

American Minute with Bill Federer

Byzantine & Ottoman Empires, The Republic of Turkey: Moderate "Kemalists" versus Militant "Islamists" and the Great Riot of Istanbul

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The **Western Roman Empire** fell on September 4, 476 AD, but the **Eastern Roman Empire** continued nearly another 1,000 years.

Its capital city was **Constantinople**, founded by **Emperor Constantine** in 330 AD, regarded for centuries as the largest and greatest city on earth.

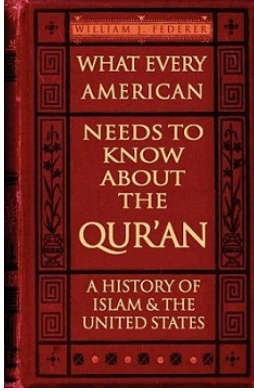


Constantinople was located where the East and West met, being situated where the **Black Sea** empties into the **Mediterranean Sea**, and **trade routes** from the **Far East and Central Asia** connected to **Europe** ...

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The **Eastern Roman Empire** was also called the **Byzantine Empire**, after the area's original Greek colony called **Byzantium**, founded in 657 BC by **Byzas**.

The **Byzantine Empire** had many notable emperors, such as:

- **Theodosius the Great**, 379-395;
- **Zeno**, 474-491;
- **Justinian & Theodora**, 527-565, built the Hagia Sophia Cathedral;
- **Heraclius**, 610-614
- **Basil I**, 867-886;
- **Basil II**, 976-1025;
- **Alexios I Komnenos**, 1081-1118, requested help from the West -- the First Crusade;
- **Constantine XI**, 1449-1453, last emperor.



Unfortunately, similar to the **western Roman Empire**, the **eastern Roman Empire**, or **Bzyantine Empire**, experienced **internal weakening** followed by **external invasion**.

Emperor Justinian was engaged in battles to **regain the western Roman Empire** from the **Vandals** and **Ostrogoths**, but his campaign was cut short by the **Plague of Justinian**, 527-565 AD.

The **plague** was rumored to have arrived from **trade with China**.

At its peak, **10,000 a day** were **dying** in the capital city of **Constantinople**.

The **plague**, with recurring waves, **killed** by some estimates **100 million people, close to half of Europe's population**.

The **plague** so **weakened the Byzantine Empire's military** that it was not able to win against the **Persian Sassanid Empire**.

This was followed by **losses** of large areas to the **Arab cavalry** of the emerging **Islamic Rashidun and Umayyad caliphs**.

The **Byzantine Empire** suffered internal religious disputes, loss of virtue, court intrigues, assassinations, coups, civil wars, and revolts.

In fact, the word "**Byzantine**" came to have the definition of "clandestine, stealthy, secretive, surreptitious, **labyrinthine power struggle**."

Rivalry between **political parties** blinded both sides from recognizing a **greater threat** -- the renewed threat from **expansionistic Ottoman Muslim armies**.

The **last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI**,



was being challenged by his brother, **Demetrius**, in a claim for the throne.

Demetrius brought in **tens of thousands of Muslim warriors** across the Bosphorus and besieged the walls of Constantinople, not realizing that they had an agenda of their own, to **take**

advantage of the internal political divisions to conquer the entire country.

Constantinople was conquered by **Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II** on May 29, 1453, and shortly after, **the Byzantine Empire permanently collapsed.**

In the **fall of Constantinople**, untold thousands of Christians were raped, killed, enslaved or deported.



The world's largest Christian church for nearly a millennium, the **Hagia Sophia**, built by **Emperor Justinian**, was converted into a **mosque.**

Islamic minarets were erected around the **Hagia Sophia**, and the **four acres of Bible-themed gold mosaics** which adorned the church walls were covered with **white wash and Qur'an verses**.

The Turkish government has never offered to give ownership of the church back to its original owners, the Orthodox Christians.



The **Ottoman Empire** went on to become **one of the largest empires in the world**, lasting for over 6 centuries.

Towards its end, **internal and**

external factors weakened it, resulting in it being referred to as the **"sick man of Europe."**

Turkey was dragged into European conflicts.

After the Industrial Revolution, **European countries desperately needed oil.**

Oil was discovered in Iran in 1908 by the British, who formed the **Anglo-Iranian Oil Company**, now **BP**.

Germany sided with **Turkey**.

Kaiser Wilhelm industrialized **Germany**, and needing oil, he arranged an alliance with **Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II**.

The **Turkish Oil Company** was formed in 1911, with oil being drilled in **Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra**.

Oil pulled the Middle East into World War I.

Sadly, during this period a **tragic genocide of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and other minorities** took place.

After the war, the winning powers, primarily **Britain and France**, exerted control over former **German and Ottoman territories**.

France attempted to take control of **Turkey**, but the **Turks** rallied and maintained their independence.

They replaced the **Ottoman Turkish Empire**, founded in 1299, with the **Republic of Turkey**, founded in 1922.

Constantinople was renamed in 1930 to **Istanbul**, derived from the Greek "eis-ten-polin" meaning "**to the city.**"

The courageous **leader** who kept **Turkey** independent of **European control** was **Mustafa Kemal Ataturk**.



He helped found the **Republic of Turkey** and served as its **first President**.

Ataturk, from 1924 to 1938, successfully reinvented **Turkey** into a prosperous republic - a **modern secular state**.

Followers of his successful moderate views became called "**Kemalists**."

Ataturk distanced his country from its former fundamentalist past, the followers of which were called **Islamists**.

A similar secular policy was pursued by **Shah Reza Pahlavi** in his country of **Iran**,

and by **Gamal Nasser** in **Egypt**.



Arabia went in the other direction.

Consisting mostly mountains of worthless sand, **Arabia** ruled by Sharif of Mecca, **Hussein bin Ali**, who helped **Britain** defeat the **Turkish Ottoman Empire** in **World War I**.

After the war, **Britain** installed his son **Faisal** as **King of Iraq**, and his son **Abdullah** as **King of Jordan**.

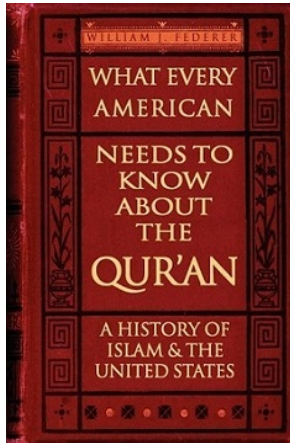
When **Hussein bin Ali** waffled on a treaty, the **British** allowed the fundamentalist wahhabi Arab **Abdulaziz ibn Saud** to take over **Arabia**.



In 1938, **Standard Oil Company** discovered **oil** in **Saudi**

Arabia, causing it to become the **wealthiest country in the Middle East**, the **main exporter** of both **oil** and fundamental **Islamist** beliefs called **wahhabism**.

Of note is that when **Hussein bin Ali** died in 1931, his body was buried on **Jerusalem's Temple Mount**, which was considered by orthodox Jews as a **desecration**. (Ezekiel 43:7-9)



[What Every American Needs to Know About the Qur'an-A History of Islam & the United States](#)

Ataturk is considered the **father of modern Turkey**.

"Ata" is the Turkish word for "father."

Ataturk abolished the position of the **Sultan**, stating:

"He is a weak ruler who needs religion to uphold his government ...



Even before accepting the **religion of the Arabs**, the **Turks were a great nation.**"

Ataturk ended the Islamic **Caliphate**, thus preventing Muslim religious leaders from controlling government affairs.

In an effort to cut ties, he replaced Arabic Islamic names

with Turkish names.

He introduced the western use of last names.

Ataturk abolished use of Arabic and Persian script, replacing it with the Latin alphabet.

He abolished turbans and fezes (the red felt cap with a black tassel) and required men to wear western pants and suits.

Ataturk banned beards on men, and even required Muslim prayer leaders to be beardless.

He replaced Arabic muezzin's call to prayer and made praying a private affair.

He abolished sharia courts, and made Friday a workday, instituting the Western idea of the "weekend" being Saturday and Sunday.

Ataturk outlawed polygamy and elevated the status of women, appointing the first female judges, and insisting on education of girls.

He abolished women wearing of scarves, veils, chadors or burqas - the full-length body dress worn by Muslim women, and requiring women to wear skirts.

Women were allowed to vote in 1930.

Ataturk stated:

"If henceforward the **women** do not share in the social life of the nation, we shall never attain to our full development. We shall remain irremediably backward, incapable of treating on equal terms with the civilizations of the West."

Instead of a caliphate, students were taught republican

ideals of **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** and **Montesquieu**.

Ataturk empowered the **military** to be **custodians of maintaining a secular government**, with responsibility to remove political leaders who drifted toward Islamist fundamentalism:

"Mohammedanism was based on **Arab nationalism** above all nationalities ...

... The purpose of the religion founded by Muhammad, over all nations, was to drag (them into) **Arab national politics** ... (It) might have suited tribes in the desert. **It is no good for a modern, progressive state."**

Similarly, **Egypt's President Gamal Nasser** told a secular political gathering in 1958:

"I met with the head of the **Muslim Brotherhood** and he sat with me and made his requests. What did he request?

The first thing he asked for was to make wearing the hijab mandatory in Egypt and demand that every woman walking in the street wear a tarha (scarf), [audience laughter] Every woman walking! [someone in audience shouted 'let him wear it!'] ...

.. And I told him, if I make that a law they will say that we have **returned to the days of Al-Hakimbi Amr Allah**, who forbade people from walking at day and only allowed walking at night ..."

Nasser continued:

"My opinion is that every person in his own house decides for himself the rules.

And he replied 'No, as the leader, you are responsible.'

I told him, 'Sir, you have a daughter in the School of Medicine and she is not wearing a tarha. Why didn't you make her wear a tarha? If you (audience applauded) ...

If you are unable to make one girl - who is your daughter - wear the tarha, you want me to put a tarha on 10 million woman myself? (sustained laughter).

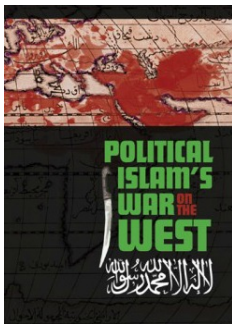
Pro-western views were also embraced in other Middle Eastern countries, such as **Syria**;

and **Afghanistan**.

Sadly, in August of 2021, after 20 years of women enjoying freedom and opportunity, **President Biden** surrendered **Afghanistan** to the **militant Islamist Taliban**.

From 1953 to 1979, **Iran** was pro-American, with **Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran** (1919-1980), being friends with **U.S. Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford**.

Iran had a secular government until it was **abandoned** by **Jimmy Carter** in **1979**, who helped ushered in the Islamist **Ayatollah**.



[DVD Political Islam's War on the West](#)

ISTANBUL'S GREAT RIOT & POGROM

Ataturk's effort to transform **Turkey** suffered a temporary set back after his death.

Turkish leaders spiraled into being more fundamentalist.

Turkey passed laws barring Greeks from 30 different trades and professions.

In 1942, a capital gains tax was passed to reduce the number of Greek businesses.

Politicians began speaking openly against the 100,000 Greek Christians still living in Constantinople, now **Istanbul**.

In 1950, **Adnan Menderes** became Prime Minister of Turkey.

Menderes gave a speech supporting the **return of the Caliphate**.

He re-opened thousands of mosques which had been closed, brought back the Islamic call to prayer in the Arabic language, and encouraged Muslims to follow Islam more fundamentally.

Menderes orchestrated a provocation whereby a Turkish University Student was to place explosive charges in the Turkish Consulate and in the **birthplace of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk** in Thessaloniki, Greece.



The plan was to blow it up on September 3, 1955 and blame it on the Greek Christian minority.

Though the bomb never went off, the newspapers ran with the story anyway - a version of fake news blaming the Greeks.

Mobs were incited to violence and retaliation.

Menderes arranged for government trucks to block off the streets to the Greek neighborhoods, then provided shovels, pickaxes, crowbars, ramming rods and gas, to the 300,000 rioters.

Similar to Antifa and BLM organized riots, in just a few hours, Istanbul's Greek Christian neighborhoods were pillaged.

Thousands of shops, houses, churches and graves were destroyed.

It was **like the "Kristall Nacht" of November 9, 1938**, when Nazis in Germany and Austria smashed and vandalized Jewish stores and neighborhoods in the **"Istanbul Pogrom" of September 6, 1955**.

For nine hours, mobs erupted in a mad frenzy, laying waste to Greek homes, businesses and churches.

Greek women and young boys were targeted for public rape.

Turkish author Aziz Nesin witnessed Greek Christian men beaten and circumcised in the streets by marauders.

Sixteen Greek Orthodox clerics were killed.

Historian Spero Vryonis, Jr., author of *The Mechanism of Catastrophe*, recorded that rioters desecrated cemeteries and overturn tombstones.

A British journalist witnessed one graveyard where "the contents of every coffin spilled into the streets."

Over a dozen Greek and Orthodox clerics were killed.

Rioters destroyed:

- 1,000 Greek homes;
- 4,348 Greek-owned businesses;
- 110 hotels;
- 27 pharmacies;
- 23 schools;
- 21 factories;
- 73 of the 81 Greek Orthodox Churches in the city;
and
- 3 monasteries.

Armenian and Jewish shops were also destroyed.

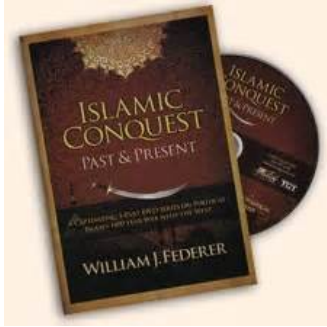
Like modern riots, **Turkish police were ordered to "stand down,"** and **passively watch the rioters,** who were **given space** wreak mayhem.

The World Council of Churches estimated the damage at over 150 million dollars.



The mob chanted "Massacre the Greek traitors" and "Down with Europe."

[DVD Islamic Conquest - Past and Present](#)



In one church arson attack, Father Chrysanthos Mandas, was burned alive.

Greek cemeteries were desecrated with relics of saints burned or thrown to dogs.



Noel Barber, a journalist for the *London Daily Mail*, wrote on September 14, 1955:

"The church of Yedikule was utterly smashed, and one priest was dragged from bed, the hair torn from his head and the beard literally torn from his chin.

... Another old Greek priest (Fr. Mantas) in a house belonging to the church and who was too ill to be moved was left in bed, the house was set on fire and he was burned alive.

At the church of Yenikoy, a lovely spot on the edge of the Bosphorus, a priest of 75 was taken out into the street, stripped of every stitch of clothing, tied behind a car and dragged through the streets.

They tried to tear the hair of another priest, but failing that, they scalped him, as they did many others."



Another eyewitness was **Ian Fleming**, a reporter for the *London Sunday Times*, who later became well-known for writing the *James Bond* detective stories.

Ian Fleming was covering the INTERPOL (International Police) Conference in Istanbul.

Ian Fleming's column "The Great Riot of Istanbul," printed September 11, 1955, described how "hatred ran through the streets like lava."

(Phillip Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453-1944*, Harmondworth, U.K., Penquin, 1995, p. 425).

Fleming reference the Istanbul riot as as background information in his James Bond spy novel, *From Russia, with Love* (1957).

The riots were reported in the *Illustrated London News*, *TIME Magazine* and *Reader's Digest*, which described Istanbul as "a city gone mad."

After the 1955 **Istanbul Pogrom**, over 100,000 more Greeks departed.

The discrimination continued and in 1958, Turkish nationalist students campaigned for a boycott on all Greek businesses.

In 1964, the Turkish government deported 50,000 more Greeks.

The New York Times printed, Nov. 26, 1979:

"According to the most recent statistics, the Christian population in Turkey was diminished from 4,500,000 at the beginning of this century to just about 150,000. Of those, the Greeks are no more than 7,000. Yet, in 1923 they were as many as 1 to 2 million."

When the dust settled, citizens of Turkey came to realize that **Adnan Menderes** was responsible.

He was tried and executed in 1961 for his part in overseeing these atrocities.

In August of 1995, **Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (NY)** introduced U.S. Senate Resolution 160 calling on President Bill Clinton to proclaim September 6 as a **Day of Memory** for the victims of the **1955 Istanbul Pogrom**. (104th Congress, U.S. House of Representatives, Library of Congress, 1995-07-08):

"Whereas, in September 1955, there existed a Greek minority population of 100,000 in Istanbul, Turkey;

Whereas, on the night of September 6-7, 1955, a pogrom against the Greek community began in Istanbul;

Whereas anti-Greek rioters attacked, pillaged, gutted and destroyed more than

- 2,000 Greek homes,

- 4,200 Greek shops and stores,
- 73 Greek Orthodox churches,
- 52 Greek schools,
- 8 Greek cemeteries,
- all 3 major Greek newspaper plants, and
- dozens of Greek factories, hotels, restaurants, and warehouses in Istanbul;

Whereas 15 Greeks were killed in the pogrom or died subsequently, and 32 were seriously injured;

... Whereas as many as 200 women were raped by rioters;

Whereas the United States Consul General in Istanbul reported that police stood idly by or cheered on the rioting mobs;

Whereas the State Department received confirmation of 'elaborate advanced planning for widespread destruction of the property of the indigenous Greek community,' involving careful preparations by many individuals;

... Whereas American journalist Frederick Sondern, Jr., writing at the time for *Readers Digest*, described



the events of that night as...one of the wildest eruptions of mob fury and hysteria in modern times ...';

Whereas homes of Greek officers stationed at NATO headquarters in the Turkish city of Izmir were also attacked and destroyed;

... Whereas rioters attacked and burned down the Greek Consulate in Izmir and the Greek Pavilion at the Izmir

International festival;

Whereas Turkish authorities failed at the time to convict a single rioter, out of thousands, for any crime committed during the pogrom;

... Whereas five years later, after a military coup in Turkey, the former Prime Minister and acting Foreign Minister at the time of the pogrom were charged with, and convicted of, numerous criminal actions, including the instigation of the anti-Greek riots;

Whereas the pogrom marked the beginning of the end of the Greek community's presence in Istanbul, numbering about 2,000 in 1995; and

Whereas September 6, 1995 will mark the 40th Anniversary of the pogrom:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the President should--

(1) take all appropriate steps to observe and commemorate the loss of life and property, and the numerous injuries and offenses, which took place during the **pogrom by proclaiming September 6, 1995 as a day of remembrance** for the victims of these attacks; and

(2) urge all Americans to honor the victims of the pogrom in the appropriate manner."

Turkey once again continued as a secular, tolerant state.

Recent developments have raised.

From 2003 to 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was Prime Minister of Turkey.

In 2014, he became President and began moving the country backwards in an Islamist direction.

Though democratically elected, *The Economist* reported (2/4/16):

“Mr Erdogan made a telling remark ... ‘Democracy is like a train,’ he said, ‘you get off once you have reached your destination.’”

Fears of intolerance have left, as of 2006, only 5,000 Greek Christians, mostly elderly, in Istanbul, the former ancient capital of the Christian world.

London's Daily and Sunday Express reported April 22, 2016, "Islamist Turkey seizes ALL Christian churches in city and declares them 'state property'"

The New York Times reported April 23, 2016, "Turkey's Seizure of Churches and Lands Alarms Armenians."



The **American Center for Law and Justice** reported:

"The government of Turkey – led by an Islamic party – has begun increased crackdowns on Christians, and Pastor Andrew Brunson, if convicted, may face years in prison based on extremely serious – and false – charges."

A screenshot of the Gatestone Institute website. The website features a navigation bar with links for About Us, Events, Experts, Authors, Donate, and Archive. The main content area displays a news article titled "Turkey: American Pastor Brunson in Prison; ISIS Terrorists Roam Free" by Uzey Bulut, dated July 21, 2018 at 5:00 am. The article URL is https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/12736/turkey-american-pastor-brunson-in-prison-isis. There is an "AddThis" social sharing widget below the article title. A quote from The American Center for Law and Justice is visible at the bottom of the screenshot: "Incredibly, the indictment now admits that Turkey considers 'Christianization' to be an act of terrorism" – The American Center for Law and Justice.

Bloomberg reported (7/18/18) on Pastor Andrew Brunson, "Turkey Keeps U.S. Pastor Jailed, Straining Ties With Washington."

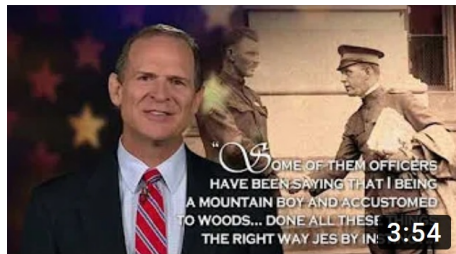
In 2018, **President Trump** secured his release, as Fox News reported Oct. 18, 2018 "Trump meets with freed American pastor in Oval Office."

Rather than following the militant Islamist example of **Adnan Menderes**, perhaps, in the future, leadership will once again follow the more successful and moderate example of **Kemal Ataturk, the Father of Modern Turkey.**

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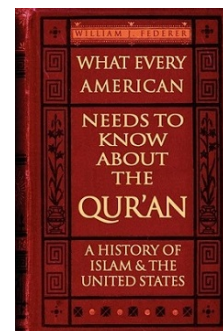
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