

## The Nation-State, a Primitive Idea, has Destructive Effects on Humanity

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the call for the idea of the nation-state by the pseudo-intelligentsia of that time, which was itself mesmerized by the Western civilization, had a devastating effect on the political institution of the Caliphate. The concept of nation state was behind the formulation of the Ottoman constitution of 1876. This constitution led to the adoption of the Ottoman bond as a foundation of this new bond which, despite various nationalities and linguistic differences, bonded all citizens and the public on the fact that they all were Ottoman nationals, without any exception. This constitution enabled the racial bonds to manifest, which led to the surfacing of Turanian and Arab nationalism by late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This itself wasn't surprising because the self-proclaimed reformers fascinated by Western thought were aptly described by the Austrian thinker Bischoff as attempting to "marry fire with water". They claimed that they wanted to elevate and strengthen Ottoman State through Western civilization, but their sole achievement was that they transformed the Khilafah from a state which implemented Islam upon its people into a state very similar to the Roman Empire. They lacked the fundamental understanding of the concept that the Islamic State was for all of humankind, in which no race is superior nor better than another, nor is the state associated with any specific nation or race, which they attempted to achieve through the 1876 Constitution. According to this promulgated law, all state citizens were to be referred as Ottomans, the state religion was to be Islam and state language, Turkish. All this was done while blindly imitating the notion of the Western "nation-state".

Although Sultan Abdul Hamid II overturned the said constitution early in his rule, but the bond established between the people of Islamic State during its last times influenced his thinking as well. To protect the Ottoman State from it, Sultan Abdul Hamid II intended to replace the Ottoman bond with an Islamic League or an Islamic Bond as basis, but this itself shows the extent of influence of Western thought upon him. This was because the Islamic State never organized or felt the need to stand on such bonds. The Muslims never needed to be concerned of the survival of their "State" at any time, because Islam was observed as a way of life, the state was essentially a part of it, and Islam was not implemented except by the existence of a just ruler. It is due to these concepts and beliefs that Muslims ensured protection of their state and remained faithful to it. The concepts like Islamic League were a byproduct of the seeping influence of western ideas into the thinking of Muslims.

Initially, the attempt to invent an Ottoman bond was simply but a patchwork, an effort to reconcile the irreconcilable concepts of Islamic and Nation-state, which was at that time, was at its peak in Western Europe. The same idea was also gaining traction in eastern Europe, including the Balkans which were considered vassals of the Ottoman State. Moreover, this was a blatant attempt to overturn the Sharia rules pertaining to regulating the relationships between the State and its citizens. Patriotism was legislated based on a bond, which was itself sourced from a Social Contract outlining political relations organized in a state. The promotion of Ottoman nationalism in the Ottoman State while imitating the nation-state resulted in reformists leading the Islamic State to the brink of decline. It was because then, the existence of Islamic State was no longer linked to the Islamic concepts which necessitate the existence of a state to implement Islam and carry this message globally. Now the state was justifying its existence on patriotism and patriotic grounds where the Sultan or the ruler was justified being representative of people or the Ummah, similar to how it was practiced in the nation-states of the West. This innovation paved the way for the patriotic and nationalistic movements to raise their patriotic and nationalistic slogans. Furthermore, this encouraged apartheid as well, because the Ottoman bond, which had no basis in reality, could not manifest itself without instigating the creation of racial bonds, aggravating the decline of the Muslim Ummah. The 1876 Constitution, in acknowledging the Ottoman bond, though

unintentionally, made families and tribes the basis for its political organization within the framework of executive body of the State.

After the demise of Ottoman Khilafah, patriotic and nationalistic slogans aggravated the destructive impacts of the idea of the nation-state within Muslims, because all those small insignificant states which the colonial non-Muslims allowed to be built upon the debris of Khilafah, declared the idea of nationalism and patriotism as a basis for their Reason d'état, as well as the basis of their public law. Therefore, it was easy for the non-Muslim colonialists to benefit from the dominant majority factions within these states in order to interfere in the state matters, primarily due to their resultant weaknesses, which in turn generated instability in these states.

An excerpt from a lecture "Iraq between 1920 and 1930" by a British research scholar Roger Ovine, who presented it in 1993 in a conference titled "Nationalism: Its nurturing, views, objections and problems" arranged by an Iraqi cultural platform, said: "When Britain announced a modern state after 1<sup>st</sup> world war, the problem of majority and minority surfaced. Similarly differences on definition of communities and estimates of their new identity appeared". He said: "Iraq was formally accepted after 1930 and the identity problem appeared again".

Nation-state has been defined as, "Political organization of a specific nation in the framework of a state". Western legal experts and specialists of political systems agree that a state must comprise of three elements: people, land and general authority over both of them. And a nation state is established by the combination of three elements:

1. It is established inside geographical political boundaries, which enables it to justify the ownership of all material forces, organize relationships and acquire the authority to resolve disputes.

2. Existence of history or cultural or civilizational factor of a nation.

3. Right to defend, necessary education and receive general tax.

Historically, the first ever nation state was established in England in 17<sup>th</sup> century, then in France in late 18<sup>th</sup> century and in Germany and Italy in 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the groundwork for the nation-state was laid well before in 1648 in the conference of Westphalia when the idea of international balance of power was readily adopted. According to this, if a state endangers the existence of other states through expansionist designs, then all other states are bound to defend against, and would do their utmost to resist it, so that international balance could be maintained which itself was a guarantee against wars and in turn, promoted peace.

As far as Marxism is concerned, a nation state is a consequence of public revolting against the tyranny of capitalism which provides a platform for the national Bourgeoisies of capitalism governments. In this stage of national liberation, it is important for the proletariat under the communist leadership that they join forces with the majority, because of them being the most powerful group. According to their teachings, capitalist nation state inclines towards colonialism externally and oppression internally. This is why real national liberation and abolishment of the boundaries between nation states is possible only through a labor group (proletariats) acquiring the ruling. This also explains the actions of socialist states in backing the national freedom movements of other nations.

The rational study of a reality leads to an accurate conclusion, i.e. it is a study which takes thinking as the basis for the sensation of a reality and the linking of previous information with it, rather than matter, like Communists do. Similarly, the reality of nation state should also be evaluated on this basis. It does not take much to fathom that the idea of the nation state is a primitive one which has pushed humankind towards national and tribal relations, and no matter how much we try to obtuse the fact, towards Fascism and Nazism.

There is no doubt that the idea of nation state itself carries the seeds of its destruction along with it. This is visible through all those difficulties which surface while attempting to

implement this idea in reality. Humans have developed the idea of a structured state in order to organize human relations, but with the implementation of the idea of nation state, whether with or without contemplation upon the rights of minorities, a diverse set of problems appeared. This is because it is almost impossible for country to be free of any national disparities. The word nationalism is rooted from Latin word "Natio", which means a nation or relating to a nation. Based on this, as per the European definition mentioned above, a nation state is the state of a nation where no other nation is respected inside the geographical boundary of that nation state, and that permanent boundary is the first of all factors whose accomplishment is necessary for the state to become a nation state.

To realize other factors like civilizational and cultural, which include language and history, it is necessary that nation states perform racial cleansing of minorities or eliminates them or convert them, be they minorities originally residing in the country historically, even well before the creation of the nation state, e.g. German minorities in eastern Europe, gypsies or Jews residing in Europe etc., or those who migrated to nation states in fairly recently, e.g. Muslims residing in the Western world today.

The majority enjoys dominance and supremacy in any nation state. The security of their civilization, culture, history and language included, which results in the coerced assimilation and amalgamation of the minorities. Moreover, the term social contract within a nation state also emanates from western thought and is a foundational pillar of all the relationships between the ruler and the people themselves, among many of the democracies within the framework of capitalist system. According to this social contract, individuals have the right to have free and autonomous relations with each other. It was Rousseau who termed this framework as a Social Contract. Based on the contract between the state and individual, loyalty to the state is established upon a relationship between both the parties. However, this relationship i.e. patriotism, contradicts with the idea of a nation state, which represents a racial or national bond. This is one of the reasons that we see that during the French revolution, it was attempted to change the definition of nationalism altogether. For this, the thinkers of the revolution attempted to reconcile the concept of the nation state with the idea of the social contract. Therefore, the French Revolution was seen as founding a modern nation, not linked to a biological source, rather the free decision of fellow countrymen, who only wished to live their collective lives under their own laws without hindrance. This is what is now known as sovereignty of the people in Western political thought. Based on this idea, the French national revolution promoted the nationality of an ideological society, a nationality having unbound authority, a nationality of fellow countrymen, which was not a nationality linked to a specific race, and neither a nationality of old people. This is how the French Revolution included the French Jews as French People or French nationals, by modifying the definition of French nationalism.

This does not mean that other problems which appeared through the implementation of nation state vanished through this modification of the definition of nationalism, which in itself is contradictory to the reality of tribalism or racial nationalism. As even after this, especially in a state like France, the issue of security of civilization and culture for the French nation lingered on. This forms the basis of the policies of Europeans, especially the French, for the Muslims also. They sought implementation of French rules over them according to French constitution, and they also encouraged the formation of patriotic bond between them and the French state as a contract. But the stark reality is that we see a push by the government and media to assimilate the Muslims with the larger French society and to coerce the adoption of French nationalism as per their interpretation. For this purpose, the French state changed the rules of game altogether. The state believed that the Muslims should culturally be amalgamated with French society through the enforcement of laws, and hence new conditions were formulated to ensure patriotism or loyalty. Two options are given to the Muslims in France, either they obey the patriotism inducing laws or they step back from patriotism, and with that, relinquish their citizenship. On one hand it is claimed that that sovereignty rests with the people, as they are the lawmakers; Then how is it possible that the

new brand of inclusive nationalism that they came up with after the French revolution, would be sidelined in such a way, that a major segment of society opposed to it, would then be marginalized by it so brutally? This was only possible because the dominant French race wanted to maintain the society according to their civilization and culture. As this was the only condition which ensured the dominance of their indigenous French culture. This actually shows that the agreement on the modern definition of nationalism to amalgamate the nation state and social contract did not solve this essential problem. This simply shows that the idea of nation state is irrational and false, not only in its foundation but also in its implementation.

The nation state is itself a primitive idea, which differentiates people based on races and tribes and brings with it, troubles and calamities for the people in the land. It nurtures national pride, inculcates nationalistic and patriotic emotions in fellow countrymen, and for those in authority and engages them in wars for the sake of the benefits of the powerful capitalist colonialists. This in turn produces problems like racial cleansing and forced cultural amalgamations. Hence, the idea of nation state is that of exploitation, domination and occupation, and this also becomes the basis of relationships between nations.

Islam views the objective of nations and tribes as to introduce or identify them. Allah (swt) says in Quran, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۝﴾ **“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify one another. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah’s sight, is the one who is most pious of you.”** [Al-Hujraat – 13]

Similarly, nationalism played a vital role in demise of the Islamic Khilafah State. Within the newly emerged nation states, which were brought up by colonial non-Muslims on the debris of the Islamic State, a new problem of minorities emerged in the Muslim world. This problem of minorities opened doors for colonial non-Muslims to interfere in those states. The objective of this interference was to divide them further into pieces and ensure the existence of their occupation in the Muslim world.

In stark contrast to the primitive nation state, the rules of Islam consider all humans as equal from the perspective of the state. No race is superior to another nor any nation better than other. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, except due to his taqwa and fear of Allah (swt). In the Khilafah state, the non-Muslims are treated same as Muslims. It is not allowed for the state to discriminate between its people in matters of ruling, judiciary or welfare, rather it is obligatory to treat them alike without any consideration to nationality, religion, race or color.

Since the Islamic state “Khilafah” is a human state for all humans, it is neither a religious state nor a national one under western connotations. Therefore, it will be a guarantor of peace, harbinger of justice and deliverer of rights for all, from the very first day it will be established, by the will of Allah (swt). The people will embrace the Deen of Allah (swt) in groups and crowds, as a consequence of the authentic implementation of Islam and the spread of justice and tranquility on the land. We pray to Allah Almighty to hasten the light of this day. Ameen.

Oh our Lord! Please accept, and our last prayer is that praise be to Allah, Lord of both worlds.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
Bilal Al-Muhajir**