

FAIT ACCOMPLI STRATEGY AGAINST NON-MUSLIMS

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By Orhan Kemal Cengiz, [Today's Zaman](#), 20 November 2009

Michel Foucault says you can understand a society from what it excludes. We generally tend to look at what a society includes, what they are willing to embrace.

But Foucault draws our attention to a different angle. I agree with him. When it comes to Turkey, I believe, not only what it excludes but also how it does this are important factors to look at in order to have a better understanding of this country.

What does Turkey exclude? Without any doubt it excludes non-Muslims. This non-Muslim identity is rejected by secular state elites who are the founders of the Turkish republic. This is another tricky part which confuses outsiders and they have a serious difficulty to understand. In Turkey so called "secular people" have a much stronger allergy towards non-Muslims than devout Muslims have towards non-Muslims. This is important to understand because of the complex policy towards non-Muslims developed by the secular elites and so called secular state apparatuses. Today's so called "secular elites" are just the inheritors of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which orchestrated massacres against Armenians. If devout Muslims could play a quite dynamic reformist role in Turkey, they can do that because they do not have any historical linkage with this political movement. On the contrary, the same political movement has always oppressed them in Turkey.

While the Ottoman Empire was collapsing, the CUP decided that they should create a homogenous society in the remaining part of the empire. Because they believed if they did not do that they would have lost more territory, even Anatolia would be broken into smaller pieces. On the orders of Talat Pasha, in 1915, Armenians were forcefully expelled to the Syrian deserts, massacred and all their belongings were seized. Turkey's history of getting rid of non-Muslims is also the history of the Turkification of capital. It is not a coincidence that the richest Turkish families in Turkey are from the cities and regions in which the biggest massacres were carried out; Adana, Kayseri and so on. This may also explain why we have such an obedient bourgeoisie in Turkey.

After this initial and brutal blow, a certain policy was vigorously and relentlessly applied towards non-Muslims during the Republican era in Turkey. If you look at the history of non-Muslims, you can clearly see the repetition of certain patterns. Sudden and unexpected attacks followed certain periods of inaction and after a while, another unexpected attack followed this inactive period. This is called a 'fait accompli' strategy. A fait accompli strategy works like this: You want to get something. You take it without discussion or warning and you give your enemy/opponent a choice, they will either fight back or accept the loss. You also act upon the conservative attitudes of your opponent; you know that they will act to protect what is left to them rather than fighting for what has been taken from them. After a while what you have taken becomes a part of the status quo. Sooner or later you take something else from your opponent, but again they do not react believing that they have a lot to lose if they fight back. These actions and waiting periods follow each other; after a while your opponents start to see the pattern, but this time, if they react, they would have lost most

of their material possessions and freedoms when you set out for a new attack; they think it will not be worth fighting back because they did not fight while most things were taken from them.

This is exactly what happened to non-Muslims during the republican era. They were scared away with pogroms. They were condemned to poverty by wealth taxes. Their properties, their foundations were taken from them one-by-one by carefully calculated legal tricks. They were never given any legal status and they suffered from this ambiguity. Their schools were closed and so on. Attacks followed inaction. Inaction was followed by new attacks. The so called Lausanne minorities suffered from these policies a lot and they have come to the verge of extinction. I have already explained the plight of the ecumenical patriarchate in this column before. And as I said earlier, minority groups are also a part of this game with their submissive and passive attitude. They never sufficiently use and benefit from existing remedies; they have never developed any strategic litigation to gain new rights to loosen the noose around their necks. This fait accompli strategy has been applied on automatic pilot since the republic was established. Its aim is obvious. It will be repeated until non-Muslims completely vanish. This strategy is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to democracy in this country. We need to develop awareness, an understanding of it first and then a serious struggle for its eradication can be started. There is no place for fait accompli in any democracy!

Comments



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Very interesting vision

This article shows the implicit strategy that underlies in the Turkish society against "non-Muslims". Also it's interesting how the author deals with the difference between Muslims and "secular people" in that society. This article helps us to think more deeply about the future. The cultural changes take years, and if the Turkish leadership doesn't have any intention to change the status of non-Muslim people, the minorities are going to disappear, just it happened in other Muslim nations.



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Reading the above does not

Reading the above does not leave any more misunderstandings. Democracy should prevail - We all globally should take part of it.