

THE CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS RADICAL MOVEMENTS AND TERROR IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES: TURKEY AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In this article we try to clarify some ideas concerning Islam and terrorism in Muslim countries, and specifically in Turkey. Many important issues, which have recently been published in Turkey, lay stress on two opinions: Firstly a real Muslim cannot be a terrorist. Secondly religion does not permit to kill a man in order to reach a goal. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that religions exist only for the happiness of humankind. This is valid not only for individuals but also for the communities and societies. Nonetheless, it is also an undeniable historical fact that many religions, with their aims to ensure happiness of humankind, contain violence in their several applications. According to Muslims, the main concern of Islam is to make people happy in this world, and then, what are the main characters of these modern violent movements in the Islamic world and Turkey? In this juncture, it is safe to assume that some minority radical groups base their intolerable attitudes on their religious understanding and philosophy. In other words, they think that they try to please God by this religious violence and intolerance. So, what they have done is carried out in the name of God; therefore they even take serious measures against their co-religionists not thinking like them. There are two main reasons for radical movements in the Islamic country especially in Turkey. First is the arguments derived from some Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths, as well as the jihad. In fact, theologically, these could not to be interpreted in support of such actions. Their actions are very closely related to their abuse of Islam with their narrow-minded understanding. Secondly, there are some governmental pressures; for instance, secular pressures and autocratical-monarchic pressures. At the same time, non-democratic and radical secular statements caused some radical religious movements in the Islamic country. Thus, democratic improving could be proposed to alleviate these religious radical movements in the Islamic world and in Turkey.

Keywords: Terror, Religious terror, Islam, Muslims, Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

Throwing a bomb is bad,
Dropping a bomb is good;
Terror, no need to add,
Depends on who is wearing the hood
(Coady, 1985: 47)

Terrorism is an expression of conflict. It operates within a political construct in which one or both parties refuse to recognize the other's legitimacy. In fact, one goal of a legitimate political entity fighting a political movement that seeking legitimacy is to disallow negotiation. "Terrorism" and "terrorist" are thus significant legal instruments. Successfully labeling a group, a movement, or even a state as terrorist denies its political legitimacy. It can then be dealt with, as merely a criminal organization. One doesn't negotiate with criminals, and simply brings them to the justice. Looking history we know that criminalizing an authentic political movement has often failed. Terrorist conflicts end up being just as much about negotiation as any legal war. Many terrorist entities have been awarded political legitimacy, often after a long conflict, and often by the very parties that sought to destroy them.

Terrorism has a complex phenomenon. Therefore it is not easy to describe it clearly. Terrorism, which has a global dimension today, does not have a single definition. There are approximately 109 different definitions of terror. And also there is no consensus on what terrorism includes or excludes. The meaning of terror depends on time and place such that an action called "terrorist act" could be regarded as a "struggle for freedom" in another place and time, and a "terrorist" as a hero or liberator (Pulat, 1999: 30). Or some acts being considered terrorist acts by some countries are considered as only political crimes by others. Was not Gandhi hastily labeled as a terrorist by the United Kingdom, and Mandela imprisoned for years? UNESCO did even award some people who were once called as terrorists with peace prizes (Arendt, 1970:46-56; Arblaster, 1977: 414-421).

Definitions in the theoretical literature, of which there have been estimated to be more than 100, fall into several groups emphasizing different aspects of the phenomena commonly referred to a terrorist. (Laqueur, 1987: 143; Tavlás, 1995: 106-107) Nearly all of them take it that terrorism is, or involves, violence of a political nature as opposed to mere, as it were, mundane criminal violence, though most legal regimes would also count terrorist acts as illegal. (Coady, 2004:5)

Since the definition of terror is very difficult, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to limit its meaning which becomes very complicated. The difficulty with limiting terrorism and with locating the strength of its reasons and existence are quite different. We may cite at least the following in this respect:

1. The lack of a legal definition of terrorism. None of the debates, up to now, having their institutional locus in the UN General Assembly and its Legal Committee in the 1970's and the 2000's, have successfully defined international terrorism and have, in fact, made a distinction between it and other forms of political violence (there is no clear difference between a terrorist, offender by conviction freedom fighter and, for example, legitimate self-defense by a national liberation movement).
2. Traditional fear of revolt and revolution. All of today's definitions of terrorism are removed of any sort of connection with the French Revolution that is the Jacobean terror, as well as the rich tradition of terrorism in Europe during the last and 19th centuries.
3. The erasure or censure of the history of secret relations between "the strong" (states) and "the weak" (terrorists, terrorist groups). The governments of certain states or their administrations are primarily responsible for the strength, organization and even the existence of these gangs. The governments of the most powerful states have usurped their own rule ("world governance"), damaging the sovereignty of other states, badly protecting the interests of their own people and putting their own sovereignty (their own citizens) at risk. Conversely, "terrorists" have not managed to transform themselves into carriers of the interests of minorities and the weak, those who want equality and to take part in world governance, rather their "enthusiasm" has changed into fanaticism or into "enthusiasm for something abstract" */ein Begeisterung für ein Abstraktes/* (this is an important characteristic of Mahometanism or Mohammedanism; Hegel, for example, compares it to the terrorism of Robespierre.
4. The "institutionalization" of hypocritical argumentation (double standards) which "strengthens" the sovereignty of privileged states and the immunity of their citizens. (Bojanic, 2006: 2)

Terrorism has been an international nuisance for an extremely long time. It has been used to express political and religious beliefs, in retaliation for certain wrongdoing, and in other cases for the specific purposes of intimidating and injuring people. Nearly all nations have been effected by terrorism in one way or another. Accordingly, the reasons of terrorism are different to people and nations.

I. REASONS OF TERRORISM

In fact, terror does not exist and survive without any external support. Thus there are some factors which appear and develop in a country paving the way for terrorism. These factors may be economic, socio-cultural, educational, psychological and religious reasons as well as despotism (Denker, 1997: 10-12; Kaya 1993: 5). We would like to put emphasis on socio-economic, educational and religious ones in our study.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC REASONS

Emile Durkheim's "social events/phenomenal can only be explained by social events/phenomena" helps us to solve the problem. Terrorism as a social phenomenon has many dimensions and sides. Social change involves every kind of change in a society, in its institutions and organizations. Social division is the departure of society from its national culture to the maximum extent. Societies are constantly in course of change. If social change makes the institutions in society unable to perform their activities and causes defects in the system, then, the change results in division. (Capoglu-Albayrak, 2004: 291)

One of the major reasons for social change is urbanization. Urbanization is simultaneously accompanied by is a fast change of life style and culture in societies; that is, cities, on their own, are not responsible for the violence. Namely, unequal opportunities and levels of income and lifestyles between urban and rural areas, and even such differences within a city because of irregular urbanization in Turkey have always fed the tendency to the violent activities. (Turkdogan, 1985: 122; Alkan, 2002: 46)

According to the researches on the reasons of terror in Islamic countries like Turkey, economic conditions and education come first among others. The researches clearly indicate

that most of the members of terror organizations in Turkey come from the layer of the society, with low income and education. It is also observed that the higher education and income people have the less frequent participation in these actions. (Ozonder, 1998: 292; Aygan, 1987: 101-102)

Economic problems affect people not only materially but also psychologically. That is why the unbalanced sharing of income in the society is one of the most important elements, of which the terror organizations make use. In other words, unequal distribution of income is used as a material of propaganda and a tool for exploitation. Consequently, uneducated and ignorant people are more inclined to manipulation. (Yalcin, 1969: 238-242)

According to the researches working on terrorism, the militants taking role in the terror operations are mostly the people of a specific group; and poverty is generally used as the motto of communist propaganda. The communist ideologists exploit economic conditions of people. For instance, a militant confessed his personal reason why he was impressed by the propaganda of left organizations as "I could not own anything I wanted in my childhood and youth because of having a very poor family. While the young people of my age were having fun in summer holidays, my family and I were obliged to go to Cukurova to work under the scorching heat in cotton fields for summer. I had to work while studying. The condition I was in caused me to get interested in approaching to those organizations". (www.terror.gen.tr)

Another member who joined a terrorist group because of the hard conditions, not of the ideological beliefs says: "I went somewhere far from home because of the economical difficulty. I did not have any occupation. That's why I started to work as a worker at building constructions. It was impossible to make a living with the amount of money I earned". (www.terror.gen.tr)

Despite many positive consequences, fast developments in the economic and social life can lead to inharmonious and unstable effects on a group of young people in their sensitive period. The lack or insufficiency of basic institutions dealing with such problems among young people is unfortunately enhancing the inharmonious manners. The system may not work regularly if economic development and growth are not supported with social integration.

We can find solutions for terrorism when economic and educational problems are solved, which are referred as the main reasons behind terrorist acts in Turkey. It should be kept in mind that counter-violence could not be a solution to terrorism, as historically proved; because violence always gives birth to violence. In addition, continuation of the possibility of violence is also violence. (Mavfarlane, 1974: 46)

III. EDUCATIONAL REASONS

Education begins in the family and goes on in schools, workplaces, etc. Political parties, civil associations, non-profit organizations, mass media and other social organizations may also be considered within this educational process. If one neglects the role played by non-school educational processes, he cannot penetrate into the reasons why one joins a terrorist group or participates in terrorist acts. As a matter of fact, leaders of terrorist groups in Turkey generally either had or discontinued their higher education. They are not uneducated (Alkan, 2002: 50-51). If the number of higher educated people who involves terrorist acts is relatively high, this is a warning that the educational system should be questioned. Therefore, one may argue that student movements should be seriously taken into account in order to understand the relation between education and violence. (Mongin, 1995: 48; Hamilton, 1978: 91-92)

Education has the power of changing the thoughts of individuals and society thoroughly. Through a good education system, there could be an opportunity to make people equal, as it is always missed and expected. Philosophers like Herbert Spencer believe that education make people become more reasonable, decent and get rid of greed. According to psychologist Gustave Le Bone, who is against the education depending on memorizing and repetition only, asserts that knowing is the act of making and understanding the relations of reason and result. It is unfortunately true that education in Turkey raises people as civil servant individuals bounded to the “desks” at which they sit instead of acting, creating and producing. As a result, the person who rises up to a leading position of the highest rank in government service is incapable of comprehending the aspects of social management and the problems taking place in society (Yalcin, 1969: 246-248)

Peace in societies depends on completely testable and affirmative education the individuals get. Briefly, the better and the more sufficient and affirmative the education is, the more useful individuals the society has, or vice versa. The role and duty of families, schools, institutions and media is to make people have decent characters leading them to serve the society, and the role of the government is to make this education possible supervising and controlling it at the same time. The basic line constituting the educational system is a parrot fashion, making students memories without directing them to think.

One of the leading members of MLAPA (Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Association), having participated in 184 operations, 117 of which are murderous activities, says about his own life that: “I joined leftist groups at the age of 17 when I was at high school.

Because the people around me were in different political groups, I felt obliged to take part in one of these groups. In the meantime, I believed that the method for correcting the defects in social structure should be the revolution that directly aiming the government for the dominance of proletarians as in the Marxist-Leninist doctrines”. The former general secretary of a terrorist group also says “We were interested in social issues, as we became youngest leaving the childhood behind. We were not satisfied with what we learned from our families and the people we lived with in our environment. We could not find at schools what we look for. The communists got use of this period of our youth manipulating the inexperience, excitements, and weakening religious and national senses to become annihilated in time. They tried to substitute nationalism and national morality with internationalism and proletarian morality”. (www.terror.gen.tr)

According to the researches, many of terrorists have not graduated from universities. Lots of them graduated from high Scholl (Lycee) and tributary unit schools, like illiteracy, and primary school. The statistical information below indicates the educational background of the separatist, communist and radical religious terrorists.

Clearly, as seen in the statistics of the table given below, relative weakness of the inner structure of a country is an unobtainable opportunity for centers that want to make use of terrorism.

	Separatist Terror	Communist Terror	Radical Religious Terror
	%	%	%
Illiterate	13	2	4
Literate	9	-	3
Primary Scholl	38	30	24
Secondary Scholl	10	14	12
High Scholl	18	34	36
University	12	20	21
Total	100	100	100

(Source: Atici-Gumus, 2002, 88)

IV. RELIGIOUS REASONS

Principally we need emphasize some definitions about the religious terror. For example, “Fundamentalism” had originally been used for a radically conservative Protestant movement in America that focused on the inerrancy of scripture, among other things, and has often been apolitical. Virtually all Muslims, however, accept the inerrancy of their scripture and thus rarely debate it, while Muslim “fundamentalism” is highly political.

The term “Islamism” lacks this Protestant baggage and may avoid the misconceptions it can cause. Secondly, “fundamentalism” in the Christian context is highly pejorative for most people and this may carry over unfairly to the Muslim phenomena. In the 1980s “Islamism” was not pejorative, though, in view of the violence since 2001, it has become pejorative for many, though probably still less so than “fundamentalism”.

Thirdly, there has been a tendency to treat all Muslims as fundamentalists, something about which Muslims often complain. It seems easier to keep “Islamism” separate from “Islam” and “Muslim” The “-ism” suffix suggests an ideology and most observers agree that the movements involved represent ideologies of Islam. One advantage of “fundamentalism” is that it can be used cross culturally, so that one may speak of “Hindu fundamentalism” and “Jewish fundamentalism.” While not everyone likes this usage, no term has replaced it for this purpose and this alone would guarantee its continued use. (Salvatore, 2007)

Most Muslims are not fundamentalists, and most fundamentalists are not terrorists, but most present-day terrorists are Muslims and proudly identify themselves as such. Understandably, some Muslims complain when the media speak of terrorist movements and actions as “Islamic” and ask why the media do not similarly identify Irish and Basque terrorists and terrorism as “Christian”. The answer is simple and obvious –they do not describe themselves as such. The Muslim complaint is understandable, but it should be addressed to those who make the news, not to those who report it. Usama bin Ladin and his al-Qaida followers may not represent Islam, and many of their statements and their actions directly contradict basic Islamic principles and teachings, but they do arise from within Muslim civilization, just as Hitler and the Nazis arose from within Christendom, and they also must be seen in their own cultural, religious, and historical context. (Lewis, 2003: 137)

These pro-terror people grew up before our eyes in Muslim families. We thought they were Muslims. What kind of a process have they undergone such that they turned out to be terrorists? Aren't we all guilty? Our guilt is the guilt of a nation. It is the guilt of education. A

real Muslim, who understood Islam in every aspect, cannot be a terrorist. It is hard for a man to stay as a Muslim if he becomes involved in terror. Religion does not approve of killing a man to reach a goal. In fact, the three Theistic religions decreed love, mercy and peace. At the same time terror is the opposite of religion, it is barbarity, and misery. Terror origins should be sought in the other areas, like sociological and psychological ones, rather than in religion (Onder 2002, 29)

First of all, we can mention the existence of various opinions and lack of tolerance against these religious differences. Similarly, many think that they give religious judgment on the basis of God's will. However, almost all of them miss the main point, namely, none has ability to know the exact judgment of God. We also cannot disregard some religious men's mis-influence on these people. Clearly, ordinary people consider these men as respectable religious leaders; therefore they think that their views show the judgment of God. Consequently, these opinions become the essence of religion. Another important reason for intolerance is fanaticism, which exists in subconscious of many people. This fanaticism does not endure the existence of other opinions. Thus it produces the people who stand against God and also produces people who behave harshly and violently against their fellows.

In fact, Muslims could not be terrorists. Because of the Book of the Muslims not allowed that. Qur'an says “Killing one is the same as killing all” (V: 32). One of the companions of Prophet, Ibn Abbas says “a killer of a man will stay in hell for eternity” (Nasai, 1992; Ibn Maja, 1992; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1992). If this is the fundamental of the Islam, then it should be taught through education. They do not do so. At the same time, there is self-criticism in Islam. Everything is questioned by Muslims, except for holy messages. We do not think such self-criticism exists in others. If you are not right, we will do this for you.” Scholars and ethnologists have discussed and debated Islamic issues so many times that these fill countless volumes. Everyone had criticized the other in Islam. These criticisms had been met within a sensible tolerance.

As a matter of fact, Mehmed II encouraged the scholars of his time to produce works in their special fields. For example, for the comparison of al-Ghazzali's criticisms of Mashshai (Peripatetic Muslim) philosophers concerning metaphysical matters, expressed in his work titled *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), and Ibn Rushd's answers to these criticisms in his work *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (The Incoherence of Incoherence), he ordered two scholars of his time, Hojazade and Ala al-Din al-Tusi, each to write a work on this subject. (Bolay, 2000: 20-22)

All of the different extremist groups the Muslim country sanctify their action through pious references to Islamic text, notably the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet, and all three claim to represent a truer, purer and more authentic Islam than that currently practiced by the vast majority of Muslims and endorsed by most though not all of the religious leadership. They are, however, highly selective in their choice and interpretation of sacred texts. In considering the sayings of the Prophet, for example, they discard the time-honored methods developed by the jurists and theologians for testing the accuracy and authenticity of orally transmitted traditions, and instead accept or reject even sacred texts according to whether they support or contradict their own dogmatic and militant positions. Some even go so far as to dismiss some Qur'anic verses as "revoked" or "abrogated". (*Vasat Dergisi*, 1997: 4; *Davet Dergisi*, 1990: 56; Azzam, 2002: 299, Lewis, 2003: 138)

According to some researches, there are two claims on the source of religious terror in the Islamic history, and these are *Kharijites* and the ferocious *Assassins*. Let us briefly discuss these groups and their position in religion.

Kharijites historically speaking, are well known Islamic sect, which gives primary importance to this idea when they spread pernicious views and doctrines against Islam, they were not exercising legitimate freedom of expression in pursuit of either truth or knowledge, but were bent on destruction and abuse, and their activities threatened the disintegration of the community. The *Kharijites* acted in concert and had enough power to jeopardize the security of the nascent Islamic state.

Thus ancient authority on *jihād* has modern force. For example, the 13th century Mamluk scholar Ibn Taymiyyah has reached out through the centuries to mold radical Islamist thinking about *jihād* today. Hillenbrand explains why "Ibn Taymiyya's ideas have been embraced enthusiastically by modern Islamic reform movements": For him, *jihād*, both spiritual and physical, is a force within Islam that can create a society dedicated to God's service. But whilst stressing the prototypical religious importance of the Prophet's career for those who wish to wage *jihād*. Ibn Taymiyya is sufficiently a man of his own age to draw parallels between Muhammad's time and contemporary events. Ibn Taymiyya sees the Muslim world assailed by external enemies of all kinds and the only solution is to fight *jihād* so that 'the whole of religion may belong to God. (Hillenbrand, 2000: 243) There are several important insights here. First, like the mid-13th century, these are times of danger and crisis for Islam. The danger is not simply from enemies without—in the *Dar al-Harb* (territory of war or chaos)—but enemies within—in the *Dar al-Islam* (house/abode of Islam) itself. (Inalcik, 1980: 71-79)

Second, *jihād* is the path to renewal in Islam, but that renewal requires both armed struggle and spiritual struggle. Third, no one is exempt from the struggle, because Islam is threatened at its very heart. Finally, this collective *jihād* is in itself a form of celebration, creating a current of collective piety that in effect moves history forward.

Some radical Islamist approaches, like those of Al Qaeda and Taliban ideology in the world, might seem archaic or even unacceptable to most Muslims. Ibn Taymiyyah here has done a disservice to today's Islamist cause. Again, Hillenbrand explains: His implacable diatribes against all kinds of innovations in Islam—against mystical practices, philosophy, theology, and veneration of tombs—are all motivated by his desire that the True Religion should not resemble in any way the practices of non-Muslims. (Hillenbrand 2000, 243) Ibn Taymiyyah's interpretation of *jihād* in effect has created a historical precedent for approaching non-Muslim innovation solely in terms of its potential theological impact on Islam. Thus, some radical Islamists today judge western technology on theological grounds as potentially corrupting, like the Taliban's rejection of TV. Muhammad and original Islam, in contrast, welcomed innovations of all kinds, whole-heartedly adopting what worked.

Indeed, ordinary Muslims support the insurgency. A *Sunday Times* poll finds that 40% of Muslims are openly willing to voice their support—in Britain, a western country "at war with terrorism", in Arabia the percentage is much more than that. Some imply that the insurgency is artificial, a 'soufflé' of their money. Some political governments have pushed Wahhabism with a payroll big enough for every mullah in the western countries, or at least 80% of them, as several sources attest (Wlahos und. 49).

The Wahhabi religious vision or brand of Islam, named after Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wehhab, has been the staple of Saudi government, a source of their religious and political legitimation. It is a strict, puritanical faith that emphasizes literal interpretation of the Qur'an and *sunnah* of the prophet Muhammad and absolute uniqueness of God. The Wahhabis denounced other tribes and Muslim communities as polytheists and idolaters. Anything the Wahhabi perceived as un-Islamic behavior constituted unbelief (*kufur*) in their eyes must be countered by *jihād*. Thus *jihād* or holy war was not simply permissible: to fight the unbelievers and reestablish a true Islamic state was required. (Esposito, 2002: 6)

Islamism in forms called extremist or radical has managed to take over the revival of Islam. The middle ground, giving way, is everywhere dislocated and confused. The entire experience of Islamic work over the past fifteen years has been one of increasing radicalization, driven by the perceived failure of the traditional Islamic institutions and the older Muslim

movements to lead the Muslim people. It is precisely this failure of leadership that gave the insurgency its initial authority. In times when the *Dar al-Islam* is under attack, voices of leadership tend to be totally more extreme. The example of the threat of the Mongols in the 13th century is important, for that is when Ibn Taymiyyah's vision of *jihad* emerged: It is small wonder that Ibn Taymiyya's ideas have been embraced enthusiastically by modern Islamic reform movements. The Mongols were the most fearsome enemy that the world of Islam had ever encountered, an alien force. Just like 'us'. It is not enough to say that most Muslims are not extremists and that therefore they do not support fighting subcultures. (Sivan, 1990: 94-107)

Assassins, historically, followers of many faiths have at one time or another invoked religion in the practice of murder, both retail and wholesale. Two words deriving from such movements in Eastern religions have even entered the English language: *thug*, from India, and *assassin*, from the Middle East, both commemorating fanatical religious sects whose form of worship was to murder those they regarded as enemies of the faith.

Members of the Muslim sect known as the Assassins active in Iran and then in Syria from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, seem to have been the first to transform the act that was named after them into a system and an ideology. Their efforts, contrary to popular belief, were primarily directed not against the Crusaders but against Muslim rulers, whom they saw as impious usurpers. In this sense the Assassins are the true predecessors of many of the so-called Islamic terrorists of today, some of whom explicitly make this point. (Lewis, 2003: 144)

There is today a prevailing view that world is witnessing a resurgence of Islam. It is, therefore, important to determine whether this view is justified, or well founded. (Esposito, 2002: 118-124) In order to do so, an understanding of what Islamic resurgence means is needed. Is it a revival of Islamic teachings, or is it a radical religious movement, which aims at making Islam the basis of temporal power by the establishment of a theocracy? Or, is it both at the same time? (Denker, 1997: 5-7; Vatikiotis, 1997: 169) If this is a reasonable and plausible characterization of the causes and motives of Islamic resurgence today, it suggests that the problem it reflects is not so much one, which concerns the rest of the world, but Islamic society itself. Nor it is a new problem.

V. RELIGIOUS TERROR: THE SAMPLE OF TURKEY

Before going in detail, it is better to give some historical information about the role of religious people in Turkish society. The Ottoman religious elites could offer no effective response either to European intervention or to the determination of the state elites to create a secular national state. The religious elites were in effect subordinate functionaries of the state, committed to the authority of a regime, which for centuries had been a warrior state and protector of Muslim Peoples. Throughout the nineteenth century, Ottoman sultans continued to stress their credentials as caliphs and defenders of Islam. With their base of power crushed by the liquidation of the Janissaries in 1826, and ambivalent about reform because of their desire to see a revitalization of Muslim life, the *ulama* were unable to resist the program of the state intelligentsia. Whatever the opinion of the *ulama*, and whatever the shock to the feelings of masses of Turkish Muslims, the voice of the Westernized political establishment was the only one heard at the foundation of the Turkish modernization. (Lapius, 1983: 54)

Thus, from its inception, the Turkish Republic was aggressively committed to 'Cultural Revolution' and to state-sponsored economic development. The heritage of strong state control, the nineteenth-century circumstances which inclined the political elites to western-type reforms, and the subordination of the religious establishment allowed the state elites to pursue policies of economic and cultural development that seem to have broken the inherited institutional pattern and created a more differentiated and pluralistic society.

Another consideration in assessing the credibility and prospects of the current movements of militant Islam is the effectiveness of Islam as a political ideology. In the recent past, Islam as a political ideology was tried briefly as a defense against the onslaught of the West and quickly abandoned in favor of borrowed secular ideals of nationalism 'progress' and modernity. (Vatikiotis, 1997: 170)

Today, there are some/few fundamental groups in the modern Turkey. Religious fundamentalist groups in Turkey principally are not different from other Islamic countries. There are, however, some different considerations in details. Their claims are like that: "The laws do not derive from Islam. Thus it is 'unsafe' to be a Muslim. The states in the Muslim world are anti-Islamic. (*Hira Dergisi*, 1993: 32; Humeyni, 1991: 77; Azzam, 1997: 190) Apostates or unbelievers are the very epitome of evil. The real/true Muslims are obliged to wage a *jihad* against them, and although in a *jihad* the rights of noncombatants must be respected, enemies who are apostates are to be treated differently. The Rulers of the age are in apostasy from

Islam. They were raised at the desk of Imperialism. They carry nothing from Islam. It is a well-established rule of Islamic law that the punishment for an apostate will be heavier than for one who is by origin an infidel. (*Genc Birikim* Haziran 1999, 8; Azzam, 2002: 211) An apostate has to be killed even if he is unable to go to war. An infidel who is unable to go to war should not be killed. (Faraj, 1986: 25) To support their activities it is known that so called Muslim terrorists cited both the Qur'an's declaration that rulers who do not govern according to the *shar'ia* are unbelievers (V: 40) and the tradition built on it relating that the Prophet said: "Whoever amongst you sees something reprehensible, should set it aright with his hand; if he cannot do that let him do it with his tongue; if that is impossible let him do it with his heart". (*Hira Dergisi*, Kasım, 1994: 27)

As known, religion is a fact for the individuals and societies. The facts of religions change according to the people's cultures, traditions and understandings. In this manner, in a state in which Islam is the common belief, there are some misinterpretations and misunderstandings about religion. However, when we search for roots of the radical ideas we found the Middle Eastern countries as their creator.

The radical thoughts are easily adopted by the underdeveloped countries, which are economically weak. The people of such countries could easily rebel against the existing administration as they have lost their confidence in the governmental institutions. They find themselves in a low state of mind because of political and economic pressures.

Although radical Islamic thoughts are opposite to the religious understanding of Turkish people, because of Iran's diffusions revolutionary attitude, those ideas are adopted by some marginal Turkish groups. Geographical closeness could be considered as the reason of the diffusion of Iran originated religious thoughts in Turkey". (Metiner, 2004: 223) After the Revolution in Iran, for the first time Islamic policies are begun to be discussed and unfortunately Iran became a role model example for the reactionary Muslims in many countries (Zengin, 1991: 42; *Davet Dergisi*, 1990, no. 2: 30)

However, Iranian Shiite Islam and Turkish Sunnite Islam differ in many ways. Essentially, the Islamic scholars show Turkey as the country in which Islam is lived freely (Lewis, 1994) On the other hand, Iran always sees Shiism as its most important governmental institution. Thus Muslims in Iran are stricter than those who live in Turkey in many ways. (Turkoglu, 2006: 82-85) Clearly, Islam is not a religion of wars and bloodshed but a religion of tolerance: eternal love and peace. The translations of the works, which identify Islam with revolution, blood and wars, have affected some groups in Turkey Qur'an says, "The one who killed another is as

guilty as he killed all, the one who survived another's life is as precious as he gave life to all". In this manner, Islam brings love, respect, unity and brotherhood to mankind, not conflicts, combats, separation or wars.

Wast majority of the Muslim peoples are opposed to all kinds of terrorism, like religious terror. For example, according to researches carried out in Turkey, the Muslim-Turkish people are against terrorism and violence. (Ozankaya, 1979: 51-61; Denker, 1997: 5; Gunduz, 1996: 54-57; Ilham, 9; Ergil, 1980: 26-48; Tacar, 1999: 47-48)

The founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman Bey, maintained the religious rights of the Christians. When reached Hagia Sophia after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Mehmet II granted the Christians full rights and reorganized the staff of the Orthodox Greek Patriarchate. Suleyman the Magnificent reinforced these privileges, in response to Francois I's request, he forbade a church in Jerusalem to be changed into a mosque. After the conquest of Cyprus in 1571, Sultan Selim II issued an edict to the governor-general (Beylerbeyi), the *kadi* (Muslim Judge) and the *Defterdar* (minister of finance), specifying various rights to non-Muslims. Non-Muslim governors expressed their gratitude to Ottoman rulers, as may be seen in a document known as *Patrik-i Istanbul-i Rum ve Asitane'de Mukim Cemaat-i Metropolitan*.

Another example of religious tolerance relates to the Jews. The relations of Turks and Jews had a long history, going back to the early days of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, in May 1517, on entering Jerusalem, Sultan Selim issued an edict to the Armenian Patriarch Serkis guaranteeing all previous religious rights and institutions of the Christians. Some reforms were introduced in the millet system after *Tanzimat Fermani*/the Reform Firman (1839) and *Islahat Fermani*/the Improvement Firman (1856), in response to various demands and new regulations took effect on 25 April 1861, *Rum Patrigi Nizamati* (Regulations relating to the Greek Patriarch). Similarly, *Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi* (Regulations relating to the Armanian community) became effective on 18 March 1863, and *Yahudi Milleti Nizamnamesi* (Regulations relating to the Jewish Community) on 22 March 1865. (Sezgin-Bicer, 2006: 411-412)

In fact, these religious tolerant attitudes have been continued nowadays in the Muslim peoples. The religious tolerance is opposite of religious terror. For this reason Muslims, Christians and Jewish people have been living all together in the same region without struggle; in other words, they still living all together in the same neighborhoods and peacefully by ages in Turkey, Egypt, and Syria etc. As a matter of fact mosques, churches and synagogues stayed side by side along the centuries in Istanbul and in other Anatolian cities. The people in Turkey

live in the same way as in the history although they believe in different religions. No one is accused or denounced for his beliefs.

It is a reality that terrorism has no religion; it means that all terrorists are criminals, disregardful of whom they are or what cause them to claim to serve from wherever and whoever they are. For this reason, all moderate Muslims in Turkey condemned the terrorist attacks November 2003 on British Embassy, HSBC and on Synagogues in Istanbul. For the new-style terrorists, the slaughter of innocent and uninvolved civilians is not “collateral damage”. It is the prime objective. Inevitably, the counterattack against the terrorists –who do not of course wear uniforms-, also targets civilians.

The terrorists improved on the methods, in particular the lack of concern at the slaughter of innocent bystanders. This unconcern reached new proportions in the terror campaign launched by al-Qaida and PKK. It is a typical example of the bombing of two American embassies in East Africa in 1998. In order to kill twelve American diplomats, the terrorists were willing to slaughter more than two hundred Africans, many of them Muslims, who happened to be in the vicinity.

Similarly, the terrorist attacks November 2003 on British Embassy, HSBC and on Synagogues in Istanbul are not too different. Among the people who died in these unfortunate events were Muslims; actually a greater portion of the losses were Muslims; which further shows to the world Turkish public that the terrorists who carried out these attacks were not trying to serve the cause of Islam or the Muslims.

Consequently the shopkeepers and businessman in the districts of Istanbul that were attacked by terrorists re-opened their shops and offices next day as a reaction to the terrorist attack. By doing so, they declared and proved that they are not afraid of terrorists and that they are actively opposing terrorism.

CONCLUSION

These misunderstandings and incorrect views about the Muslims by the Western public are due to the way in which media represent Muslims to the world public. The media is reluctant to investigate the issues and the events, and their reluctance to pursue the truth of news stories result in correct; if not fictitious news coverage and reports. This creates grave misunderstanding and misrepresentations, which further create prejudices about Muslim people in the West; as

a result of which various discriminative behavior patterns emerge in Western societies with regard to Muslims (Esposito, 2002:119-123). It is a fact that some terrorist presents themselves as Muslims, but they have done is incompatible with the principles of Islam.

Islam just like other major religions of the world has many different branches and sects. Some heretical branches or sects might preach terrorism to their followers, but orthodox Islam opposes “the killing of a person unjustly”, hence opposes terrorism. The terrorists who present themselves as Muslims live in an isolation from everybody; their thoughts and mentality do not coincide with reality. At the same time according to those terrorists “dissimulation” (*taqiya*) is the most important belief. Although Islam declares it is definitely mistaken but the radical thoughts like those may be in any religion or movement. Although this is definitely incorrect according to Islam, people with such radical tendencies might have radical thoughts can be found among the followers of any religion.

We should very deeply think about the Muslim terrorists. Is that really from religious anxiety? Because of terrorism is a complex phenomenon. Like other forms of violence, there is no single reason why people engage in acts of terrorism, and no simple solution to the problems it poses. But if we wish to move beyond vengeance and seek a solution, we must try to understand and effectively address the conditions that give rise to terrorism and help it grow. In our search for a solution, there is no doubt that economic and political development play a critical role. They not the whole answer, but they are an important part of it.

Finally, we especially remind, “The Qu’ran says that killing one is the same as killing all.” And Ibn Abbas says “a killer of a man will stay in hell for eternity”. We can ensure you Turkish people surely believe in that Muslims cannot be terrorists. So it is no way to claim that any terrorist group is originally founded in Turkey. Generally, they are affected from Shiite and Wahhabi groups.

Religious terrorist attacks in Turkey, in Islamic countries and in the world: the willingness of the perpetrators to commit suicide and the ruthlessness of those who send them, concerning both their own emissaries and their numerous victims. Can these in any sense be justified in terms of Islam?

The answer must be a clear no. the callous destruction of thousand in the terrorist attacks, like in the World Trade Center (The September 11, 2001) and in the Istanbul, including many who were not American and English. Some of them Muslims from Muslim countries and a lot of them from different cities in Turkey, have no justification in Islamic doctrine or law and no precedent in Islamic history. These are not just crimes against humanity and against

civilization; they are also acts –from a Muslim point of view- of blasphemy, when those who perpetrate such crimes claim to be doing so in the name of Allah, His Prophet, and His scriptures.

The response of many Turkish Muslims to the attack on the World Trade Center and British Embassy, HSBC and on Synagogues in Istanbul were one of shock and horror at the terrible destruction and carnage, together with shame and anger that this was being done in their name and in the name of their faith and culture.

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