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TURKEY UNDER THE HOLD OF SAUDI FUNDAMENTALISM

The first page of the center-left daily *Cumhuriyet* of March 13, 1987, violently shook up Turkey's political life. An international Islamic organization in favour of the *Shari'a* (the Islamic law), had paid from 1981 to 1982 the salaries of the Turkish clergy employed by the government of Ankara to assure the religious education of

The *World Moslem League* (Rabitat-ul Alem-ul Islam), by way of the *Islamic and Cultural Center* in Brussels, had paid over two years 1,100 dollars per imam and per month. It had also made donations of 20 million Turkish Lira for the mosque which should be built within the parliamentary complex, two millions for the mosque of Kocatepe in Ankara, and five millions for the restoration of damaged religious buildings in Adana. On the whole story of this "contract" with a foreign religious organization, the *Cumhuriyet* asked President Evren to explain. In fact, below the decree of April 28, 1981, concerning the salaries of the Turkish Clergy, one can see the signature of General Kenan Evren who was then chief of the military junta.

According to the *Cumhuriyet*, this submission to the *Rabitat* would in a word be a scandal without precedent in the history of secular Turkey. But the scandal does not stop there... A series of reports by the journalist Ugur Mumcu showed that the Evren-Özal tandem had given besides numerous concessions to Islamic institutions directed by this Saudi organization.

The polemics that followed these revelations showed once more the hypocritical politics of the Ankara regime: while they pretend to be "attached to the European ideal," and knock at the door of the European Communities, their consecutive governments have done everything possible for the *Rabitat* to establish its political, ideological and economic hegemony in Turkey.

Following these revelations, the Minister of State Hasan Celal Güzel has, in the name of the government, confirmed the revelation regarding the clergy: "the imams implicated exercised their ministry for Turks abroad be-

tween June 30, 1981, and January 1982. They received part of their salary from *the Rabitat*." However, he tried to justify this affair with the usual demagoguery of the regime: "Shortly after the coup of September 1980, strong agitation against the State was developing abroad. Consequently, it was good for Turkey that clergy sent by the State could avoid having their co-religionists implicated in these subversive activities. The end justifies the means..."

Whereas, according to the revelations of the journalist Ugur Mumcu, the most subversive activities would be those of *the Rabitat* which aims at overthrowing the secular system of the Turkish State and reestablishing a fundamentalist regime based on the *Shari'a*. That is the reason that the Secretary General of the *Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP)* Fikri Saglar asked purely and simply for the resignation of Kenan Evren and those responsible for *the Rabitat* operation (See boxed interview with Saglar). Furthermore, the SHP has lodged a motion with the National Assembly to open a parliamentary inquiry into *the Rabitat* affair and the resurging of fundamentalism in Turkey. But putting this motion on the agenda was refused by the government majority in the Assembly.

The reaction of General Evren against criticism of the opposition was as demagogic as that of the government spokesman. During a press conference held on March 27 at the Association of Journalists of Turkey, General Evren said: "I know under which circumstances *the Rabitat* had been authorized to pay the salaries of Turkish clergy in Europe. The country was at a financial bottleneck and had no money to pay these people. I know that the World Moslem League is an organization which aspires to establish the order of *Shari'a* in Islamic countries, but no Turkish clergy has been influenced by this organization. Moreover, why is this affair considered so important? They also criticize the fact that the Turkish Ambassador is a part of the administration council of the Islamic and Cultural Center in Belgium. What could we do? The Belgian state has recognized Islam as one of the official religions of the country and has attributed all power to designate religious teachers. If we had not been a part of this center, the clergy for the Turkish community would have been named by strangers. If we had participated in the direction of this center, it was so that we ourselves could designate our clergy. I believe that this campaign was started for subversive reasons because just after publication of the story of *the Rabitat*, several European radio stations have begun anti-Turkish broadcasts. The underground organizations in Europe which lead a campaign against Turkey are paid for that by certain communist countries. Besides, if the World Christian League had paid this clergy, there would have been no reaction."

Nevertheless; he did not say one word about the revelations regarding the other acts of submission to *the Rabitat*. During his monologue -the journalists participating in the press conference were forbidden to pose questions to the "President of the Republic"- Evren affirmed that he would be the only guarantee of State secularity.

But it is during Evren's period of power that the

fundamentalist powers have gained their peak in Turkey and the secularity of the state is compromised more than ever (see: *Info-Türk*, May 1986).

HISTORY OF SUBMISSION TO THE RABITAT

One must admit that the resurging of Islam in Turkey had already begun in the seventies, after that start of the oil crisis. First of all, the secularization of the State and the suppression of *Shari'a* institutions by the young Republic had not been accompanied and maintained by socio-economic reforms which could improve the condition of the life of the masses. Moreover, the banning of left-wing political parties, trade unions and democratic organizations pushed the discontented masses into underground Islamist groups and superstitious practices. But from the passage to the pluralist system in 1946, all the political parties began to address themselves to the religious sentiments of the believers for electoral reasons. Consequently, one has seen a beginning of mosque building throughout the country. While there were 12,036 mosques in Turkey at the start of the Republic, this figure rose to some 50 thousand in the seventies.

The years 1973-80 form the period of the repolitization of Islam in Turkey. *The National Salvation Party (MSP)* of Necmeddin Erbakan, with the support of the conservative Anatolian bourgeoisie, rapidly organized and became the third big political party in the country. Thanks to its close position at the constitution of governmental coalitions and its participation in several governments, the MSP rendered the Islamic movement one of its most important components of political life.

The military junta which took power on September 12, 1980, took as target left-wing and democratic organization. It also showed itself repugnant regarding the extreme-right, chauvinists of fundamentalists, but that was only to justify its putsch and to present itself as an arbiter against all kinds of extremism. Although the military justice started some political cases against neo-fascist and Islamist organizations, some months later all the leaders of these parties were freed. Moreover, in the new political structure, activists of these two extremisms have quite infiltrated the State apparatus as well as *the Motherland Party (ANAP)* which has been in power since 1983.

While they pretend to be the heirs of Kemalism, the secular movement of founder of the Republic Kemal Atatürk, the military, in the aim of recruiting Islamist militants, have taken a series of measures, all in denying the principle of secular State. General Evren, in all his speeches, refers to the texts of the Koran to justify his anti-democratic arguments. The military government and its "civilian" successor accelerate the opening to Islamic countries with a view to developing economic and commercial relations with these countries. General Evren, his prime ministers and other ministers participate very often in meeting of Islamic countries and are always running around capitals of the Arab world.

Developing bilateral relations, including with Moslem countries, is indispensable for Turkey, but she was not obliged at all to resurrect medieval trends 60 years after the proclamation of the Republic.

THE LEFT-WING OPPOSITION ACCUSES GENERAL EVREN

The Secretary General of the Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP) Fikri Sağlar, in an interview to *the Turkish Daily News* of April 3, 1987, explained why he asked for Kenan Evren's resignation:

"First, one must speak of the true nature of Rabita, the World Moslem League. This is not a religious organization, as they would have us believe, but a political foundation. Its aim is to promote the principles of Char'i'a. As they pursue their political goals, they act to reach their end. In Turkey, they have poured in money. Now, whoever they are, they are linked and obey first those who pay them. It is a universal law. If an Islamist organization pays the envoys of the Turkish Government, it would be absolutely normal for the envoys in turn to work for the organization. Furthermore, another fundamental principle is that the State absolutely should pay its envoys itself. What has it done in this affair? It has sold its freedom and independence to an Islamist organization whose ideals are contrary to their own."

Q: But does this "skid" warrant only the resignation of the president of the Republic?

A: What counts is not whether Evren personally signed or not, but who was the chief of the government having implemented this policy. You say "the president of the Republic", but do not forget that at the time, between 190 and 1983, he was the real executive chief in Turkey and that he personally made decisions.

Q: Kenan Evren, however, is considered one of the ardent defenders of Secularity.

A: People believe that. It is false. May be the president, personally, believes in the principles of Secularity, but in no case has he matched his acts with his thoughts.

Q: You sincerely believe that fundamentalism is a real threat to Turkey?

A: Let's look at the facts since September 12, 1980: Secularity has been slowly but surely eroded in Turkey. Since that date, religious affairs have little by little been entering state affairs. For example, for the first time in a constitution one brings up and admits the question of religious courses in national education. The head of the State begins certain of his speeches with verses of the Koran. The religious foundations are multiplying. The number of schools of the imams has remained the same, but the number of students has also increased. The president, ostensibly, remarks that he does not observe the obligatory fast because he is on official travel, etc. Each of these indications seem minimal. Their sum clearly shows the present tendency of Turkey.

Q: But in Turkey, Moslems make up 90% of the population. All of them are not seeking to overthrow the Republic.

A: That's what Kenan Evren says. In a Moslem country, he says to justify the constitution, it is normal that one is concerned with religious education. First, there is a contradiction in these words and his declarations on his role of "defender of Secularity". Then, in secular country like Turkey, I think that non-Moslems who make up 10% of the population can demand that such things be withdrawn from the constitution. I would even say that for one percent, a secular state should abstain from religious concerns.

Q: What explanation would you give for this regrowth of Islamic sentiment?

A: It is obvious. A part of the Right and of those who took power on September 12, 1980, wanted to use the force of religion against the left-wing forces. To counteract the popular influence of the communists, the social-democrats, the socialists, the religious card was played against them. That's why fundamentalism has reappeared in Turkey. Moreover, one must not neglect external factors. Turkey is the only Moslem country under a secular regime. Certain people do not like that. In the Rabita affair, it has been said that Demirel was the first to contact the World Moslem League. But at the time, Ozal was his advisor. Since that time, Ozal has had ties with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia in fact is ready to grant aid to Turkey in exchange for cessions to Islamism. Let us not forget Iran obviously, which seeks to safeguard its western border by having as many friends as possible in Ankara. These two countries constantly pour oil on the fire, even if the fire is not very strong. The leaders of 1980 and afterwards should have seen that. They did not see and did not react.

Q: Do you think that the people in the government and the politicians of the Right are in favour of a return to fundamentalism?

A: To obtain 92% of the vote for the constitution referendum of 1982, it was necessary to make concessions. Since the foundation of the Republic, there has remained in Turkey those who are nostalgic for the Shari'a and who await their day. The danger is real. After our statement requesting the resignation of President Evren last week, the parties of the Right reacted unanimously against us. There is the proof that our fight bothers certain people.

According to the recent revelations, it is irrefutable that the Islamist movement has been well organized for two decades in the social, political and cultural arenas while developing their rapports with international organizations of the Saudi persuasion, particularly with the World Islamic League (*the Rabitat*).

What is most remarkable is that the present prime minister Turgut Özal, "the spoilt child" of the American capital and author of the request for joining the EEC, has figured since the beginning in the had core of this Islamist movement.

In the sixties and seventies, an association of "academic" appearance recruited the first "Islamist intellectuals" and began to form them for important missions in the future. It was *the Association for the Propagation of Science* (Ilim Yayma Cemiyeti). The

word "science" is used, not in the sense of "positive sciences", but in the sense of "shari'a".

The creation of this association in Turkey coincided with the foundation of *the World Moslem League* (Rabitat) by Saudi Arabia in Mecca. In fact, the latter had been founded in 1962 with the support of the United States which tried to politicize Islam in the Middle East so as to counteract the progressive and anti-imperialist movement in the region. Financing for *the Rabitat* was assured by the American company ARAMCO, exploiting petrol from Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Emirates. During this period, the socialist movement has also flourishing in Turkey.

Among the 41 founders of *the Rabitat* were two members of the Turkish National Assembly, Salih Özcan and Ahmet Gürkan.

According to its statutes, the Rabitat had as a goal:

- to select accomplished Moslems among the pilgrims to Mecca and to form them into missionaries of Islam;

- to subsidize Islamic publications in all countries;
- to organize meetings between men of State.

Already in 1968, the socialist revue ANT revealed, with a very explicit table, the penetration of the Rabitat in Turkey through the Association for the Propagation of Science (IYC). At this time the IYC already placed its militants in several ministries, public enterprises, charged with coordinating different anti-communist, religious and nationalist organizations, had launched several publications including two daily newspapers and had started Koranic courses. ANT revealed also the names of three young Islamist engineers who had reached very important positions in the public services. Turgut Özal, president of the Organization for State Planning (DPT), his brother Korkut Özal, president of the State Oil Company (TPAO) and Necmeddin Erbakan, secretary general of the Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Stock Markets of Turkey (TOB). In Turkish intelligentsia, they stand out with their religious practices such as praying five times a day, even at the workplace, and making frequent pilgrimages to Mecca. For that, this group is called *Takunyalilar* (the sabot people). (ANT, 19.3.1986).

One should recall at once that, of these three engineers well selected at Mecca, Turgut Özal would first become deputy premier, then prime minister; Korkut Özal minister of the interior, and Erbakan first president of the National Salvation Party (MSP), then deputy prime minister.

Parallel to this Islamist movement, another movement was getting stronger and stronger in Turkey at the same time: the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) of former colonel Alparslan Türkeş, who, pretending to be attached to Islamic values, claimed superiority of the Turkish race and envisaged the constitution of a united empire of all the Turks in the world under the same banner. In fact, the union based on race was fully contradictory to the idea of *Umma* (community of all Moslems).

To reconcile the two tendencies, the IYC turned in 1970 to another association also open to nationalists: the Foyer of Intellectuals (Aydinlar Ocagi). The new association, to satisfy all the right-wing tendencies, launched the thesis of "Turco-Islamic synthesis". This thesis called for making the State more powerful and authoritarian for the promotion of Islam and the national values of Turks. It was this association which played an important role in the formation of governmental coalitions between the different right-wing groups: the "Nationalist Front" government, from 1975 to 1980, under the presidency of Demirel with the participation of Erbakan and Türkeş as deputy premiers.

It was in 1976 that, counting on financial and economic power of the oil-exporting countries, the Rabitat organized in Pakistan in 1976 a more audacious in-

ternational meeting aimed at imposing a more ambitious programme to other countries. This was the *International Congress of Shari'a*, attended also by the Turkish Minister of State Hasan Aksay, companion of Özal. The Congress adopted the following programme:

- to make the constitutions and legislations of all Islamic countries conform to the Shari'a;

- to make obligatory in all Islamic countries teaching of the language of the Koran;

- reinstatement of the Caliphate (abolished in 1924 by the Republic of Turkey);

- publication of a catechism of the Shari'a;

- to make obligatory the teaching of the first five chapters of the Koran in primary school and all of it in secondary schools;

- to proclaim Friday a holiday;

- strict application of the prohibitions imposed on women by the Koran;

- opening of mosques in all official places;

- foundation of Moslem organizations and trade unions.

In fact, this programme imposed by the Rabitat was put in practice without delay in all the countries. The opening of the *Islamic and Cultural Center* in Belgium, right beside the buildings of the European Community, was aimed at applying some of these decisions at least to the immigrant community from Islamic countries.

THE ISLAMISTS' HOUR

As for Turkey, the Islamists preferred to advance with extreme caution so as not to provoke brutal reaction from the Army in which certain officers were still attached to the principle of secularity. Furthermore, the left-wing forces actively resisted any fundamentalist initiative.

Up to 1980, all efforts were concentrated on strengthening the economic power of Islamist circles. Several important figures of the *Foyer of Intellectuals* were already at the head of private or public economic enterprises. Turgut Özal was advisor to prime minister Demirel and the "man on the spot" for the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

According to the example of the *Christianity Holding* and the *Ambossiano Bank* of the Vatican, the men of the Rabitat in Turkey, thanks to the revenue from their trade with Islamic countries, began to set up a series of holdings, foundations and enterprises.

It was in this period that, during the 8th Islamic Congress which met in Cyprus on the 24.3.1980, the president of Religious Affairs Tayyar Altikulac officially asked for assistance from the Secretary General of the Rabitat Ali El Harekat. The latter visited Turkey a week later and promised:

- funding of the religious service of Turkish workers abroad;

- a donation of 20 million Turkish lira for the construction of a mosque on the grounds of the National Assembly of Turkey;

- assistance for the Direction of Religious Affairs.

When the military seized power on September 12,

1980, although all the political leaders were stripped of their functions and prime minister Demirel was incarcerated in military jail, his chief advisor, Turgut Özal was installed in the military government with the title of "deputy premier".

At last, it was the Islamists' hour!

Although Erbakan and other leaders of the MSP, including the brother of Özal, were arrested, it was only a scenario put on by the junta to show themselves "attached to the principles of Atatürk." Some months later, all the Islamists were freed.

Since then, the influence of *the Rabitat* and the putting in practice of the decisions of the Congress of the Shari'a have been going full speed ahead. General Evren quotes in each of his speeches verses from the Koran and hadiths of the Prophet.

It is in this context that General Evren signed the decree regarding the payment of salaries of Turkish clergy abroad by *the Rabitat*.

While the ministers of the military government make trips to the capitals of Islamic countries, the volume of trade with these countries surpass that with EC countries. And it is the first time in the history of the Republic that a chief of State, General Evren, participated in the Islamic Conference in Morocco in 1984.

Concretely, since the arrival of the military in power:

- Religious teaching in secondary schools has been made obligatory by the new constitution. Even Christian students are forced to take Islamic religion courses.

- The number of mosques has risen to 57,000.

- The number of religious schools and Koranic courses multiplies. One out of five students in secondary education go to religious schools: There are 220,991 students in 715 religious schools. 130,874 students (78,354 girls and 52,520 boys) in 3,704 Koranic courses. But the number of underground Koranic courses is much higher. According to the *Cumhuriyet* of January 28, 1987, the Minister of State Kazim Ok-say declared that five thousand new courses of the Koran might have been opened in the two past years.

- While left-wing publications are banned, the number and circulation of Islamist publications multiplies rapidly. The number of the titles of religious books published in one year increased by 226% (from 267 to 637 in absolute figures) in nine years and by 71% in six years. The number of Islamist reviews climbed from 15 in 1980 to 27 in 1986. Four daily Islamist newspapers have a total circulation of 200,000 (*Türkiye* 150,000, *Milli Gazete* 30,000, *Yeni Nesil* 8,000, *Zaman* 11,000).

- Religious practices in official places are more frequent. Following the decision of the Congress of the Shari'a, each State department sets aside a prayer room. With the help of *the Rabitat*, mosques are being built at the National Assembly, at universities and in other public places.

- Recently, a deputy of Özal's party proposed a motion to the National Assembly for public services to be shut down for two hours on Friday so as to hold the prayer of the "holy day" of Islam.

- Islamic foundations register unprecedented growth

during the Evren-Özal period. Annual profit of the Turkish Foundation of religious Affairs, thanks to the organization of the pilgrimage to Mecca each year, has reached fabulous sums. In 1986, with a figure of 2.2 billion Turkish lira, its annual profit largely surpassed those of the most powerful industrial enterprises of the country. Moreover, the important figures of *the Foyer of Intellectuals* have arrived at setting up a series of Islamic foundations and holdings. The number of foundations rose to 1,663 in 1986 while it was 804 in 1983. According to the estimation of the daily *Hürriyet* of March 20, 1987, the revenue of these foundations should be 2,000 billion TL (5 billion DM). While Premier Özal figures among the administrators of *the Foundation of the National Culture of Turkey*, his brother Özal presides over *the Foundation of Fertility*.

- What is most significant is that after the military coup, Saudi financial groups like *Faisal Finance* and *Al Baraka* were allowed to set up in Turkey and to participate in several commercial and industrial enterprises. Among the Turkish partners of these groups are members of the Özal family and several leaders of the government party, ANAP. *Faisal Finance* and *Al Baraka* are linked to a Saudi financial group headquartered in Geneva, *Dar Al-Maal Al Islam*. The founder of Faisal Finance in Turkey is the former deputy Salih Özcan who is among the 41 founders of the Rabitat. As for Al Baraka, its principal partner is the Özal brother.

- *Dar Al-Maal Al Islam* of Prince Faisal is also interested in the savings of the Turkish workers in Europe. For that, it has set up *Islam Tekafül Kurumu* (The Islamic Corporation of Guarantee) of which propaganda is spread among the immigrants by way of Turkish mosques in Europe.

- The Rabitat also subsidizes the Turkish Republic of Cyprus of the North (KKTC). According to the *Milliyet* of March 26, 1987, the sum set for the administration of Denktash by the Rabitat rose to 988,949 \$.

- Certain big newspapers in Turkey also benefit from Rabitat subsidies. The *Hürriyet* announced on March 27, 1987, that the dailies *Tercüman*, *Milliyet*, *Türkiye* and *Yeni Asya* had received newsprint valued at a billion LT, paid by *the Rabitat* banks.

After revelations about the activities of *the Rabitat* in Turkey and among immigrants, its adjoint secretary-general Amin Akil Al-Attas, in an interview with the *Hürriyet* of March 29, justified them in these terms: "The propagation of the Shari'a is our duty. God said it. If you are Moslems in the world."

But what is most remarkable, the Turkish Army, for the first time in the history of the Republic, openly calls itself "the Army of Islam".

During the raking operation against Kurdish guerillas of the East, planes and helicopters of the Army threw on Kurdish villages about a thousand tracts of the "jihad" (holy war).

Here are some quotations of these tracts:

"Citizen! Listen well to what Islam orders of you:

"Fight in God's way against those who fight against you!

"Separatist groups try to snatch from you your religion, your children, your wife, all values such as fatherland, flag and morale.

"It is your duty to fight against them!
 "Don't forget! The Turkish Army which is in
 progress of wiping out these traitors is the latest pow-

erful army in the Islamic world. Collaborate with it."
 It is this army which goes now, through its "civil"
 government, to the door of the European Communities.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ISLAMISTS AND THE RIGHT-WING PARTIES

Turkey, according to the Constitution put in force by the military in 1982, is a secular Republic. Consequently, the State should remain above all the religious affairs by looking after the safeguard of equality between different cults of the country.

Whereas, respect to the equality of cults has never existed in Turkey. First of all, the non-Moslem minorities are subjected to a discrimination not only from the point of view of having access to higher positions in public services, but also in the field of religious education. By virtue of the new Constitution, christian children have to follow islamic courses in secondary schools.

The neutrality of the State in regards to different cults does not exist even for an important party of Moslems.

Islam is not monolithic in Turkey and the two principal sects of Islam, *the Sunnites* and *the Alevites* live side by side in Turkish and Kurdish communities. While the Sunnites constitute absolute majority, the number of the Alevites rises to ten millions within a population of 50 millions.

The Alevite sect can be compared to the messianist movements which, at the end of the Middle Age in Europe, wanted the ideal State on earth. In spite of their parenthood with the Shiites of Iran, the Alevites of Turkey do not share their fundamentalism and are more open and more progressive than the Sunnites. That is probably because of their minority status in Turkey, while the Shiites have always been the majority in Iran. In modern history, the Alevites first supported the Kemalist reforms and afterwards left-wing movements. However, they have always been discriminated, like christian minorities, even during the periods of power of the Kemalists and the Social-democrats, because they have not any representation within *the Religious Affairs Directorate of the Republic*. Official authority on religious affairs is completely given to the majority sect: *the Sunnites*.

Sunnite orders influenced by the Rabitat

The Sunnite sect, divided in many religious orders and tendencies, has been for more than twenty years under the growing influence of the World Moslemwellinty the Motherland Party (ANAP), but is active also in *the Welfare Party (RP)*, *the Correct Way Party (DYP)* and *the Nationalist Labour Party (MCP)*.

2. *The Süleymani:*

An order issued from the Naksibendi. It supports only the ANAP.

3. *The Kadiri:*

A mystical order. It supports only the RP.

4. *The Nurcu:*

Divided in two factions: *The Yeni Asyaci* supports the DYP while *the Fethullahci* is partisan of the ANAP.

5. *The İskici:*

Issued from the Naksibendi, this order supports only the ANAP. It has recently reinforced its influence thanks to its daily newspaper *Türkiye*, which has a daily circulation of 150,000 copies.

The Fethullahci works recently among young cadets of military schools with a view to seizing political power by the means of a well islamized army. As for *the Süleymani*, it indoctrinates youths by thousands of courses of the Koran and student dormitories that they have opened throughout the country.

After the Iranian Revolution appeared in Turkey some new tendencies, mainly *the Group of Young Radicals* and *the Group of Cemalatin Kaplan* which voice the idea of seizing political power by following the example of Khomeiny. Their common characteristic is to be against all kinds of relations with political parties.

Grey Wolves' Turco-Islamic Synthesis

Although not religious in itself, *the Grey Wolves* should be studied as one of the most audacious islamist movements in Turkey. Organized prior to the military coup of 1980 within *the Nationalist Action Party (MHP)* of Ex-colonel Turkes, they advocated the foundation of a fascist-type State which would unite all the peoples of Turkish origin in the world, including the Turks of the Soviet Union, under the flag of the imaginary *Empire of Turan*.

It is this movement that was the instigator and author of the political violence of the years 70. In the meantime, they launched the doctrine of *Turco-Islamic Synthesis* and developed within this optic their relations with other islamist movements as well as with the Rabita. Since the ban on the MHP, the Grey Wolves organize in Turkey within *the Nationalist Labour Party (MCP)*.

A sui generis tendency: the National Vision

This is a sui generis islamist movement which participates since the years 70 in political life with its own political party. Prior to the military coup of 1980, *the National Salvation Party (MSP)*, led by Necmeddin Erbakan, had assembled many islamist tendencies within its ranks. Besides, it had the privilege in the relations with *the Rabita*. After the ban put on

the MSP by the military, the National Vision founded a new political party, with the active support of Erbakan: *The Welfare Party (RP)*, but it had no more in a privileged position neither in its relations with the Rabita nor with different religious orders. While the MSP was obtaining about 10 per cent of the votes prior to 1980, the new party could obtain during the last partial elections only 2.5 per cent. The majority of the Islamist electorate has turned towards the Motherland Party (ANAP), new favorite of the Rabitat, which enjoys the support of the United States and the military.

Disappointed in losing its privileged position in the Islamist movement, the National Vision began to develop a new image: "A movement open to all dialogue with other democratic forces of the country on the basis of national independence, respect to human rights, lifting the restrictions on Islamist and communist parties."

With this new identity, it refuses any collaboration with the authoritarian regime of the military and enters in common actions, especially in the FRG and the Netherlands, with Turkish migrant organizations near to communist or social-democrat movements. Recently, the Secretary General of the *Turkish Communist Party (TKP)* has declared during his talks with Turkish journalists in Paris that his party is very satisfied with its collaboration with the "rational Islamists".

However, it is too early for giving a judgment on the success of this new opening of the National Vision. The right-wing press in the Rabitat's pay has already launched a campaign with a view to discrediting this movement's leaders in Europe, by claiming that "they are manipulated by the agents of Moscow." This is an argument that may incite many Islamist sympathizers of the National Vision to rebel against the leaders and may oblige the latter to yield to the sinister authority of the Rabitat.

THE SETTING UP OF THE RABITAT IN BELGIUM

The matter of teachers of Islamic religion and Islamic clergy has effectively given rise to polemics, not only in Turkey but also in Belgian opinion, especially after the anti-demonstration by North Africans in April 1986. Since then, one has wondered as much about Islam in Turkey as in Belgium.

The two Moslem communities, Moroccan and Turkish, presently constitute 21.8% of foreigners in Belgium. The mosque is already one of the religious places most frequented on Belgian territory.

The course of Islamic religion has known rapid development since the recognition of Islam as one of the official religions of Belgium. Although in the 1977-1978 school year there were only 140 schools in which Islamic religion courses were taught, that number rose to 600 in the 1984-1985 period. During the same period, the number of students climbed from 7,055 to 26,000 and that of teachers from 68 to 300.

If the symbolic giving, in 1967, of the keys of the Cinquanteaire pavilion to King Faysal of Saudi Arabia seemed to mark the beginning point of the rapid installation of a new religion on Belgian territory, one must still wait until July 9, 1974 for Islam to be as recognized in Belgium as Catholicism, Judaism or Protestantism. It was a question of recognition without studying the particulars of Islam and preparing the necessary structures to avoid possible inconveniences. The beginning of the oil crisis might have forced Belgium to take this hasty decision.

Moreover, despite the fact that Islam is not monolithic and has no hierarchical authority, the Belgian government committed the error of recognizing the *Islamic and Cultural Center (ICC)* as the only authority for Islamic affairs in Belgium. Now, behind this center is the *World Moslem League (Rabitat-ul-Islam-ul-Alem)*, an international organization set up and financed by the reactionary regimes of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates of the Persian Gulf.

The administration council of this center is made up essentially of representatives of this league and ambassadors from Islamic states represented in Brussels,

namely for the moment Senegal, Turkey, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Since June 1975, the Belgian government has been inviting the officials of education establishments to offer, experimentally, to Maghrebins and Turkish students courses in Moslem religion. The responsibility and the designation of the teachers was conferred, by a circular of December 10, 1982, on the director-imam of the ICC. All the teachers designated by the ICC are paid by Belgian National Education Ministry. The monthly salary set for them, in primary school, is that of guardian teacher (about 38,000 francs gross); in secondary school, that of teacher (about 46,000 francs gross) and in high school, that of regent (about 48,000 francs gross).

As for the imams, the Maghrebins are named and paid by the mosques themselves administered under the form of non-profit association, while the Turkish clergy is directly named and paid by the Direction of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. During 1981-1983, the salary of the latter was paid by the Rabitat (See lead article).

While the Catholic education network (by virtue of the laws of the 29.5.1959 and of the 11.7.1973 - laws of the "School Pact") are not obliged to organize Islamic religion courses, the number of Belgian students declining, many Catholic schools do it to recruit children of Moslem families and ask for reimbursement by the State for teachers of Islamic religion.

The director-imam of the ICC, Mr Al-Ahdal, said in *Le Soir* of the 26.5.1986 that his children attended Catholic school and added: "I appreciate Catholic schools in general because they respect Islamic law."

CRITICISMS AGAINST RELIGIOUS COURSES

Many teachers of Islamic religion come directly from Moslem countries and commence without knowing much about Belgium or the needs of immigrant students. As for the teachers who come out of immigration, they are a super minority, according to a study

ligion and is divided into several sects, orders or fraternity which have never had a single hierarchy.

Several years ago, about 50 maghrebin mosques were grouped within the Federation of Mosques of Belgium to establish their autonomy vis-a-vis the ICC. The president of the federation Aissa Najjari justifies the creation of this new structure in these terms: "The Islamic and Cultural Center worked independently, there was a sort of personal power of the Center's director, the other mosques not being consulted for feasts, prayer schedules, or whatever religious problem. That is the reason the Federation of Mosques was created."

Noting a certain malaise within the Moslem community, the Belgian government suggested to that the ICC restructure itself with a view more democratic and representative of the Moslem communities in Belgium. Negotiations were carried out with a view to creating a "Supreme Council of Moslems in Belgium" which would replace the CIC. The Ministry of Justice would hand down a proposal providing for the organization of elections to allow entry into the higher council the representatives of the immigrant moslem communities.

However, according to information given the *Tribune Immigrée* of January 1987, even without waiting for the statutes of this new council to be decreed by the Ministry of Justice, the ICC proceeded to the constitution of "the supreme council" in May 1986. This council of 13 members is made up of three representatives of the Rabitat, of five ambassadors, two Turkish immigrants and two Moroccans. These four immigrants were elected only by the votes of Moslems who attend the mosques. Thus, the Moslems who practice at home without attending the mosques have been deprived of the right to vote and eligibility. Out of 13 members, eight are foreigners to Belgium. The director-imam of the ICC also holds the administration of the above mentioned "Supreme Council of Moslems."

Thanks to this sham election and to its financial power, the *Rabitat* has not delayed in having accepted his authority on the contesting Moroccan mosques. The president of the Federation of mosques Aissa Najjari who are among the "elected" of the supreme Council of Moslems bends before the authority of the ICC.

"The World Islamic League represents the believers together ... a little like the Vatican of Islam, as it were. Therefore, I do not think that the League is outsider. The Ambassador of Morocco has the right to oversee or something to say since he represents a community that exists in Belgium. The same thing for the ambassador of Turkey. There is financing by Saudi Arabia or other Arab countries to each mosque that requests it. They can always make a request to Saudi Arabia, Kowait, Qatar or whichever country of the Gulf, and they can receive the complete sum requested or a part..." (*Tribune Immigrée*, Dec. 1986, pp 13-17)

THE RABITAT AND TURKISH MIGRANTS

One must recall that Turkish immigration is the most recent in Europe, compared to other immigrant communities. It first of all began to organize in the context of initiatives aimed at construction of mosques and assuring the repatriation of the bodies of the dead.

In the beginning, this was where lay the most urgent initiatives for Turkish nationals in a country whose religion and customs were quite different.

With the arrival of the second generation, these associations began to organize courses of the Koran by bringing "imams" or "hodjas" from Turkey.

It is in this way that Islamist and nationalist tendencies seized the occasion and began to send their propagandists to European countries. In fact, the massive arrival of Turkish immigrants to Europe coincides with the rise of neo-fascist and fundamentalist movements in their country of origin.

So, four Islamist movements have succeeded in having a widespread ramification within the Turkish immigration:

1. *The National Vision* (Milli Görüş): Organized in Europe under the appellation "*The National Vision Organization in Europe*" (AMGT), this movement controls more than 150 mosques. It assembles youths within the *Islamic Youth Union in Europe* (AIGB). The daily newspaper *Milli Görüş* of this movement is sold in all European cities inhabited by Turkish migrants.

2. *The Süleymanci*: Organized in Europe under the appellation "*The Union of Islamic Cultural Centers*" (IKMB), it controls 147 mosque, 300 cultural centers and hundreds of courses of the Koran. Though the Süleymanci voices that a Moslem should not be the friend of Christians or Jews, their representative in Europe, Harun Resit Tüylüoğlu is always in very close relations with the Cardinal of Köln Höffner, and with a CDU member of Parliament, Albrecht Hassinger.

3. *The Grey Wolves*: They are organized for ten years within the *Türk-Federasyon*, seated in Frankfurt (FRG). Since the military coup of 1980, the Grey Wolves devoted themselves to the organization of religious services such as mosques or courses of the Koran with the purpose of recruiting Turkish believers to swell their ranks. To deceive public opinion; many Grey Wolves organizations changed their appellations adding to it the word "islamic". Within the Turkish immigration they control at least a hundred of mosques and as many courses of the Koran. In Belgium, many organizations of the Grey Wolves are named "Turco-Islamic Cultural Association". All these associations have been gathered since April 1984 within the Federation of Turco-Islamic Cultural Associations, or in abridged, *Türk-Islam Federasyonu* (Turco-Islamic Federation).

4. *The Khomeinysts*: Led by Cemalettin Kaplan in Köln, they organize in Europe under the appellation of "*The Union of Islamic Associations and Communities*" (ICCB). They control about 120 mosques. According to the daily *Cumhuriyet* of March 13, 1987, Cemalettin Kaplan visited Teheran and enjoys a complete support of the Khomeiny regime.

Since the very beginning, all these tendencies had, in a way or another, relations with the *Rabitat-ul Islam-ul Alem*. The latter decided in 1980 to attribute 50,000 dollars to any islamic association that wishes to found a mosque in Europe. According to the weekly *Yeni Gündem* of May 19, 1986, these funds have been paid by the means of the *Mosques' Committee in Europe*.

by the GREM (Group for the study of migration and inter-ethnic relations) at the Catholic University of Louvain.)

This group notes great differences between the Arabic-speaking teachers (issue of Maghreb and Morocco especially) and the Turkish-speaking ones. The Turks are in fact functionaries designated by the ministry in charge of Religious Affairs in Turkey and their rotation within immigration is rapid. They are older than their Arab colleagues and almost all of them already had professional experience before coming to Belgium. Their stay seems to be short: 79% of them intend to return to Turkey in two years and 87% have left their families there. With the Arabic-speakers, the situation is more hazy: half of them are in fact students who are pursuing or have ended their studies in Belgium. The plan for return is also vague: only a third decide to return.

The integration of these teachers in Belgian society can also be very different. To measure it, the investigators have verified their knowledge of certain abbreviations like ULB, PMS, FGTEB or PRL, all belonging to Belgian institutions known by the population. Two-thirds of the Turkish clergy did not understand the meaning of these abbreviations. Only 10% of the Turkish clergy regularly read a Belgian newspaper. This is not very surprising because only a quarter of Turkish clergy understand the languages of Belgium, while all the Arabic-speakers master French. According to Felice Dassetto, one of the authors of this inquiry, the situation of Turkish teachers is no longer tolerable if one looks at it from the viewpoint of integration of immigrants in Belgian society.

"It is unacceptable," says Marcel Leurin, inspector of National Education. "A state cannot give the authority to the profit of foreign states to designate those who play an important role in the formation of its youth."

The Consultative Council of Immigrants of the French-speaking Community in Belgium have already given, on July 12, 1984, its alarming opinion regarding the teaching of Islamic religion in Belgium.

"The present function of this teaching leads to results that appear to the Council contradictory with the objectives of intercultural education. The Council is of the opinion that the organization of this teaching and the modalities of the functioning of the system of designating teachers are partly responsible for this situation.

"It seems in fact that many teachers designated for this task by the Moslem authority recognized by the Belgian state come directly from the states of origin or are designated by them.

"The Belgian state, by wishing to respect the autonomy of religions in keeping with its principles, end in the paradox of accepting the intervention of foreign states regarding the designation of its own system of education. This situation does not present itself in the same fashion for other religions.

"These teachers function in the school system with insufficient or no knowledge of the French language, the Belgian school system and the immigration situation of their students. Their integration is difficult because of this as is their relationship with other teach-

ers and the directors of the schools where they teach.

"This phenomenon risks accentuating the distance between the present cultural communities.

"For certain people, this situation could be explained by the difficulty in finding, among immigrants of Moslem origin, relatively recent, the necessary educational and religious personnel."

In this statement, the Council had made the following proposals:

"During a transitory period which could be about 5 years, National Education should:

"1. Be attentive that all new designation is done primarily among those who are the products of immigration or who have resided in Belgium for at least five years;

"2. Assure for the teachers presently functioning:

"- French language courses,

"- initiations in the functioning of Belgian institutions and the school system;

"- an initiation in the knowledge of the milieu and the situation of immigration.

"3. For the future (beyond five years), the Council proposes that priority is retaken to point 1 of the transitory period becoming compulsory and that National Education organizes an eliminatory test of knowledge of French and Belgian institutions for teaching candidates except for the holders of Belgian or French teaching diplomas."

Noting that reaction against its absolute power in the area of children's education is widening, the ICC has not hesitated in taking initiatives so as to impose itself as a guarantee against "fundamentalism and terrorism."

In his interview to *Le Soir* of the 26.5. 1986, the director-imam Al-ahdal spoke of a new programme for the formation of teachers of Islamic religion courses:

"Practically, first by an accelerated programme of recycling which will be started this summer, then by the creation of an Islamic institute, the teachers of religion will be formed, in the pure Islamic spirit and in the sense of comprehension and integration in Belgian society so as to distance them from fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism (...) This institute which will form the teachers and the imams will deal essentially with the children of the second generation. (...) Put in turn to work, teaching Islamic religion, they will play the same role vis-a-vis other young people in a society that they know well. (...) The teachers will be entirely under the control of the Islamic Center and the programs will only be put forth by Moslems. Who can know better than us, in fact, what is to be taught?"

It should be said that if the authority to designate religious teachers is held by the ICC, the future teachers, even those who are come out of immigration, will be formed by the Rabitat according to the reactionary interpretation of Islam.

MAGHREBIN OPPOSITION TO THE ICC

Since the beginning, the power of the ICC has been contested by non-moslems well as by several mosques or Islamic associations formed by immigrants in Belgium.

One must realize that Islam is not a monolithic re-

Moreover, the *Islamic and Cultural Center* in Brussels has undertaken to pay the salaries of the Turkish clergy. During a briefing given to the National Security Council on November 26, 1982, it was unveiled that the number of the Turkish Clergy's members named and paid by the ICC rose to 86. (*Milliyet*, 26.3.1987).

TURKISH OPPOSITION TO THE RABITAT

However, this administrative and financial submission to a Saudi center gave rise to a certain uneasiness as well in the Turkish clergy as in the Turkish diplomatic corps.

"Turkish Islam in Belgium was going to be disturbed by Arab influence, especially Saudi influence, a great financial power, exercised on the organization of the Moslem religion. (The) position assigned to ICC will be from the start violently contested by the Turkish Community and Turkey by way of its official representation, charged with the religious organization of Turks, in Belgium. (...) But the Turkish contesting comes not only from official circles but also from the immigrant communities themselves. When the ICC takes on the importance that we know it has today, it will be rejected by the majority of Turks who see it only as the mosque of Arabs." (Robert Ancieaux, *Tribune Immigrée*, January 1987, pp 64-65).

This uneasiness well coincided with the launching, by the military government, of the project of assembling all the right-wing association, including those of the Grey Wolves, within a single federation for each country so as that Turkish migrants can be kept under the absolute control of Ankara. However, all the steps in this sense led to a failure due to political differences among the Islamic organizations.

At the present time, Turkish right-wing associations in Belgium are grouped in three different federations: *The Northern Federation of Turkish Workers' Associations*, seated in Antwerpen, *the Southern Federation of Turkish Workers' Associations*, seated in La Louvière and led by Osman Kurt, a counsellor of the Turkish Embassy, and *the Türk-Islam Federasyonu*, seated in Eidsen and led by the Grey Wolves.

The Turkish Government launched another another initiative aimed at assuring a control at least on the religious activities of these right-wing associations. On December 29, 1982, the setting up of the "Turkish Foundation for Islamic Religious Affairs" (*Türk İslam Diyanet Vakfi*) was announced by the Turkish press. Among the founders of this foundation which groups about 60 mosques were the President of the Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Tayyar Altikulac, and several religious advisors of the Turkish embassies in Europe. The Turkish Ambassador in Brussels is named honorary president.

On May 11, 1985, during the inauguration of the seat of this foundation on Boulevard Général Jacques 38 - 1050 Brussels, coasted at 18 million BF, the Turkish Minister of State Kazim Oksay said: "In the heart of Europe, within one of the most important Christian Communities in the world, you carry on activities to promote our values. All the other ideas are inferior in comparison to ours and they are condemned to disappear in the future while Islam will live forever."

While the three above mentioned federations are taking part in this government guided foundation, the National Vision organizations, contesting the legitimacy of the military power, have refused to join this foundation.

On the other hand, the Grey Wolves, thanks to their affiliation of their federation to the Foundation, have legitimized themselves before the Turkish Embassy. The messages wishing success for the annual convention of the *Türk-Islam Federasyonu*, held in April 1987 in Eidsen, sent by Belgian Premier Wilfrid Martens and the Turkish Ambassador, Ecmel Barutcu, are the proofs of this "legitimacy". This congress was attended also by a famous Grey Wolf who was implicated in the affair of attempt against the Pope. He is Serdar Celebi, former president of the *Türk Federasyon*, who was tried at Roma along with Mehmet Ali Ağca.

THE RABITAT TAKES OVER THE OPPONENTS

Since a few years the salaries of the Turkish clergy named by the Turkish Government are paid by this foundation. However, some imams and religious teachers who refused to obey to the directive of returning to Turkey and are no more paid by the Turkish foundation for this reason, are being paid by the ICC. The substitution of the ICC for the foundation has given rise to a uneasiness within the Turkish Moslem Community. On October 26, 1986, the chairmen of the two Turkish federations suggested to the parents not to send their children to the courses given by the teachers named and paid by the ICC.

However, as it had already done for the contesting Moroccan clergy, the ICC, for calming the Turkish community, announced that the chairmen of the two Turkish federations, İrfan Günes and Osman Kurt, had been "selected" for *the Supreme Council of Moslems in Belgium*. (*Tercüman*, November 18, 1986).

Yet, this improvement of the relations between the ICC and the Turkish right-wing federations can be disturbed because of the recent revelations made by the *Cumhuriyet*, but the future of these relations depends completely on the Turkish Government's stand. The Saudi hold on the present government is so powerful that at the end, the chiefs of the right-wing associations in the pay of the regime will have to yield to the Rabitat's authority.