RELIGION AND WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

How Faith Shaped Societies from Antiquity to the Present

VOLUME 2

MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN WORLDS

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community of these kabbalist crypto-Jews has survived to the present day at Yeniköy on the Bosphorus. Their proper liturgical texts remained secret until recently. Today five Shabbetayan sacred "romansas" in Judeo-Spanish Ladino are known to scholars. The first of them, "Meliselda," was sanctified by Shabbetay Tsevi himself. One additional romance, "Armavan gera los moros," is used by the Dönme to hint at metaphysical reasons for Tsevi's apostasy. The fifth and last known romance, "Hahamim van ayi irando/ayrando," depicts the meeting between Mehmed IV and Shabbetay Tsevi in optimistic terms, ignoring the issue of apostasy and emphasizing that Shabbetay continued to work for the good of Israel.

Out of the Shabbetayan underground in the eighteenth century, the Polish Jew Jacob Frank founded the movement of the "Frankists." It spread also through Austria, Germany, and most of the Ashkenazi world. Instead of mixture with Islam, they propagated embracing the Christian faith holding on like the Dönme to their own secret rites and practices. The good relation between the Sepharad and their Muslim surroundings can also be seen by the great variety of faces and sounds of Jewish music in Ottoman lands. Over time, the Sephardic communities developed both an extraordinary blend of liturgy in Hebrew and Ladino language, but in strict compliance of classical Ottoman music, and a folkloristic tradition that moves between influences of medieval Spain and the Aegean. Jewish musicians were not only at the receiving end of this exchange—many of them were teachers of Turks, Greeks, and Armenians and even composers of still known pieces. Jewish cantors could visit Dervish convents, and Muslim reciters would visit synagogues to listen to the liturgy as well.

Although the majority of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were supported by European empires and their circumstances were often cited to charge the Ottoman government with acts of oppression in the nineteenth century, this was not the case for the Jewish community. However, a stream of socialism and Zionism filtered in from Europe during that century. Industrialization also created a—mainly Jewish—working class in Turkey. The Marxist ideology of the Ashkenazi "Bund" (Jewish socialist movement) in Tsarist Russia was transmitted to the Ottoman Jews by Avraam Benaroya, who in 1909 in Salonica founded the Federacion Socialista Laboradera. It was also an attempt to solve within a single democratic movement the Ottoman nationalities problem. The revolution of the Young Turks (1908/1909) initially had the same purpose. The most prominent financier and mentor of their Committee of Union and Progress (İttiḥâd ve Terakḳî Cem'iyeti) was the Jewish banker from Salonica, Emmanuel Carasso. Another initiative was to transform the Sephardic proletariat of Smyrna into farmers since 1891 at the Or Yehuda Agricultural Colony in Akhisar. Its results helped the early Zionists in establishing from 1896 their first rural settlements in Palestine. On his way there, the "Worker of Zion" (Paole Zion) Joseph Gruen—later under the name David Ben-Gurion the first prime minister of Israel—came from Poland to Turkey. He wanted to take advantage of the Zionist's friendship with the Young Turks. Arriving in Salonica in 1911 he found "a Hebrew labor town, the only in the world." So the "Jerusalem of the Balkans," also called "Mother of Israel," became a model for shaping the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Under late Ottoman rule, there were already 66,000 mainly Ashkenazi Jews who lived there. In 1918, the Young Turks wanted to "deport" them like the Armenians, but they were saved by intervention of the German commander at the Palestinian front and Ottoman field marshal Erich von Falkenhayn.

Heinz P. Gstrein

See also: Volume 1: Byzantium: Fall of Constantinople (1453); *Early Medieval Europe (500–1000):* Founding of the Holy Roman Empire; *Volume 2: Medieval Arab Civilization:* Dhimmi Status; *Medieval Spain (300–1500):* Expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal; *Seljuk and Ottoman Civilizations:* Armenian Genocide; Collapse of the Ottoman Empire; Millet System

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Jihad, World War I, and the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire followed an effective pan-Islamist policy during the reign of Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909). He utilized the title of caliph as a means of soft power against the imperialist powers. In this way, he aimed to develop a sense of solidarity among all Muslims. For

instance, his name was mentioned as the caliph of Muslims in Friday sermons that were delivered in mosques in India and Africa, since the preaching of Friday sermons in the name of a ruler or the caliph symbolized their authority in those lands. As a result, African and Indian Muslims living under European colonial rule started to pay more attention to the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, and this prevented colonial powers, fearful of antagonizing local peoples, from pursuing more aggressive policies against the Ottomans. For example, during the Ottoman-Italian Tripoli War (1911) and the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), Indian and North African Muslims disrupted the colonial public order by demonstrations and also sent aid to the Ottoman Empire.

In World War I, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and fought against the Allied Powers. It entered the war in late October 1914 by bombing the Russian ports on the Black Sea. On November 11, Sultan-Caliph Mehmed V announced two documents to the public. First, he proclaimed that there was a state of war between the Ottomans and the Allied Powers. Second, he issued a declaration to the Ottoman army and the Ottoman navy explaining the reasons for the war. Although the *jihad* fatwa (legal ruling) had not been declared yet, this declaration also mentioned *jihad* and invited Muslims to join.

Three days after this declaration, on November 14, Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Hayri Effendi, who was a state official with the highest authority in religious matters and whose fatwas were considered legally binding, publicized the *jihad* fatwas. This religious and legal document consisted of five fatwas. In the light of this, it was the obligation of Muslims to participate in the *jihad* by the order of the sultan-caliph. All Muslims under the rule of Russia, Britain, and France, namely, the countries that were understood to have targeted the Islamic caliphate, were obliged to unite against these empires. Those who did not join in *jihad*, despite this obligation, would deserve and bring on them the wrath of God. Muslim soldiers who served on behalf of the Allied Powers and fought against and killed Ottoman soldiers would commit a great sin. It would also be considered a great sin for Muslims under the domination of Russia, Britain, France, Serbia, and Montenegro to fight against Germany and Austria-Hungary, the allies of the Ottoman Empire. In this declaration, the forty-first verse of the Surah At-Tawbah in the Qur'an, was cited as the basis for the *jihad*. It reads: "Mobilize whether you are equipped lightly or heavily (and whether it be easy or difficult for you); and strive with your wealth and persons in God's cause. Doing so is what is for your good, if you but know it."

Sheikh al-Islam publicized another fatwa, titled "Declaration of *Jihad*" and included signatures of the former Sheikh al-Islam, the fatwa consultant, and twenty-nine clerics on November 23 with the sultan's decree. In this declaration, the crimes committed by the Allied Powers against the Islamic world were described and used as the basis to claim that Muslims were oppressed and deprived of their freedom and independence in the Near East, India, and Africa. It also explained that the *jihad* was not against any or all Christian states but only those who showed their enmity to the caliphate of Islam. Furthermore, the fatwa called Muslims under the domination and captivity of Britain, France, Russia, and their allies to revolt against these states and sought to dissuade Muslim subjects of these states from fighting in their armies against the Ottoman Empire, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. Finally, the Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Tatar texts of all these declarations were sent to almost every part of the Islamic world, both inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire, for distribution to Muslims.

After the declaration of *jihad*, a tremendous struggle took place between the Ottoman and British intelligence organizations. The Ottoman Special Organization, backed by the Germans with money, weapons, and ammunition, sent its officers to the Middle East, North and East Africa, India, Central Asia (Turkestan), and even Java and Sumatra. The ultimate goal of the Ottomans was to carry the war directly to the colonies where the Muslims lived by starting an armed struggle and uprisings, but the Ottoman efforts failed. If this had happened, the Allied Powers would have had to amass to more troops in these regions to maintain control, and thus the Central Powers would face reduced Allied forces on the war fronts in Europe.

During the intelligence wars, the Ottomans focused on three issues:

The first was to reach central Asia and India via Iran. The Ottoman intelligence officers entered Iran and Iraq. They organized Kurdish tribes and formed militia units, but the expected support from Persian and Iranian Turks, who were completely Shia, could not be realized due to the long-term sect factionalism. After the Ottomans were defeated by the Russians in the Caucasus Campaign in 1915, the operation in Iran was doomed to failure. After relatively few Ottoman successes in Iraq, the British took Baghdad in March 1917 and drove the Ottoman forces into northern Iraq.

The second was to disconnect the British from their colonies in India, Australia, and New Zealand, by provoking the Muslims in Egypt, Sudan Darfur, and then capturing the Suez Canal. The Ottoman army organized the Sinai Campaigns, one in 1915 and the other in 1916, to seize the Suez Canal. During these campaigns, Ottoman intelligence officers tried to incite Muslims to revolt against the British in Egypt and Sudan, but both the Ottoman army and intelligence officers failed in their operations. The British, who fended off the Ottoman attacks, defeated the Ottoman Syrian-Palestinian front with a forward action. They drove the Ottomans toward the north of Syria by the end of October 1918.

The third was to prevent the uprisings of Hejaz Arabs, who were known to have agreement with the British. Hussein, sharif of Mecca, and his sons, then founder King Abdullah of Jordan and then short-lived King Faisal of Iraq and Syria, revolted against the Ottomans in 1916. They fought for the British in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. The other important figure Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, then founder king of Saudi Arabia, made an agreement with the British, paid no attention to the Ottoman declaration of *jihad*, and did not fight for the Ottomans. Therefore, the Ottomans lost all control over the Hejaz except Medina and Yemen. As a last effort, a group of intelligence officers took action from Medina in order to reach Yemen and suppress the Hejaz Revolt with the military units they formed there, but this operation also failed in 1917. The Ottomans could not do nothing in the other colonial lands.

There were some significant reasons for Ottoman failure. Muslims communities living under the colonial powers generally viewed this invitation with sympathy and saw the declaration of *jihad* as offering the potential for liberation. But the means of transport and communication between the Ottomans and Muslim populations under European colonial rule were inadequate. Also, the declaration of *jihad* by the Ottoman caliph was not authoritative or meaningful for Shia Muslims due to the historical Sunni and Shiite distinction. Furthermore, the Ottomans sided with two Christian empires, which was against the spirit of *jihad*, and the British exploited this situation very well. This was demonstrated by the fact that the British successfully recruited large numbers of Indian Muslims to fight against the Ottomans on the Iraq and Sinai fronts, and against the Germans in Europe.

The British also took serious measures to make the *jihad* fatwas fail. At first, they declared a state of emergency and martial law in their colonies. They either arrested or deported German and Austrian nationals there. Agitators and provocateurs were placed under strict surveillance. Both the British and French carefully selected recruits from Muslim populations, ensuring that few of the Muslims who served in the Allied forces fled to the Ottomans. In contrast, most of the Arabs who served the Ottoman army fled to the British.

Ultimately, the declaration of *jihad*, which was announced with great hopes and expectations, failed. In light of the complex alliances and conditions of World War I, it did not have a solid enough basis to ensure an enthusiastic response, and so the high expectations of the Ottomans for the declared *jihad* at the start of the war were not realistic.

Ercan Karakoc

See also: Volume 2: Medieval Arab Civilization: Origins of *Jihad*; *Seljuk and Ottoman Civilizations:* Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate; Armenian Genocide; Collapse of the Ottoman Empire; Establishment of the Secular Republic of Turkey; Millet System; Ottoman Empire

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Millet System

The heterogeneous Ottoman Empire from the midst of the fifteenth to the early twentieth century was based on "nations" of the same religion or confession, the so-called Millet System. Muslims represented the leading nation (Millet-i Hakime), but Greek or Oriental Orthodox Christians and Jews were also organized in self-governing communities with their own rights and duties under the