</sup> The effect of war on the Kurds is revealed in the number of refugees and displaced. More than two million people were forced to leave their villages, farms, and properties and flee to western Turkey and Europe in search of security.<sup>45</sup> Tragically, their situation in western Turkey is not much different. They are the first to be arrested, searched, and humiliated. Discrimination against the Kurds has led to a growing alienation of the Kurds from the state as well as between the Kurds and the Turks. The destruction of Kurdish villages is another reason for mass migration of Kurds. According to reports, hundreds of villages were burnt and cleared.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *The Turkish Times*, March 1, 1999: 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Washington Post*, January 9, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Wahlbeck, *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugees Communities*, 50.

<sup>46</sup> Ciment, *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, 52.

Human rights violations are typical features of war, however in Turkey human rights abuses reached the extent that members of parliament lost their immunities and were sentenced to prison because of their exercise of free speech.<sup>47</sup> The overall impact of war on the Kurds has been summarized by human rights organizations to have been:

A staggering list of human rights abuses, arrest, torture, assassination, mass deportations, expulsions, appalling conditions in refugee camps, denial of ethnic rights to language, literature, and music, and destruction of villages and towns.<sup>48</sup>

On the economic level, the war had its cost, too. Turkey spent an estimated \$8 billion fighting the PPK in 1995 alone,<sup>49</sup> not to mention the economic loss as a result of the destruction of the infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, and transportation.

On the political level, the war had serious consequences for Turkey's relations with the rest of the world. At the regional level, the Kurdish question figured strongly in Turkey's relations with its southern and eastern neighbors Syria, Iraq, and Iran. These countries have large Kurdish populations. Consequently, they were able from time to time to play the Kurdish card against Turkey. The tension between Syria and Turkey in the 1990s over Syria's support of the PPK falls under this category. In fact, Syria, Iran and Russia exploit

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<sup>47</sup> *Criminalizing Parliamentary Speech in Turkey*, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Washington, D.C.: May 1994), 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Situations of Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran*, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe" (Washington, D.C.: May 17, 1993), 9.

<sup>49</sup> Aram Nigogosian, "Turkey's Kurdish Problem: Recent Trends" in *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, ed. Olson, 44.



the Kurdish card to put pressures on Turkey to compromise on other issues.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the impact of war on Turkey's relations with Europe is the most expensive price that Turkey pays for the war. Turkish handling of the Kurdish question has outraged many in Europe and stands in the way of Turkey's entry into Europe.<sup>51</sup> The European body prides itself on being a club of democracies. Turkey's severe treatment of the Kurds and its record of human rights violations of both the Kurds and the ethnic Turks represent a major obstacle to Turkey's membership in the European Union.

### Towards a Lasting Solution

For many years, the Turkish authorities, civilian and military, had announced the victory of the government forces over the PPK and the end of the Kurdish problem. The capture of Ocalan intensified such claims. However, it is evident from this study that the Kurdish problem cannot be solved by policies of repression and denial. Rather, Turkey must look for a solution that would remove the grounds of Kurdish opposition and achieve a lasting peace between the Kurds and the Turks.

Lasting peace requires compromise and some degree of sacrifice. Both the Kurds and the Turks need to rethink some of their fundamental assumptions. For example, the Kurds must accept the fact that Turkey is committed to its unity at all costs. Therefore,

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<sup>50</sup> For an analysis of the impact of the Kurdish question on Turkey's relations with Syria and Russia see Mahmut Bali Aylean, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1999: A Turkish View," *Middle East Policy*, vol. VI, no. 4 (June 1999): 174-187. Also, Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question and Chechnya: Turkish and Russian Foreign Policies since the Gulf War," *Middle East Policy*, vol. IV, no. 3 (March 1996): 106-118.

<sup>51</sup> Muftuler-Bac, "The Impact of European Union on Turkish Politics," 70-72.

secession or an independent state for the Kurds is an unrealistic option. Furthermore, Turkey as well as Iran, Syria, and Iraq, which disagree on many issues, are united in their absolute determination to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish state.

Therefore, cultural and political autonomy would be a reasonable choice. This means that Kurdish identity must be recognized and the use of Kurdish language should be legalized. It also means allowing the Kurds a voice in Ankara. Democracy is impossible when it excludes the Kurds from participating in the political game.

For their part, the Turks must acknowledge that democratic reforms, human rights improvements, and finally economic development are musts for Turkey's integration of the Kurds. It is widely agreed that economic development of southeastern Turkey would reduce tension and create stability in the region. Kurdish discontent represents a search for a just, equal, and democratic system for those people who feel excluded, exploited, and marginalized.

These measures would not affect the state integrity or national unity of Turkey. At the same time, these measures would satisfy the Kurdish aspirations within the democratic state of Turkey. Until then, the Kurdish question will remain a running sore in Turkey and will hamper its economic and political development for years to come.

### Islam and Nationalism in Sudan and the Southern Problem

The conflict in Sudan is a conflict of nationalisms: one rooted in Arabism and Islam and the other in Africanism. The division of the country into its African and Arab segments is a result of northern Arabization and Islamization on the one hand, and southern fear,

hostility, and resistance to the imposition of the northerners' vision on the other. Furthermore, this conflict serves as a case in point when discussing the failure of Sudanese leadership in understanding the realities of Sudan. In this regard, both northern Arab and Islamist nationalists, and African nationalists in the south committed deadly mistakes from which Sudan suffered much, and from which it has never fully recovered. It is ironic that the southern Sudanese had fought for self-determination on the eve of independence and in the early 1960s; now, however, they are struggling for a united, secular, democratic Sudan. By the same token, the Islamists of the north who fought for a vision of a united Islamic Sudan in the 1950s and 1960s, later, in the 1970s and the 1980s up to the present, began to believe that their goal is unattainable and a separated south might be the only possible solution.<sup>52</sup>

To understand this dramatic change in Sudanese politics, and for a careful examination of conflict of nationalism in Sudan, it is important to present the views of both northerners and southerners.

### The View of the North

Northern Sudanese value the unity of Sudan and so they resented deeply the British separation of the south. According to the northern view, "this policy aimed not at creating non-Islamic culture, but an anti-Islamic one."<sup>53</sup> The southern region was open to Christian

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<sup>52</sup> Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, "Islamization in Sudan: A Critical Assessment," in John Obert Voll, ed. *Sudan: State and Society in Crisis*, 85.

<sup>53</sup> Abdel Wehab El. Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," 372.

missions in order to establish spheres of influence for crusaders among the non-believers, "who if they were not saved for Christ, would at least be lost to Allah."<sup>54</sup> Therefore, after independence, the northern Sudanese:

... exhibited a romantic attachment to the South, "the lost brother" snatched away by the aliens, and long due back. ... There was a general feeling of a need to make up for lost time by spreading the 'national' (Arabic-Islamic) culture in the south as a basis for unity. This conception pre-supposed that the south would act as an inert mass, waiting to be reshaped anew.<sup>55</sup>

While this perspective ignored the fact that the south had its own culture, customs, values, and traditions, the northerners' identification with Arabism and Islamism has largely influenced their attitudes towards the region. Thus, they sought to impose Arabization and Islamization on the south in an attempt to achieve national unity. The commitment of northern Sudanese to Arabism was best represented by the first Sudanese president, Ismail Azhari, who commented that:

We are proud of our Arab origin, of our Arabism, and of being Muslims. The Arabs came to this continent, as pioneers, to disseminate a genuine culture and promote sound principles which have shed enlightenment and civilization throughout Africa.<sup>56</sup>

In line with this perspective, Sudan's prime minister in 1966, Sadiq al-Mahdi, went further in expressing his strong belief in Arabism and Islam and asserted:

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<sup>54</sup> Ruth First, *Power in Africa: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (London: Penguin, 1971), 127.

<sup>55</sup> Abdel Wehab El. Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," 372.

<sup>56</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 421.

The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab, and this nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival.<sup>57</sup>

Northern Sudanese pride in Arabism had its justification. Several intellectuals had addressed this issue and provided various explanations for the status quo in favor of Arabism.<sup>58</sup> According to Muhammed Omar Bashir, Sudanese identification with Islam and Arabism was natural because:

They were undoubtedly more Arab than African in their culture. . . . Besides, the Africans in Southern Sudan, who were among the most backward peoples on the continent, could hardly inspire Arab compatriots with any desire to identify with Africa.<sup>59</sup>

It is clear that northern Sudanese were more Arab than they might need to be. However, what matters is that they should not act or behave in a racist way to the disadvantage of the non-Arabs. In this context, several studies continue to support the argument that the average northern Sudanese citizen is not actively involved in imposing Islamism and Arabism on the non-Arab and non-Muslim people of the South. However, it is the members of the ruling elite who see themselves as having a special role to play in

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Lesch, *Sudan: Contested National Identities*, 42.

<sup>58</sup> Mansour Khalid, one of the very few northern Sudanese members of the SPLM, explained northern Sudanese identification with Arabism in racial and chauvinist ways. According to Khalid, "Sudanese pride in Arabism stems from an inferiority complex really. The northern Sudanese is torn internally in his Arab-African personality. As a result of his Arabism, he views himself in a higher status from the other Sudanese not exposed to this process." Deng, *War of Visions*, 421.

<sup>59</sup> Muhammed Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to the Conflict*, (London: C. Hurst, 1968), 134.

To sum up, northerners' exaggerated identification with Arabism and Islamism had historical, psychological, and political grounds. The northern ruling elite in Sudan believed that Arabism and Islamism were superior to the indigenous culture of the southerners, and so they sought cultural integration based on their perspective as a means of attaining national unity.<sup>61</sup> As Arnold Toynbee observed over thirty-five years ago, "Northerners equate the spread of Arabism and Islamism to a nation building mechanism."<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, this approach, rather than achieving national unity, antagonized the south and widened the cleavage between the two parts of the country, leading to a brutal civil war.

### The View of the South

In sharp contrast to the north, the people of the south have an African as distinct from Arab identity, and so Islam and Arabism are irrelevant to them. As Dunstan M. Wai explained, although the people of southern Sudan belong to various ethnic groups, they identify culturally with Africanism. Their value systems preclude the possibility of

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<sup>60</sup> See for example Francis Deng and Prosser Gifford, eds. *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Welson Center Press, 1987), 110.

<sup>61</sup> From independence in 1956 until the present, with the exception of the years of the Addis Ababa agreement from 1972 -1983, ruthless attempts to dominate, Islamize, and Arabize the south had characterized the politics of Sudan's successive governments, as it had been explained in chapter four of this study. However, this was a mere hope. The southern people had rejected and furiously resisted this program of integration, as they viewed it as a symbol of northern domination and southern submission.

<sup>62</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Between Niger and Nile* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965), 15.

assimilation into Arab culture. Their religion is indigenous to Africa with a Christian elite.<sup>63</sup>

In other words, the southern people of Sudan view themselves as Africans, racially and culturally, with Western influence reflected in Christianity.<sup>64</sup> Just as Arabism and Islam had been the source of pride and basis of unity in the north, Africanism became the core principle in consolidating the defense against northerners' attempts of molding the nation into their image. In other words, Christianity was seen as a source of defense against Islam.

As the Arabs in the north used Islam in their battle and declared "*Jihad*" against the south, indigenous beliefs and Christianity in the south were brought to the forefront of the conflict. Southerners' resistance to northern attempts of Arabization and Islamization took two forms: one military, the other religious. Southerners' miseries and sufferings had driven them toward religion in general and Christianity in particular. As a result, the conflict has been viewed in religious terms.<sup>65</sup>

When Sudan achieved independence in 1956, there was an absence of any sense of national belonging on the part of southern Sudanese. In fact, independence meant to southerners that the struggle for self-determination had begun. The treatment of the southern Sudanese as a minority group in the post-independence Sudan had a far reaching impact on

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<sup>63</sup> Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York: African Publishing Company, 1981), 19.

<sup>64</sup> According to Deng, a southerner's conversion to Christianity from his traditional beliefs is viewed as a price to be paid in order to achieve two goals: first, gain support from the church; and second, it is a means of gaining modernity such as medicine, employment, literacy, skills, and so forth. In other words, it was not a religious transformation, but rather, as a means of salvation. For more information, see Deng, "War of Visions for the Nation" in *Sudan: State and Society in Crisis*, ed. vol. 1, 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

the north-south relationship. It has sharpened African-Arab cleavages and made it more difficult to develop a sense of unity between the two.

According to Dunstan, the northern ruling elite carried out a series of malicious policies that led to the buildup of frustration among the southern people. Dunstan described these policies and their impact on southern people in the following words:

Patterns of social and economic discrimination reinforced the minority status of southern Sudanese within the independent Republic of Sudan. Their political weakness in turn reinforced their social and economic patterns. . . . They perceived themselves to be socially and economically deprived in comparison with the north. And they suffered humiliation.<sup>66</sup>

Dunstan went on to describe one form of southern reaction to this treatment:

As the propensity of the north to engage in discrimination, oppression, and violence against the south increased, the southerners felt that there was no justice in the political system, there was no legitimate state and no obligation to obey. They wanted to go their own way free from Arab domination.<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps this decision would not be taken if the northern elite had tried to understand the causes of southern fear and frustration, but this did not happen. Even during the honeymoon period between the north and the south after the Addis Ababa agreement, the southerners' attitudes towards the north changed very little. As Francis Deng observed, when southern leaders were asked about the prospects of national integration, their responses were striking. One southern leader saw the differences between the Arabs and Africans as inherent and sacrosanct:

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<sup>66</sup> Dunstan, *The African-Arab Conflict in Sudan*, 182.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



Those people are brown and we are black. God did not create man at random. He created each people with their own kind. He created . . . some people brown and some people black. We cannot say we want to destroy what God created; all this is in God's hands. Even God would get angry if we spoiled his work.<sup>68</sup>

It is clear that the southerners never believed in the arguments of integration with the north. Their historical experience, which can be summarized by memories of bitterness towards, and fear and hatred of, the Arabs, persisted from generation to generation and offered them little hope in a united Sudan.

The north and the south are two different areas, geographically, religiously, culturally, and, to a large extent, economically. In other words, it would be easy to conclude that there is nothing in common between the northerners and the southerners. This makes national integration a task next to impossible and war almost inevitable. In this regard, the conflict of nationalisms in Sudan will be examined in three distinct historical phases following independence, with emphasis on the southern Sudanese quest for self-determination.

#### The First Phase: Struggle for Self-Determination: 1956-1972

Before the declaration of independence in January 1956, southerners' fears of northerners' domination were expressed in the divided march to independence. In August 1955, a mutiny by southern soldiers was triggered by a widely shared fear in the south that independence was just a change of masters from the British to the Arabs, a second colonial

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<sup>68</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 203.

era in the history of southern Sudan.<sup>69</sup> The southern soldiers, who were ordered to travel north to participate in the independence celebration, decided to disobey their orders, stayed in the south, and organized resistance to the new masters.<sup>70</sup> This mutiny was suppressed violently by the northern Arabs, thus confirming southerners' worst fears that independence was not for them. In this context, one might argue that many African countries were challenged by ethnicity on the eve of independence, and national integration is still a major challenge for these countries. However, most of these countries, regardless of their ethnic problems, were united in their march to independence in the 1950s and the 1960s.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, this spirit was absent in Sudan before and after the declaration of independence in 1956. As mentioned earlier, while British policy was considered as a perpetual source of division within Sudan, it was the Sudanese political elite that should be held accountable in the post-independence period. Consequently, southerners' patience came to an end, and southerners demanded the separation of the South as an independent state. In 1963, the southerners founded the Anya-Nya guerrilla army movement, deriving its name from that of a poison concocted in Madi country from snakes.<sup>72</sup>

With the establishment of the Anya-Nya, the Arab-African schism in Sudan reached a level beyond the point of political solution. The southerners became convinced that war

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>70</sup> Lesch, *Sudan: Contested National Identities*, 36.

<sup>71</sup> Francis Deng, "Ethnicity: An African Predicament," *The Brookings Review*, vol. 15, issue 3 (Summer 1997), 28.

<sup>72</sup> Holt, *A History of the Sudan*, 180.

become more involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel provided more assistance to the rebels.<sup>77</sup>

As is common among failing leaders to blame their internal problems on external factors, the ruling elite of Sudan blamed Israel and the imperialists for the southern problem:

The South is known as the weakest link of our revolutionary defense. We are in competition with world imperialism and zionism. Since September 1964, the imperialists and the Israelis have started to pour in arms via the frontiers of Ethiopia and Uganda.<sup>78</sup>

There is no doubt that Sudan's efforts to unite the Arab world against Israel not only contradicted the violent division within the country represented by the civil war, but they gave Israel the justification to intervene and support the Anya-Nya as a tactic in its war against the Arab countries. Either way, the Sudanese people were the victims of the policies of their leaders.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Sudan's involvement in Arab politics after the war of 1967 culminated in hosting the first Arab summit following the defeat. The summit adopted a resolution with the famous three nos: no recognition of Israel, no negotiations, and no peace treaty. For more information about Sudan's solidarity with the Arab world after the defeat, see for example Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd al- Nasir and His Rivals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>78</sup> Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in Traditional Society*, 175.

<sup>79</sup> To the discredit of the Anya-Nya leaders, they were fighting for self-determination and Africanism, yet at the same time Israel was their friend and strongest supporter. Israel was among the very few states that cooperated and established a strong relationship or an alliance with the apartheid government of South Africa, and so many separatist movements in Africa maintained political distance from Israel as it supported a racist regime. For more information about Israel's involvement in Africa's affairs, see for example Olusola Ojo, *Africa and Israel: Relations in Perspective* (London: Westview Press, 1988).

The Second Phase: From Confrontation to Accommodation: 1973-1983

In 1969, Jafar Numeri seized power in a military coup. In his conduct of southern affairs, Numeri recognized the bankruptcy of earlier policies and provided a new reading of the southern issue, and declared that:

The revolutionary government is confident and competent enough to face existing realities. It recognizes the historical and cultural differences between the north and the south and firmly believes that the unity of our country must be built upon these objective realities. The southern people have the right to develop their respective cultures and traditions within a united socialist Sudan.<sup>80</sup>

These words were backed by actions as Numeri committed his government to the resolution of the north-south conflict. Numeri appointed Abel Alier, in whom southerners had great confidence, as a minister of southern affairs. Furthermore, Numeri gave a green light to Alier to negotiate with the rebels to end the civil war. Once the talks were started, both sides saw an opportunity for a settlement. After two weeks of negotiations, both sides were able to overcome the legacies of the past and reached a peaceful settlement known as the Addis Ababa Agreement. According to the agreement, the southern region became a self-governing unit within the republic of Sudan.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan: Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), 294.

<sup>81</sup> The agreement contained several provisions that emphasized the dual identity of Sudan as an Arabic and African country. Provisions on language made Arabic the official language of Sudan while English was designated the principal language in the south. The Agreement guaranteed all citizens in the southern region the rights to equal opportunity, freedom of movement, personal liberty, freedom of religion, etc. These rights were not to be prejudicial because of race, language, religion, social status, or place

The agreement recognized the dual identity of Sudan as an Arab and African country. It was the outcome of compromise between the northerners, who were able to ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan, and the southerners, who gained a considerable degree of autonomy that was enough to preserve their identity. In other words, it brought peace with justice for the south and honor and dignity for the north.

The question then arises, why did the Sudanese people from north and south, after a long period of bitter conflict, change their attitudes and reconcile their differences? Muhammed Omar Bashir, who devoted much of his scholarship to the problem of the south, listed four major reasons that brought about the change from confrontation to accommodation and led to the success of the Addis Ababa negotiations.<sup>82</sup>

First, both sides reached a military stalemate; therefore, they were convinced by then that no military solution was possible.

Second, the war was a continuous drain on the poor resources of the country. Numeiri came to realize that the enormous amount of resources geared towards war could be used beneficially in development.

Third, the conciliatory policies of Numeiri convinced the southern leaders that there was a better chance to reach a peaceful settlement with Numeiri than with any future leader in the north.

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of birth. Finally, a special provision stated, "the southern people shall strive to consolidate the unity of Sudan and respect the constitution." For a detailed account of the Addis Ababa Agreement, see Muhammed Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace* (London: C. Hurst, 1975).

<sup>82</sup> Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to the Conflict*, 129-131.

Fourth was the appointment of Abel Alier as vice president and minister of southern affairs. Alier, a gifted lawyer, enjoyed the trust and confidence of both sides of the conflict. Alier convinced the southern leaders in Addis Ababa that separation was not a viable option in Africa.

It is clear that these factors emphasized the internal context and the role of Sudanese leadership. Numeri decided to re-order his priorities in a way that put Sudan's national interests before any other obligations. He realized that pan-Arabism was incompatible with his attempts to solve the southern problem. However, one cannot ignore the external context.

Sudan's openness to key African countries, the containment of the Israeli influence and finally the role of Emperor Haile Selassie were no less important than the internal context.<sup>83</sup>

The most significant thing about the agreement, apart from termination of the civil war, was that for the first time in the history of independent Sudan, the southerners were fully integrated into the body politic of Sudan. The agreement enhanced the sense of national unity, and fears and hostility between the north and the south were replaced by mutual trust and co-existence. The Arab-African cleavage was replaced by a spirit of African brotherhood. Finally, the agreement paved the way for a period of relative stability, and for the first time since independence, a permanent constitution was promulgated in 1973.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> In Sudan as well as in many African countries, evidence continues to show that external involvement in civilian wars always promote conflict, reinforce hard line positions, and cripple efforts toward peace. For further discussion of this point, see for instance Smock, *Making War and Waging Peace: Foreign Intervention in Africa*, 82.

<sup>84</sup> Sidahmed, *Islam and Politics in Contemporary Sudan*, 115.

Numeri was able to achieve this only when he neutralized the religious forces in Sudan. The wisdom of this policy was not without fruits for Numeri. It enhanced his legitimacy and increased his popularity. The people's admiration of Numeri raised his stature to something akin to a Sudanese Lincoln.<sup>85</sup> Numeri, the man of the people in every sense of the term, was proposed as a candidate for the Noble Peace Prize.<sup>86</sup>

### The Third Phase: Struggle for Recognition: 1983 - present

While the Addis Ababa agreement marked an important stage in the north-south relations, it could not alone ensure peace and unity in Sudan. In fact, the agreement was not accepted by three major groups in the country.

First, there were some southerners who felt that the agreement had betrayed the African Sudanese cause. This group viewed the agreement as a virtual surrender and chose to remain outside the settlement.<sup>87</sup>

Second, opposition to the agreement came from the advocates of pan-Arabism. This group saw the agreement as an attempt to Africanize the Sudan. This group was strongly supported by Libya. Qadafi, outraged by Sudan's drive in Africa, made several attempts to convince Numeri to let the south go its own way.<sup>88</sup>

Third, the Islamists, represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, were very suspicious

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<sup>85</sup> Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan*, 273.

<sup>86</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 159.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>88</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 272.

about the agreement, and were certain that it had secret clauses of an anti-Islamic character.

Therefore, they never gave it their support.

El. Affendi reported that after the agreement became a reality that could not be ignored, the Islamists started a serious debate about allowing the south to go its own way if it was necessary to establish an Islamic state in Sudan:

The call for a united Muslim front was justified by Muslim brothers because of the need to meet the new challenge of the south which demanded from the north unity in defense of its interests and its cultural identity against the Christian missionary, imperialists, racist monster.<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, in 1983, when Numeiri abrogated the agreement, as he divided the south into three regions and imposed Islamic laws in Sudan, the Addis Ababa agreement became part of history. Consequently, southerners' fears and suspicions were confirmed and the second civilian war had started.

Numeiri sent Lieutenant Colonel John Garang to suppress the south. Instead, what Garang heard and experienced there was more than enough to make him change his mind and join the rebels. Thus the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) was born.<sup>90</sup> The new nationalist movement listed twelve reasons for the renewal of the war in the south,<sup>91</sup> among them:

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<sup>89</sup> El. Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," 378.

<sup>90</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 302.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 355-356.



- Abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement
- Rampant corruption in the government and ruthless suppression of freedom in Sudan.
- Failure of the regime to solve the question of national identity of Sudan
- Discovery of oil in the south

Unlike the Anya-Nya in the 1960s, the SPLM under the leadership of Garang was not a secessionist movement, aimed at the solution of the southern problem. Rather, the SPLM made its position clear to the Sudanese people that it was committed to the liberation of the whole Sudan, and to the unity of its people and its territorial integrity. Furthermore, the objective of the movement was to establish a new and democratic Sudan in which equality, freedom, economic and social justice and respect for human rights are not slogans but concrete realities. Finally, the movement promised to solve the national and religious question to the satisfaction of all the Sudanese people within a democratic and secular context in accordance with the objective realities of the country.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, the SPLM's goals were national, not regional, and unitarian, not secessionist.

Garang appealed to all Sudanese people to join his movement in order to achieve those objectives. Consequently, a few northern politicians, outraged by Numei's contradicted policies, joined the movement. Later, Numei was overthrown by a public uprising; however, the plight of the Sudanese people never ended as war escalated in the south.

The struggle for a secular, socialist, democratic Sudan as envisaged by the SPLM took a new dimension after 1989. As mentioned earlier, in 1989, the Islamists, under the

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<sup>92</sup> John Garang, *The Call for Democracy in Sudan*, 26.

leadership of Hassan Turabi, seized power and tried to implement their own agenda in Sudan. The Islamists declared *Jihad* against the south, effectively removing any hope that the government in Khartoum might agree to a secular Sudanese state.

The sharp contrast between Garang's emphasis on the absolute necessity of the establishment of a secular state and Turabi's insistence on an Islamic state led to the failure of all attempts toward peace:

The mediator had decided to tackle head-on the issue of religion and state. If that issue could be resolved, then other issues would fall into place; if not, then no accord was possible. . . . The government delegates accused SPLM of seeking to abolish religion. . . . The SPLM, in turn, rejected religious apartheid and stated starkly that the south could be part of an Islamic state only if it were defeated militarily.<sup>93</sup>

To Turabi and his associates, if the choice had to be between continuing the Islamic experiment or maintaining Sudanese national unity, Turabi would opt for the Islamic experiment rather than a Sudanese national cause.<sup>94</sup>

In the end, as the Islamist alternative expressed by Turabi was less likely to compromise its Islamic mission for the sake of unity and peace, the war continued to rock the country with devastating effects, especially for the people of the south, as will be presented in the coming part.

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<sup>93</sup> John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 147.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

## The Impact of War

The cost of war for Sudan's people is grave. Measured in terms of deaths, refugees, displaced people, lost economic opportunities, and violations of human rights, the war in Sudan is the most costly in Africa.

The most immediate impact of war is the increasing suffering of civilians, whose death toll exceeds that of the soldiers of both sides.<sup>95</sup> From 1983 until the present, the civil war in Sudan has resulted in the death of over two million people, and the displacement of around six million.<sup>96</sup> The majority of these people are from the south, where all the fighting takes place.

The role of war in promoting famine is a major factor contributing to the increase in death rates. The tragedy is exacerbated when food is used as a weapon of war.<sup>97</sup> According to Judy Mayotte, the war in Sudan proved to be the most vicious and deadly in the African continent. In 1988 alone, more than 250,000 southern Sudanese died of starvation as the military leaders on both sides refused to allow food to reach civilian populations believed

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<sup>95</sup> Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan*, 161.

<sup>96</sup> See Majda M. El. Sanousi and Nafisa Ahmed El-Amin, "The Women's Movement, Displaced Women, and Rural Women in Sudan," in *Women and Politics World Wide*, eds. Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 683.

<sup>97</sup> For an in-depth treatment of this aspect, see Francis M. Deng and Larry Minear, *The Challenges of Famine Relief: Emergency Operations in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1992). See also Bruce Van Voorhis, "Food as Weapon for Peace: Operation Life Line Sudan," *Africa Today*, vol. 36 (nos. 3 and 4, 1989): 29-42.

to be loyal to one side or the other.<sup>98</sup>

The effect of war on the south is revealed in the number of refugees and internally displaced people. More than six million people were forced to leave their farms, villages, and most of their possessions and move to the north in search of peace and safety. Unfortunately, their situation in the north is tragic to such an extent that the international community has harshly criticized the Sudanese government for its unfair treatment of these people.<sup>99</sup>

A consistent pattern of human rights violations is a typical feature of war, and Sudan is not an exception. In fact, human rights violations have exacerbated since the Islamists came to power in Sudan in 1989.<sup>100</sup> These violations can be summarized as the following:

- Promulgation of laws contravening international standards of human rights. These laws included capital punishment, public crucifixion, public flogging and denial of freedom of religion.
- Governance by intimidation and oppression. This means common use of torture, summary executions, arbitrary detention, arrests, disappearances, and confiscation of property.
- Violations of the rules of war by killing civilians or taking them as hostages.
- The re-emergence of slavery.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Judy Mayotte, "Civil War in Sudan: The Paradox of Human Rights and National Sovereignty," 507.

<sup>99</sup> Anonymous, "A Nation's Holy War," *The Christian Century*, vol. III, no. 21 (July 1994): 672.

<sup>100</sup> For a first-hand account on the view of the Islamists in Sudan towards human rights see Abdelmoula Adam M., "The Fundamentalists Agenda for Human Rights: The Sudan and Algeria," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Winter 1996).

<sup>101</sup> See the 1994 publication by Human Rights Watch, *Civilian Devastation*:

The war has economic effects too. By the late 1980s, it cost Sudan an average of one million U.S. dollars per day.<sup>102</sup> With the escalation of the war, military expenditure increased to the extent that in the early 1990s, 25 percent of government expenditure was allocated to the military. This left the government unable to reform according to the instructions of the IMF or to meet the demands of its people. Furthermore, the war was highly destructive to the infrastructure, the agriculture, transportation, industry, and mining and further drained the national economy. Finally, as a general rule, donors and investors are not likely to be very interested in investment in unstable environments; consequently, Sudan was deprived of foreign funds and foreign investment.

#### Towards a Lasting Solution

A peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflict has not been possible, despite numerous attempts by both parties to the conflict and the good offices of neighboring countries, especially Egypt and Libya. The main obstacle to peace has always been the hard line positions adopted by both parties concerning the role of religion in Sudan. The government of Sudan seeks to establish an Islamist Arab state despite Sudan's manifest religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The SPLM seeks to establish a non-theocratic state

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*Abuses by All Parties in the War in Southern Sudan* (New York, 1994).

<sup>102</sup> Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan*, 162.

in a united Sudan. Under these circumstances, the people of Sudan have limited options from which they can choose to end war and achieve peace. Three options are suggested to end the stalemate.

### **The First Option: One Sudan, One System**

This option requires the establishment of a national framework with which all can identify without any distinction based on race, religion, tribe, language, and so forth. This pluralistic approach means restructuring national identity to ensure that the Sudanese see themselves first and foremost as Sudanese rather than Arabs, Africans, Christians or Muslims. They would value the unity of Sudan and make transition from Arabism, Africanism, Islamism, and Christianity into Sudanism.<sup>103</sup>

This approach requires a separation of religion and politics, and democracy that respects human rights and fights all forms of racism. A near approach to this option was tried following the Addis Ababa agreement and proved highly workable.

### **The Second Option: One Sudan, Two Systems**

This option means the creation of a confederal system in Sudan, where an Islamic state can be established in the north and a secular one in the south. This confederal solution would achieve peaceful coexistence of two systems with one Sudan. A one Sudan, two systems formula gives unity a considerable advantage and at the same time

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<sup>103</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 418.

respects the aspirations of both Arabs and Africans.<sup>104</sup>

### **The Third Option: Partition**

If the Sudanese people cannot live together and cannot restructure their concept of national identity and value their unity, it may be more practical and in every one's interest to divide the country. In other words, as the prospects for a united or confederal Sudan are not encouraging in the light of historical experience, partition would be the final option that the Sudanese have. While partition as a solution is far from perfect, partition with peace is more favorable than unity with war given the expensive cost of such war.

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<sup>104</sup> Deng, *War of Visions*, 507.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Findings to the Research Questions**

##### **Primary Questions**

1. Can Islam be separated from politics, and if not, why not?

Muslims' responses to secularism have varied. Some have preached rejection and resistance, as they believe that Islam is both temporal and spiritual, mosque and state. Others have tried to reconcile Islam and secularism. A third group advocates complete separation between Islam and politics, as religion is considered a major hindrance to political, economic, and social development. This confusion over the role and place of religion has its impact on a number of issues of great significance to Muslims' politics, including Muslims' view towards nationalism, democracy, and the position of women in society.

2. What is the role and place of Islam in the political process, both in domestic and foreign affairs, of Sudan and Turkey?

Islam plays an extraordinary role in Sudan's political life in both domestic and



external affairs. By the same token, the centrality of Islam for the Turkish and Kurdish peoples has remained unchanged since their conversion to Islam, and it is unlikely to change in the future regardless of Atatürk's legacy of secularism or of the Turkish elite's desire to integrate into Europe.

### Secondary Questions

1. What are the underlying reasons for hostility and rivalry between Islam and the West?

Does the West use double standards when it comes to Islamic issues? What roles have Western powers played in the crisis of Sudan and Turkey?

The hostility and rivalry between Islam and the West should not be a surprise as both religions claim a universal mission—each is a transitional community based upon common belief. Theological differences put the two on a collision course. The historical evidence tends to support the argument that the West uses double standards when it comes to issues related to the Islamic world. This could be seen in pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism, the Kurdish problem, and problems in many other places throughout the Islamic world. The Western imperialist powers in general, and Britain in particular, contributed to so many problems in the crisis of today's Turkey and Sudan. Many Sudanese and African scholars and politicians agree that the southern problem in Sudan is a British legacy. In Kurdistan, British interests led to the fragmentation of the region among various countries and prevented the establishment of a Kurdish national state.

2. What are the original causes for the failure of Europeanization in Turkey? Is there

a correlation between Turkish attempts of Westernization and the return of Islam in Turkey? Why was Turkey able to develop a military relationship with the West, thus becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but could not build a political, economic, and social relationship with the West to join the European Union? Finally, can Turkey reconcile Islam with modernity?

Several factors explain the failure of Europeanization in Turkey. One is that Turkey differs markedly from Europe. It shares with the East its culture, history and most importantly its religion. In addition, the Turkish people have great respect for their own culture and values. Therefore, they are not completely satisfied with the so-called Westernized Turkish elite who had blindly taken Europe as a model of modernization. Turkey's membership in NATO was born in the Cold War era. With the end of the Cold War, Turkey is no longer a bulwark against the Soviet threat. Consequently, Turkey's status as a European ally is being reevaluated. The rise of the Islamic movement in Turkey should not be a surprise in light of the failure of the Europeanization project and the crisis of secularism in Turkey. Turkey's attempt to reconcile Islam with modernity is fruitless. It is impossible to modernize and not to Westernize. The majority of the Turkish people refuse to eliminate their own traditional and cultural values in the name of modernization and Westernization.

3. Should the government of Sudan favor Islam and the Arabic language or accord equal citizenship to people of all faiths and races? Are the Sudanese people satisfied with the Islamic experiment, and if not, how do they express their

content with their government?

The government of Sudan should end its assimilative approach and seek a pluralistic Sudan, free from prejudice, oppression and social injustice. This approach will establish common ground on which all Sudanese—Arabs and Africans, Muslims and non-Muslims—can stand united. The majority of Sudanese people are outraged by an Islamic regime that claims to know what God wants. They express their anger towards the government in a variety of ways: protest, migration, revolt, and war.

4. What are the prospects for establishing nation states for the Kurds in Kurdistan and the southern people of Sudan? What roles do regional and foreign powers play in those ethnic conflicts? What are the humanitarian, economic, and political impacts of these civil wars? Is there a possibility for reconciliation between these conflicting parties, and if not, why not?

The prospect of establishing independent states for the Kurds and southern people of Sudan are not promising. The Kurds and the southern people of Sudan are no longer fighting for self-determination. Rather, they struggle for democracy, equal distribution of wealth, and respect for their distinctive identities. Regional and foreign powers contributed to the escalation of war. The Kurds and the southern people of Sudan were used by regional powers to put pressures on Turkey and Sudan. The war in both countries had devastating effects on all walks of life (humanitarian, economic, political and social.) The possibility of reconciliation and resolving the conflict through the rational exchange of ideas has not vanished yet. However, the

conflict in both countries demonstrated that it could not be solved by the military option.

### Conclusions

This concluding part addresses the fundamental issues that emerged repeatedly in the preceding analysis of the dilemma of Turkey and Sudan. The current developments in both countries and at the international level make this summation even more relevant.

In Turkey two major incidents took place in the 1990s that captured the headlines of news throughout the world. The first was the rise and fall of the Refah (Welfare) Islamic party and the second was the capture and trial of the PPK leader Ocalan in 1999.

For the first time in the modern history of Turkey, the Islamists, represented by the Refah, achieved a political victory in the 1995 parliamentary elections and won 20 percent of the vote. After briefly participating in a coalition government, Refah was pushed out of power and suppressed.<sup>1</sup> The Islamists recreated their political movement with the Virtue Party. In 1996, Erbakan, the leader of the Virtue Party, became Turkey's prime minister. Erbakan's pro-Islamic policies convinced the secular elite that the Islamists were Turkey's internal enemy and Erbakan was forced to resign in what came to be called a modern political coup. Furthermore, the Virtue Party was closed down and Erbakan was banned from politics for five years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ayata, "Patronage, Party and the State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," 40-56.

<sup>2</sup> Caulap, "Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party," 22.

In 1999, Ocalan was captured in Kenya after an international plot in which the intelligence of Turkey, Israel, and the United States participated and was brought to trial in Turkey. During the trial, the Turkish elite debated Ocalan's fate. Most Turkish politicians pressed for the execution of the PPK leader for leading a 15-year war for the autonomy of the Kurds of Turkey. The Kurdish diaspora launched violent demonstrations in various European capitals, and a wave of violent attacks by PPK supporters rocked Turkey. After a short trial, Ocalan received the death sentence. The Kurds saw the event as a disaster and several Kurds burned themselves alive in protest of the verdict. However, many Turkish politicians saw the event as a historical victory. So far, Europe's pressures on Turkey have deterred the latter from executing Ocalan.

A number of major points emerge from the previous developments. First, the centrality of Islam in Turkish politics remains in spite of more than 76 years of secularization. Islam has been the religion of the Turks for more than ten centuries. It has been rooted in the hearts of the Turks, who played a historic role in expanding and defending the frontiers of Islam against the dangers of colonial Europe. Throughout ten centuries, Islam was the primary guiding and the leading force in social development.

The current crisis in Turkey is the outcome of antagonism between secularism and Islamism. Ataturk disestablished Islam and imposed his secular program on the Turkish people to the extent that he proclaimed a ban on clothing identified with Islamic traditions such as the veil for women and the fez for men. The Turks could not challenge Ataturk's authority and secularism was implemented with an iron fist. The Kurds, on the other side, were more outraged by Ataturk's secular policies and they voiced their discontent through

a series of revolt in the 1920s and 1930s. Religious grievances were one of the principal causes of these revolts. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, when the political climate became more relaxed in Turkey, the Turks took the opportunity to demonstrate their strong commitment to Islam by establishing several Islamic political institutions such as political parties, charitable organizations, Islamic centers and so forth. The return of Islam in Turkey is meant to revive a way of life that was discouraged by an authoritarian secular elite.

When the Islamists gained power in democratic elections in the mid 1990s, they tried to put Turkey's focus on its natural and historical hinterland, the Middle East or the Islamic world. Erbakan opposed any further integration with Europe, arguing instead that Turkey's national interests would be served best by strengthening ties with the Islamic world.<sup>3</sup> However, such aspirations were not tolerated by Turkey's secular elite and Erbakan was forced to resign.

Second, the idea of secularism has long been sold to the Turkish people as their best guide for prosperity and development. After decades of secularization, Turkey failed to become a truly secular, European-style state. Turkey remained an Islamic state outside the European club. Furthermore, secularism began to decline and lose its glitter in Turkey. One manifestation of the growing reaction against secularism is the return of Islamic uniform in Turkey and the veil in particular. Turkish women were determined to demonstrate their

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<sup>3</sup> When Erbakan assumed power in 1996 as the first Islamist leader in Turkey, many Westerners believed that Turkey would become the next Algeria or Iran. To their credit, the Islamists of Turkey showed their respect to the rules of the political game and refused to use violence to gain power or maintain it. The secularists, on the other side, proved that they were less democratic than the Islamists when they forced Erbakan to resign and banned his political party.

commitment to Islam by covering their head with scarves.<sup>4</sup>

The secularists—who were outraged by this phenomenon—pressured the state to issue a dress code that prohibited female students and government employees from covering their heads, another manifestation of the fragility of the democratic experiment of Turkey, where people cannot dress the way they desire. Secularism does not only involve the separation of religion from politics, it also includes the process of modernization, urbanization, and most important, democracy. The contradictory policies of Turkey's secular elite demonstrate that Turkey's secularism is different. On three occasions, in 1960, 1971, and 1980, the military intervened in the name of secularism. However, in the 1990s, the secular elite viewed religion as an effective means to counter the PPK and encouraged religious sentiments among the Kurds. These contradictory policies enforced the polarization in the ideological competition between the secular elite and the Islamists and deepened the crisis of Turkey's identity.

Third, the role of leadership is essential in Turkey's current crisis. Historically, it had been demonstrated that when the Ottoman Empire was blessed with great leaders, they were a major source of the Empire's power. Seeds of decline began to grow when the Empire was deprived of wise and gifted leaders. In contemporary Turkey, the impact of leadership is so profound that one can argue that the most crucial factor in the plight of the Turks and the Kurds is the role played by the leadership.

After the establishment of the Republic, Atatürk thought that what worked in the

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<sup>4</sup> A good reference of the return of Islamic uniform in Turkey is the book of Elisabeth Ozdalga, *The Veiling Issue: Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey* (United Kingdom: Curzon Press, 1998).

West, i.e., separation of church and state, was definitely going to work in Turkey. Therefore, he launched his Europeanization project. The Turkish politicians continued to demonstrate their strong commitment to Atatürk's legacy regardless of the cost. From 1920 until the present, unity with Europe has remained the major concern for the Turkish leaders. However, the Europeans on more than one occasion have demonstrated that Islam was not welcome in their continent. Turkey took giant steps westward at every opportunity so as to convince the Europeans that she truly belongs to Europe, but to no avail. Turkey's membership in NATO was born in the Cold War. With the Cold War over, Turkey's importance is being reevaluated and Turkey might never become a member of the EU. A Turkish writer expressed Turkey's discontent over Europe's rejection of its membership in the following words:

Followers of the Atatürk dictum to look West persist in joining EU even after repeated rebuffs by that outfit. The most humiliating rejection, however, was when the former Warsaw Pact members were given priority over Turkey's for admission to the club. These were the very countries from whose wrath Turkey had protected Europe for 45 years of the cold war. It was a severe slap in the face to Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

The Özal years (1983-1993) witnessed a new era in Turkish politics. Özal realized why Europe rejected Turkey and so he tried to look eastward and strengthen Turkey's ties with the Islamic world. Furthermore, Özal recognized the failure of policies of "Turkification" and provided a new reading to the Kurdish problem. Özal's reconciliatory approach might have brought peace to Turkey, but the Turkish elite refused his approach and insisted on eradicating the PKK supporters as a solution to the Kurdish problem.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Turkish Times*, July 1, 1999.



Finally, the capture and trial of Ocalan demonstrated bitter facts for Turkey. First, after 76 years of "Turkification," Turkey had failed to turn the Kurds into Turks. Therefore, the Kurdish problem could not be solved by force. The execution of Ocalan would in no way solve the Kurdish problem. The rise of PPK was not only due to a desire to fight for the national cause, but also an expression of economic and social frustration. Turkish leaders should look for methods that would remove the grounds of Kurdish opposition rather than eradicating Kurdish rebels. Ocalan, after hearing the verdict, set out the reasons for this struggle and the solution to the Kurdish problem:

I reject the accusation of treason. I believe I am struggling for the unity of the country and freedom. I believe that my struggle was for a democratic republic not against the republic. I hope that the problem which has begun as a result of historic mistakes will reach a solution. I am repeating my call, the determined promise I made at the onset, for a fair and honorable peace and brotherhood in line with the democratic republic. The future of the country lies with peace not with war.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Ocalan's plight demonstrated that the Europeans used the Kurdish card against Turkey for their own interests. Ocalan's political asylum was rejected in Italy and he was forced to leave Europe. While most Europeans view the Kurdish leaders of Iraq as freedom fighters, they considered Ocalan a terrorist and he was wanted in Germany. As the Kurds are one nation divided among several states, one could not find any justification for Europe's position to Ocalan but hypocrisy and double standards. When Ocalan received the death sentence, Europe warned Turkey that his execution would jeopardize Turkey's entry

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<sup>6</sup> *The Turkish Times*, July 1, 1991.





into the Europe Union.<sup>7</sup>

In sum, the majority of the Kurds showed a strong desire to achieve equality, democracy, and development, if self-determination was not achievable. In doing so, they demonstrated a strong loyalty to the Turkish state. The question then arises, would the Turkish politicians realize this fact and acknowledge the Kurdish reality? The answer to this question is left for the Turks. If Turkey wants to join the ranks of Western democracy, it is the author's belief that Ocalan alive can cause no harm to Turkey. However, if the mentality of revenge prevails among Turkish politicians, Ocalan's execution and policies of "Turkification" would cost Turkey much. In the end, it is the choice of the Turks.

Finally, in the light of the previous analysis, one must consider the prospects for change in Turkish politics and examine the role of the forces of change internally, regionally, and internationally.

At the internal level, as examined in this study, in the last two decades there has been a growing feeling among the people of Turkey that there must be change. The pressures for change have been increased in recent years by the failures of both the Westernization and the nationalist projects. Turkey remains outside the European Union and the Kurdish conflict is ongoing. The realization by the people of the failures of such projects is a force for change by itself. Furthermore, this change requires the cooperation and participation of several actors in Turkey: the Islamists, the secularists, and the Turkish masses.

In this regard, it is the author's belief that the type of change that should take

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<sup>7</sup> *The Turkish Times*, January 1, 2000.

place in Turkey should be something of an Islamic sort. In a country where 99 percent of the population are Muslims, Islam as a religion must be brought back to the forefront of Turkish politics. This does not mean that Turkey should try suddenly to introduce a full scale Islamic system. Rather, it means gradual and slow change in both domestic and foreign policies so that Turkey would become more Islamic and less secular.

The Islamists of Turkey can play a very constructive role in the process of change by means of compromise and cooperation. The Islamists of Turkey, for example, must not oppose Turkey's integration with Europe. They should realize that Turkey can not afford to abandon Europe.

Based on such a vision, Turkey would change in a way that would balance between the country's interests and the wishes of the Turkish people. By the same token, the secularists of Turkey must recognize the necessity of democratic change. This change would require radical reform to the constitution and the whole structure of Turkish politics. For example, the dominance of secularism must be brought to an end. In doing so, the Turkish government would show that it is more responsive to the needs of its people, more answerable to them, less coercive and less corrupt. Ultimately, social changes are not just matters of government initiatives. They also require the full participation of the masses. Therefore, the Turkish masses must push for change and be ready to pay its price.

At the regional level, the forces of change can be found in Turkey's neighborhood. Turkey's foreign policy has been influenced by the Kurdish problem and Turkey's relations with the West and specifically its alliance with Israel. As examined in

this study, Turkey's Kurdish problem had weakened its relations with Europe as well as with its neighbors with Kurdish minorities, namely Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The previous countries play the Kurdish card against Turkey every now and then. Therefore, in order to contain the influence of these countries on the Kurdish problem, Turkey must cooperate and compromise with these regional powers on other issues such as the problem of water supply and the peace process, to name just a few. There is no doubt that such issues are of great concern to the whole region. By the same token, Turkey's neighbors must take the initiative to bring Turkey to their side. For example, Iraq and Syria can solve the problem of water supply with Turkey by means of compromise and cooperation.

At the international level, Turkey is now viewed by the West as a bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism. Turkey's alliance with Israel can be explained only in terms of a deterrent power to Arab nationalism. There is no doubt that Turkey's identification with the West and its alliance with Israel has severely restricted its ability to develop friendly relations with the Islamic world. Therefore, Turkey must adjust its foreign policy and balance its relations with the East and the West. For example, Turkey can employ its friendly relations with Israel to support the peace process in the Middle East. By the same token, key Islamic countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan can maintain friendly relations with Turkey and use it as an example of a moderate Islamic country that can integrate with the West and at the same time support the East.

In Sudan, the power struggle between Hassan Turabi and al-Bashir is an outstanding example of the failure and bankruptcy of Sudan's Islamic experiment. Turabi helped al-

Bashir to seize power in 1989, and masterminded Bashir's political program since then. However, rivalry between the two came to a head in 1999 when Turabi tried to use his power in parliament to push for limits on presidential power. Bashir reacted by dissolving the parliament.<sup>8</sup>

Turabi, on the other hand, called for popular uprisings against al-Bashir's government. Turabi went further in his opposition to the regime and, at this time, changed his colors completely and signed an agreement with SPLM to overthrow the regime:

The two sides have agreed to work jointly for putting an end to the Sudanese crisis and to establish a democratic system, just peace and federal government in Sudan. These objectives will be pursued through peaceful means of popular resistance against the government authorization methods.<sup>9</sup>

Later, Turabi, the uncrowned king of Sudan, was arrested. Turabi, the leading figure in Islamization in Sudan, ended his alliance with al-Bashir in a very tragic way.

A number of major points emerge from these developments. First, one can say that the most crucial factor in the plight of Sudan is the role played by its leadership. The errors made by the ruling elite account for most of Sudan's problems. The Sudanese leadership has repeatedly failed to address the country's thorny issues: political stability, national identity, and the southern problem. These issues are of fundamental importance to Sudan. However, these issues were overshadowed by ideological differences, cultural prejudice, economic

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<sup>8</sup> For a brief analysis about the struggle between Turabi and Bashir, see Stefano Bellucci, "Islam and Democracy: the 1999 Palace Coup in Sudan," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 7, no. 3 (June 2000).

<sup>9</sup> *Reuters*, February 21, 2001.

interests, and worse still, personal rivalries. The ruling elite in Sudan failed to come to grips with the multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of Sudanese society. Consequently, one can say that the essence of Sudan's dilemma revolves around the question of leadership. Mansour Khalid, a Sudanese scholar and statesman, commented on this failure in the following words: "The failure by the most qualified section of Sudanese society to develop a consciousness of the nation as a whole can only be marked down as an intellectual failing."<sup>10</sup>

Khalid chose India as the most obvious example to prove the role of leadership in serving real national interest and solving a country's problems. India is a country with much greater diversity than Sudan. However, right calculations and wise policies adopted by Gandhi and Nehru enabled India to survive its division of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. "Unity in diversity and justice for all" was the Indian Congress Party's slogan, and so India was able to find agreement on many issues hard to reach. Unfortunately, the Sudanese politicians were unable to tackle Sudan's relatively small cultural and ethnic differences. Of course, Sudan had no Nehru and so it was never able to reconcile its differences.<sup>11</sup>

The years from 1972-1983 marked a turning point in Sudan's history. These were the years when the country was put on the right track and peace visited Sudan for the first time since independence. These years raised Numeiri to the status of prince of peace in Sudan. Unfortunately these years came to an unhappy end by the disastrous step taken by Numeiri in 1983. Numeiri's decision was an outcome of miscalculations and wrong

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<sup>10</sup> Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.



judgments.

Two, the success of Turabi and Garang in overcoming their bitter rivalry and fundamental differences was strong evidence that the southern problem was not insurmountable. This problem can be solved by genuine recognition and careful study of those components that were the roots of the conflict. In this regard, one can say that Sudan can identify with both Arabism and Africanism at the same time. Sudan had often been called a "microcosm of Africa" because of its diversity. Therefore, it is not quite clear to understand what it means to be Sudanese. The northern Sudanese see Sudan as part of the Arab world. For the southern Sudanese, the issue of identity was never a problem: they are part of Africa. The failure of both the northerners and the southerners to agree on a common and inclusive identity has cost Sudan much. The question arises why the Sudanese people cannot be Sudanese, Arabs, and Africans at the same time? There is no contradiction between being Sudanese, Egyptian, and African at the same time. As Ali Mazrui had observed, Nasir identified with both Arabism and pan-Africanism. He told his countrymen that they were Arabs, Africans, and Egyptians at the same time:

We cannot in any way stand aside, even if we wish to, from the sanguinary and dreadful struggle now raging in the heart of continent between five million whites and two hundred million Africans. We cannot do so for one principal and clear reason: we ourselves are in Africa.<sup>12</sup>

Nasir, Nkrumah and Nyerere were all Africans. Nasir's solidarity with Africa consisted of granting scholarships to African students, allowing Cairo to become the capital

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Ali A. Mazrui, "On the Concept of We are all Africans," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 57, no. 1 (March 1963): 90.

of national resistance for nationalists from colonial Africa, and converting Cairo Radio into an instrument of anticolonialism in Africa as well as the Arab world.<sup>13</sup> Nasir proved his credentials for pan-Africanism and that was never at the expense of his commitment to pan-Arabism. Egypt is an African country in the same sense Nigeria is one. By the same token, northern Sudanese people must acknowledge the fact that they are closer to Africans than the Egyptians. Furthermore, the genetic composition of the country does not support any claims to racial purity. And so W. E. B. DuBois could make the following observation:

Anyone who has traveled in Sudan knows that most of the "Arabs" he has met are dark skinned, sometimes practically black, often have negroid features, and hair that maybe almost Negro in quality. It is then obvious that in Africa the term "Arab" is misleading. The Arabs were too nearly akin to Negroes to draw an absolute color line.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, Sudan is an African country not only in terms of the geographical fact, but also in racial features. The black Muslim Sudanese are closer to their fellow Christian Sudanese than to their fellow Arabs in Lebanon, Iraq or Morocco. Finally, if the cause of unity was so dear to northern Sudanese people, one might ask why the Sudanese people voted for independence in 1956 and refused the option of unity with Egypt, "The unity of the Nile Valley," then rejected Libya's offers for unity in 1980 and 1990? The answer to this question could be found in the words of Sir James Robertson, the last British administrator in Sudan, who remarked, "To understand Sudanese politics one had to be either a Prophet

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<sup>13</sup> Ali A. Mazrui, *The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective: The Political Sociology of Race Mixture*, in *The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration*, ed. Dunstan M. Wai (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 50.

<sup>14</sup> W. E. B. DuBois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History* (New York: International Publications, 1965), 184.

or a fool."<sup>15</sup>

Three, the agreement between the two extremes of Sudan's political spectrum is evidence that the problem in Sudan is political and not religious. If Garang, a strong supporter of secularism and socialism, was able to reach an understanding with Turabi, the Khomeini of Sudan, then one can conclude that the struggle in Sudan is not for any religious cause. Thus, it is not a conflict between Islam and Christianity. Rather, it is a struggle for earthly objects. In this context, it is necessary to point out that regardless of centuries of mutual hostility between the north and the south, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry in 1955 concluded that the real trouble in the South was

Political and not religious; and neither slave trade nor the differences in religion played a part in the disturbances. . . . In the extensive disturbances that took place in Equatoria, Christians, Pagans as well as Muslims took part; in fact some of the leaders of the anti-Northern propagandists are Southern Muslims."<sup>16</sup>

Peter Woodward reached a similar conclusion thirty-five years later, and in 1990, he mentioned that "the resulting inequality in the distribution of power and the perquisites thereof has provoked the ultimate in alienation: civil war."<sup>17</sup>

When Sudan achieved independence in 1956, the Sudanese administration invested considerably in the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the north, while the south remained isolated and underdeveloped. Furthermore, the south was

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<sup>15</sup> Harold D. Nelson, ed., *Sudan: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: The American University, 1983), XXIV.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in Sudan*, 78.

<sup>17</sup> Woodward, *Unstable Sudan*, 235.

underrepresented: of the 46 members of the National Constitutional Committee, three members were from the south. This oppression and exploitation led to rebellion. In other words, the northern elite had failed to establish a national identity and to offer political and economic models of development that all Sudanese could support. Naturally, this failure was the breeding ground for southerners' resistance, and the struggle to break away from what could be termed as internal colonization.

In sum, the war that has shattered the country since independence is by no means a religious war between Muslims and non-Muslims. Rather, it is a struggle for power and interests between the oppressors and the oppressed.

Fourth, the prominent role of religion in Sudan's public life made it very easy for the northern politicians to cover their economic, political, and worse still, personal interests with a veil of religion. Throughout Sudan's modern history, all Sudanese politicians, Islamists, Marxists, military and civilians, repeatedly manipulated religion as a device of government. This not only led to opportunistic factionalism and sectarian divisions, but the Islamic cause has suffered heavily because of such exploitation of religion for worldly goals or political ends.

The present Islamic experiment in Sudan is just one example to support the previous argument. Turabi, the spiritual father of Sudan's Islamic experiment, proved that he was interested in other things than Islam by signing an agreement with his former enemy Garang.

A few years before that event, Turabi had declared *Jihad* against the south and issued many tickets to paradise for those who went to fight in the war and lost their lives. However, Turabi later signed a deal with Garang. Turabi, like many Sudanese politicians, switched

allegiance, compromised his faith, and paid lip service to Islam in his quest for power and influence. This cynical exploitation of religion for political ends is just an action of pragmatism and opportunism. Therefore, religion is just an excuse for Turabi's maneuvering and tactics. In the course of his involvement in politics, Turabi had cooperated with different leaders, from Numeri to Sadiq al-Mahdi, from al-Bashir to Garang, and all of this in the name of Islam. Turabi, like many Sudanese politicians, had used Islam when it had suited his purposes.

Finally, the Turabi-Garang deal supports the argument that secession as an option for the southern people is far from perfect. The Sudanese people were able in 1972 to reconcile their differences and put an end to the war. Therefore, it is safe to predict that, sooner or later, the Sudanese people will find a solution to this problem. The question is how much more destruction will it take before peace can be achieved? The answer to this question is left to Sudanese politicians. However, it is clear that the solution requires understanding, tolerance, and imaginative leadership. These are the keys to Sudan's crisis. These keys can only be found in Sudan and by the Sudanese people. Otherwise, Sudan will continue to bleed dangerously and the Sudanese people might live in hell for long years.

However, it is not to be understood from the previous argument that the crisis of the Islamic world in general, and Turkey and Sudan in particular, is mainly internal. We cannot attribute to the ruling elite or any other internal factor most of Sudan's and Turkey's failures and ignore the external factor. Sudan's and Turkey's problems would not have been as bad as they are without external involvement.

It is the thesis of this work that the causes of the plight of the Islamic world in

general and Turkey and Sudan as examined in this study, were at their root internal, and that anti-Islamic Western policies played a contributory role, helping to deepen the crisis of the said countries.

A closer examination of the later developments in the United States would prove this fact. Islam was viewed during the Cold War as a bulwark against communist aggression.

In 1995, then-American President Bill Clinton rejected the view of confrontation between Islam and the West. He addressed the Jordanian parliament, and delivered the following message:

Islam can be a powerful force for tolerance and moderation, and its traditional values are in harmony with the best of western ideals. . . . The United States has a great respect for Islam and wishes to work with its followers throughout the world to secure peace and a better future for all our children.<sup>18</sup>

However, this harmony and coexistence between Islam and the West came to an end on September 11, 2001, after the attacks on New York and Washington. Islam was associated with violence, and Muslims and Arabs were associated with terrorism in Western eyes. Memories of the crusades came back. Italy's prime minister urged Europe to reconstitute itself on the basis of its Christian roots and declared that:

We should be confident of the superiority of our civilization. The West is bound to occidentalize and conquer new people. It has done it with the communist world and part of the Islamic world, but unfortunately, a part of the Islamic world is 1400 years behind. From this point of view, we must be conscious of the strength and force of our civilization.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests*, 94.

<sup>19</sup> *New York Times*, September 27, 2001.

With such remarks, it is evident that Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilizations is about to become a fulfilled prophecy. However, history has shown that it is only from deep crises that great solutions have emerged. As an Arab Muslim, the researcher is convinced that the atmosphere is better now for re-evaluation and mutual understanding by both Islam and Christianity. I believe that what binds them together is more than what divides them and responsibility for understanding and cooperation should be shared by Muslims and non-Muslims.

### **Recommendations**

After studying and analyzing the dilemma of the Islamic world and the struggle between Islam and secularism and nationalism in Turkey and Sudan, the following recommendations are suggested:

#### **Religious Reforms**

Since religion and politics are subtly intertwined, it is Muslims' duty to solve this paradox. Muslim intellectuals should take the initiative to interpret Islam in a modern way so religious ideas would fit contemporary social, economic, and political issues.

In Turkey, Ataturk adopted secular nationalism as the legitimizing ideology of the state. As the premises of such an ideology are being challenged, Turkish intellectuals must acknowledge the centrality of Islam in Turkish politics. Throughout history, Islam has been the core identity of the Turkish people and so it should be integrated in Turkish nationalism.

In other words, in order to establish a modern, Westernized nation, it is not necessary to

disestablish Islam. Islam as a religion has the capacity to adapt to new circumstances. Yet, secularization in its present form proved unworkable in the country.

In Sudan, Islamization in its present form proved unworkable in the country. Therefore, it is the Sudanese intellectuals' responsibility to construct a new vision of Islam that would validate their right to create a system of government that expresses their beliefs without violating the rights of others.

### Democratic Reforms

This study established that both Islamization in Sudan and secularization in Turkey were forced on the people from above. However, political changes need to be negotiated, not imposed on society if they are to last and enjoy legitimacy.

In Turkey, national identity was never negotiated with either the Turks or the Kurds. Many Turks feel that they are not represented by the political identity that is imposed on them by the state. The Kurds, who were excluded or denied their existence as a distinctive identity in Turkey, felt alienated by the state and eventually took the law into their own hands to express their discontent. In fact, the intolerant official policy that has been applied most of the last seventy years towards the Kurds is a direct legacy of Atatürk's vision of Turkish nationalism. Therefore, democratic reforms must acknowledge the full rights of the Turks to identify with Islam as the core of their identity and express this identification in their dress, habits, traditions, values, and so forth. By the same token, democratic reforms must recognize the existence of the Kurds as ethnic minorities and ensure their political,



cultural, and social rights. In addition, as Turkey strives to join the EU, democratic reforms would increase the chances of its membership in this political community. In other words, democratic reforms are a must if the Turkish government wants to enjoy legitimacy from its citizens and the outside world.

The restoration of a democratic government in Sudan and adopting a tolerant attitude towards the opposition whether in the north or the south, are among the prerequisites for peace, development, and stability in Sudan. The democratic reforms must acknowledge the pluralistic composition of Sudan and must function as a safety valve to ensure the full political, cultural, and social rights of all different ethnic groups in the country. Furthermore, democratic reforms will help Sudan to improve its image in the international community and put an end to its isolation.

### Economic Reforms

In many Third World countries, ethnic conflicts are fueled by gross disparities in economic and social development between different ethnic groups in the country. Therefore, equality in distributing the sources of the country among its citizens is a prerequisite for the state to gain legitimacy and enjoy stability and peace.

In Turkey, this study found that the ethnic conflict between the Kurds and the Turks is being exacerbated by the disparities in economic and social development between the eastern region, where the majority of the Kurds reside, and the rest of the country. Thus, the Turkish government must allocate development aid to the eastern region to assuage Kurdish frustration. By the same token, the conflict in Sudan is partly the outcome of the northern

exploitation of the resources of the southern region, to the negligence of the southern people and their needs. Thus, a fair allocation of Sudan's resources would help to eliminate the frustration of the southern people.

These steps would bring Sudan and Turkey closer to the realities and needs of their societies and increase the potential for peace, freedom, and development.

### A Western Initiative

This study established that continuity rather than change characterized the relationship between the east or the Islamic world and the West. The burden of history is all on the Islamic side. Turkey's relations with Europe are still haunted by the Ottoman legacy. The events in Bosnia in the last decade give credence to such an argument. Bosnia—a secular, Westernized state with a Muslim population—was not permitted to survive, apparently because Europeans do not want Muslims in their neighborhood, however democratic and secularized they might be. Thus, one wonders whether Turkey will ever join a Christian club like the EU. However, it is the author's belief that Turkey's membership in the EU would be a giant leap for Turkey and a small step for Europe. Europe can lose nothing by opening the door for Turkey and gain nothing by keeping it closed. Turkey's membership in the EU might help overcome the country's democratic and economic shortcomings. At the same time, such a European overture would be a significant step for both Islam and the West. It means that the east can meet the West and Muslims and Christians can integrate, cooperate, and coexist together regardless of cultural differences.

In Sudan, this study found that the north-south conflict is a British policy.

Furthermore, since 1983, the Western powers in general and the United States in particular continued to support southern demands for secession and to block all attempts at national reconciliation. The churches and right wing in the United States provided all kinds of support for the southerners, and the U.S. government supported such efforts by placing Sudan on the list of terrorist states. In other words, the western policy towards Sudan was all stick and no carrot. However, it is the author's belief that the carrot policy—providing incentives for Sudan's government—might work better to mend fences between the north and the south and between Sudan and the West. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the Bush administration gave up the old policy towards Sudan and began to play a constructive role to achieve reconciliation in Africa's largest country. This new approach toward Sudan is more likely to be efficient and Sudan's response was more cooperative with the U.S. to confront terrorism.

Consequently, with a Western initiative towards the Islamic world in general and Sudan and Turkey in specific, the clash of civilization would be replaced by peaceful cooperation. Finally, the West must distinguish between Islam as a religion and radical movements such as the National Islamic Front of Sudan, the Taliban, and many other militant Islamic groups that claim to represent Islam and do the Islamic cause a horrible disservice.

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