

Turkish Area Studies *Review*

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The 2013 John Martin Lecture

Dr Alon Liel

Tel Aviv University

on

Turkish-Israeli Relations: Is the Story Ending?

at

The School of Oriental & African Studies, London
Brunei Gallery, Room 102 (see www.tasg.org.uk for further details)

Friday 22 February 2013
5.30 pm for 6 pm

Spring Symposium 2013
St Antony's College, Oxford

Saturday 27 April 2013
10.00 am to 4.30 pm

Details will follow



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Please note: Opinions expressed and stances taken are exclusively those of the contributors themselves.

Editorial

Turkey faces new challenges in its neighbourhood, most notably just now in its relationship with Syria. The killing of Turkish citizens in the border town of Akçakale followed months of increasing tension. Tens of thousands of Syrian refugees are in Turkish care and Ankara now talks about a possible security zone within Syria as a haven for refugees from the fighting. Growing assertiveness among Syria's Kurds add to Ankara's worries, not least the concern that they might link up with the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Gamon McLellan surveys the range of challenges facing Turkey in this issue of the *Review*. Developments in two of Turkey's other neighbours, Cyprus and Greece, are also discussed, respectively by Clement Dodd and James Pettifer.

Within Turkey, meanwhile, the long-running 'Sledgehammer' case divides opinion and highlights new questioning of the role of the military in the country's republican progress. Large numbers of senior military figures have faced charges of plotting against the government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan which they see as overly Islamist. Debate about when free speech becomes incitement continues.

Nevertheless Turkey's economic achievement is clear at sixteenth position in the world. But there is some slowing of growth rates and problems with access to capital plus questions about continuing reforms – some of which have figured in Turkey's aspirations for membership of the European Union. Disenchantment with progress in that direction may reduce the impetus for change in some areas.

In May this year another successful TASG Symposium was held at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and we include in this issue of our *Review* papers on stimulating subjects by contributors on the day. Topics include aspects of the constitution-making process as well as life in an Anatolian town 9000 years ago (with lively illustrations) and a study of the revival of Alevi identity. These are complemented under the 'Arts' heading by an appreciation of the writer and translator Nezihe Meriç and her work. One article is about the Young Turks movement in a historical context. 'Hands-on' contributions are included in the shape of inside knowledge of Turkey's university system and entrepreneurial achievements as hoteliers. We believe the range of coverage by our contributors makes this publication distinctive to say the least.

It remains to thank all contributors, both 'regulars' and those who write for the *Review* occasionally on a range of topics with a Turkish dimension. Such support is very much appreciated, especially as it comes with no prospect of financial reward. We welcome further offers of articles or comment: please get in touch with a proposal or suggestion.

Brian Beeley
Co-Editor

Sigrid-B Martin
Co-Editor

Noteworthy Events

by Ayşe Furlonger

EXHIBITIONS

Islamic Art Galleries, Musée du Louvre

The Department of Islamic Art was due to open in a completely new, restyled setting on 22 September 2012. The new galleries, designed by the architects Mario Bellini and Rudy Ricciotti, will occupy more than 32,000 square feet in a two-level glass-and-steel pavilion and house 2,500 objects, many of which have never before been on public display. The display will provide an overview of artistic creation from the dawn of Islam in the seventh century to the early nineteenth century, encompassing decorative arts, objects, miniatures, textiles and carpets, components of architecture, and so on. The galleries represent the first major architectural intervention at the Louvre since the addition of I.M. Pei's glass pyramid in 1989. It is said that the galleries will include Louvre's own collection of some 15,000 pieces representing the breadth of the Islamic world from Spain to India, and also objects from the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which will contribute 3,400 works on permanent loan.

Timed to coincide with the opening and to continue until spring 2013, the Louvre will host a festival of contemporary Islamic art, with a concert by Youssou Ndour in front of the Museum's pyramid.

Mindful Seed Speaking Soil: Village Institutes of the Republic 1940-1954¹

Istanbul Research Institute, Meşrutiyet Caddesi No: 47, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu, Istanbul
18 April 2012 – 27 October 2012

On 17 April 1940, the then General Manager of Primary Education, İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, established the first Village Institute in order to groom a more educated, knowledgeable generation of scholars. These were the rural boarding schools set up across Turkey to increase levels of literacy; in the early years of the Republic when 80% of the population lived in villages and barely 5% could read and write. But Atatürk wouldn't have it so, and Village Institutes were seen as the way to combat this problem. Under this new formation, elementary school graduates living in rural areas would continue with their education, then return to their villages and work there as teachers. They would understand village needs better and teach both classical



subjects and practical skills. This brave enterprise was bitterly opposed by village imams and scorned by urban sophisticates, and The Village Institutes were shut down in 1954.

Suna and İnan Kiraç Foundation, Istanbul Research Institute exhibition sheds light on this era. The Village Institutes are brought back to life through special archive documents, photographs and personal belongings.

¹ On Village Institutes see also Maureen Freely, 'A Brave New World', *Cornucopia*, 48, 2012, pp.116-137.

THEATRE

Everything Begins by Loving Somebody (Bir İnsanı Sevmekle Başlar Herşey)

Arcola Tent, 2 Ashwin Street, Dalston, London, E8 3DL
Box Office: 020 7503 1646 www.arcolatheatre.com
15 - 20 October 2012 – 19:45 Tickets: £10 (£7 concessions)

Everything Begins by Loving Somebody is a selection of Sait Faik stories adapted for the stage. Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906-1954) was one of the greatest Turkish writers of short stories and poetry. In a career that spanned a mere quarter of a century, Sait Faik turned out some 190 original short stories, two novellas, a few essays, and nearly forty poems. His writing reflects everyday life in İstanbul and the sea. Sait Faik was a true man of people; what was most important to him was to tell of the hardships, joys, pleasures and rich inner lives of ordinary people. The stories used in the play are *Coffeehouse*, *Poolside*, *The Armenian Fisherman* and *the Lame Seagull*, *Share*, *The Mirror on the Beach*, and *The Stelyanos Hrisopulos*. The play is performed in Turkish with English surtitles.



MUSIC

Yasmin Levy

Barbican Hall www.barbican.org.uk
7 November 2012 19:30 Tickets £15.50-24

Yasmin Levy's new show and album *Libertad* encompass a new musical journey drawing on the influences of both Spanish and Turkish music, which have been the hallmark of her Ladino repertoire and which now take her in a new direction. For this new project, she has taken the passion of the flamenco world she so cherishes, and complements that with the emotional tones from the musical world of her Turkish ancestors. Her new landscape is a fusion of flamenco guitar, embellished with the rich sound of Turkish strings, and a small hint of Cuban and other piano stylings. More than anything else, this show will be all about Yasmin Levy and her own music; the singer and increasingly confident song-writer (she has written seven of the twelve songs on the album), and her special mix of musical influences that will create an emotionally-driven, entertaining evening.

Midori violin; Özgür Aydın piano Beethoven, Webern and Kurtág

Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP, Box Office: 020 7258 8200 www.wigmore-hall.org.uk
25 November 2012 - 7:30 Tickets: £10:00

Programme: Beethoven, **Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Op. 12 No. 2**, Webern, **Four Pieces Op. 7**, Beethoven, **Violin Sonata No. 6 in A Op. 30 No. 1**, Kurtág, **Tre pezzi Op. 14e**, Beethoven, **Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Op. 47 Kreutzer**.

Since making her debut at the age of eleven with the New York Philharmonic almost 30 years ago, the violinist Midori has established a record of achievement which sets



her apart as a musician and innovator. Turkish pianist Özgür Aydın began his music studies at the Ankara Conservatory in Turkey. He subsequently studied with Peter Katin at the Royal College of Music in London and with Karl-Heinz Kammerling at the Hanover Music Academy. He made his orchestral debut in 1997 in a performance with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he won the renowned ARD International Music Competition in Munich and the Nippon Music Award in Tokyo, thus achieving standing as a guest in concert halls throughout the world.

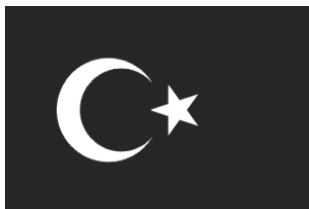
Gülsin Onay; A Charity Piano Recital

Beethoven, Debussy, Chopin

Tattersalls Sales Ring, Terrace House, 125 High St, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9BT, Tel: 01638- 661977/552069
9 November 2012 – 20:00, Tickets: £20.00

After a busy summer, the internationally acclaimed Gülsin Onay comes to Newmarket at the invitation of Newmarket Rotary Club. Born in Istanbul, Onay started her music education at the age of three and gave her first public recital on Turkish radio at the age of six. With the aid of a special state scholarship, she studied with Ahmed Adnan Saygun and Mithat Fenmen. She subsequently trained at the Paris Conservatoire with Nadia Boulanger and pianist Pierre Sancan. There, at the age of 16, she won the prestigious 'Premier Prix du Piano'. Since then, Onay has played in virtually every major concert hall in the world, worked with the most prominent conductors. In 2007, she was awarded the State Medal by the Polish nation for her exceptional interpretations and recordings of Chopin's music.





Turkey's Politics since October 2012: a Survey

by

Gamon McLellan, SOAS, University of London

Two years ago this autumn, many people in Turkey's Hatay province were looking forward to the Kurban Bayramı (the Feast of Sacrifice) in mid-November. Back in September 2010, over 50,000 people had crossed into Syria for the Şeker or Ramazan Bayramı to celebrate with relatives and friends on the other side of the border, and larger numbers were expected to travel into Syria for the four-day holiday in November. The previous autumn, the Syrian and Turkish governments had agreed that their citizens could now visit each other's countries without visas – an extraordinary development between two countries which had

had poor relations for most of the period since 1946. The Syrian-Turkish frontier, as one provincial governor in Turkey now put it, was an artificial one: “no borders exist in our minds,” he said. Turkish companies took up opportunities in Aleppo, and towns and cities on the Turkish side started to reap rewards as Syrians came across to shop, particularly in the new shopping malls of Gaziantep and Urfa. There was talk of a free trade zone linking Turkey and Syria with Lebanon and Jordan, and of a Schengen-style visa arrangement for the region. It was more than just an illustration of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu’s “Zero Problems with Neighbours” slogan: it was a showcase for the Strategic Depth policy.

It was all rather different this year. At the time of writing there were some 100,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey, with thousands more waiting to join them. On 2nd October, the UN High Commission for Refugees suggested Turkey could be hosting up to 280,000 refugees by the end of the year.² The following day, in an operation against opposition fighters in the border town of Tal Abyad, Syrian forces shelled the Turkish town of Akçakale just the other side of the frontier, killing five civilians and injuring ten others. There was outrage in Turkey. The next day Turkish forces retaliated against a Syrian army base in Tal Abyad, and Parliament in Ankara passed a resolution empowering the government to send troops ‘into foreign countries’ to tackle threats to Turkey’s national security. The resolution is valid for one year.



The Akçakale incident was not the first time Turkey had suffered from direct Syrian military action: in June Syria shot down a Turkish reconnaissance plane over the eastern Mediterranean. In both instances, Turkey referred the matter to NATO, although it refrained from invoking article 5 of the Treaty, whereby an attack on one ally is deemed an attack on all. The Prime Minister stressed that the government had no wish to go to war with Syria, but was determined to protect its borders: “Yet,” he said, “we are not that far away from war... If a citizen of mine is martyred, are we to talk about peace?” “The country”, he

declared, “must prepare for war if it wanted peace”. Public opinion in Turkey was divided – there was fury and outrage at the atrocities perpetrated by the Syrian government on its own people and now at the attacks also on Turkish citizens inside Turkey, but there was also widespread concern at the prospect of becoming involved in a major regional conflict. The opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) and the (Kurdish) Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) opposed the resolution in Parliament, which was supported by the Nationalist Action Party (MHP). The opposition was particularly concerned at the wording of the resolution, mentioning ‘foreign countries’ rather than just Syria. They feared that Turkey could be dragged into a wider Middle East conflict. Outside Parliament in Ankara as well as on the streets of Istanbul there were noisy anti-war demonstrations, fuelled by anger at the government’s support for the Syrian Islamic opposition and by the belief that the Prime Minister was hell-bent on a major incursion into Syria. Even before the Akçakale incident the government had made clear its support for the creation of a safe haven within Syrian territory for those fleeing the Assad regime terror. At the time of writing it was unclear whether the Syrian authorities were even capable of preventing further accidental damage in Turkey along the extensive frontier between the two countries, and such incidents were continuing on a daily basis.

For observers seeking to interpret the current direction of Turkey’s foreign policy, the resort to NATO was significant. It underlined that whatever the rhetoric, the alliance remains of paramount importance, particularly at times of crisis: in contrast, it seemed, to the European

² UN News Centre, 2 October 2012

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43187&Cr=Syria&Cr1=#.UHHfqa4-qQA>

Union. The EU was conspicuously absent from the Prime Minister's speech³ to the Justice and Development Party's congress on 30th September⁴. He saluted a number of other Muslim peoples, including the Palestinians and the 'heroes' in Syria. He went on to send messages of Turkey's friendship, brotherhood and solidarity to 'all the friendly and brotherly nations from Australia to Brazil and from Japan to Canada...' Particular warmth was expressed to the foreign guests at the congress: the list included Egyptian President Muhammad Mursi, Kyrgyz President Atambayev, Rachid Ghannouchi (leader of Tunisia's Annahda Party), the Vice-President of Sudan, the (Sunni) Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Osama al Najafi and the exiled (Sunni) Vice-President Tariq al Hashemi (under sentence of death in Iraq) and Khaled Mashaal, leader of Hamas, together with representatives from Pakistan, Bosnia, Lebanon and Northern Cyprus. Mas'oud Barzani, President of the Kurdish region in Iraq, was also present. There were just a couple of Europeans: former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and the Chairman of the Conservative group in the European Parliament Jan Zahradil. Observers will be watching carefully to see whether the eclipse of Europe in Turkish government foreign policy pronouncements and gestures comes to an end once Ireland takes over the Presidency of the European Union from the Republic of Cyprus in January 2013. Prior to the Cypriot Presidency, Ankara had welcomed the election of François Hollande and the departure of Nicolas Sarkozy, and in June Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announced the end of a series of retaliatory measures imposed against France after the row over the genocide resolution in the French Senate last year.

Turkey's support for the Syrian opposition and its persistent condemnation of the Assad regime have increased tensions with two other significant players in the region, Russia and Iran, both of which are supporting the Damascus government. This again goes against the Davutoğlu regional policy, reinforces traditional cold-war alignments and increases Turkey's vulnerability as an energy importer. Despite the rhetoric over Syria, the government has been at pains to avoid a breach with Russia. Prime Minister Erdoğan was in Moscow in July in the wake of the shooting down of the Turkish plane to try and persuade President Putin to stop supporting the Syrian regime and specifically not to veto a draft Security Council resolution authorising foreign intervention. Unsurprisingly the Russians did not change their position. It remains to be seen how the cohabitation between Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and Bidzina Ivanishvili following the election victory of the latter's party in early October will affect Georgia's relations with Moscow and consequently the energy equilibrium in the Black Sea/Caucasus region.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP or AK Parti) has been criticised both at home and abroad for working with the Saudis, Qataris and others towards the creation of a Sunni bloc in the region to confront Iran. The government's support for Syria's Islamic opposition and the list of guests at September's AKP congress did little to dispense this suspicion. Nor did the war of words between Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki over the latter's treatment of political opponents, particularly Sunni opponents, culminating in the sentencing to death of Vice-President Tariq al Hashemi, who is now resident in Turkey and who, unlike al Maliki, did take up his invitation to attend the AKP congress. Another

³ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/basbakan-erdoganin-ak-parti-4.-olagan-buyuk-kongresi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/31771>

⁴ Interviewed live at the congress by Kanal 24 Television on 30th September, Egemen Bağış, Minister for EU affairs, confirmed that the Prime Minister's not mentioning the EU was indeed a clear message to "narrow-minded people" in the EU who had been obstructing Turkey's accession process, but he stressed that the government was still strongly committed to continuing to implement the process of EU compliance which had provided positive benefits for Turkey's democratic processes during the last decade. The interview can be viewed at http://tvarsivi.com/ab-bakani-egemen-bagis-akp-kongresini-ve-basbakan-erdoganin-aciklamalarini-degerlendiriyor-30-09-2012-izle-i_2012090905663.html

aggravating factor was Davutoğlu's visit to Kirkuk in August, further cementing Turkey's close relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq. Baghdad objected, because the visit had not been cleared with the Iraqi government. In a lengthy interview with *Hürriyet* in September, the Foreign Minister denied that the government was following a Sunni sectarian agenda in the region: they had, he said, pursued closer relations with Assad's Syria before the uprising started, despite Syrian involvement in the murder of the former Lebanese (Sunni) Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. He also rejected the charge by Damascus that Turkey was pursuing a neo-Ottoman policy in the region, drawing a parallel with Slobodan Milošević's accusations that Turgut Özal had been an Islamic fundamentalist in his condemnation of Serbian crimes in Bosnia.⁵

But while events in Syria and the Middle East are causing anxiety and acute problems in the border regions, political energies were, as always, concentrated on domestic issues, where passions are most intense. The multi-party Parliamentary Commission chaired by Speaker Cemil Çiçek continued its work drafting the new constitution, although there was still wide disagreement between the parties represented. On 2nd October, the Prime Minister indicated he expected the draft to be completed by the end of this year – the deadline originally set by the Speaker a year ago. He wanted all four parties to agree on the draft – but if that proved impossible, the government would go ahead with the support only of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP).

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan clearly has no time to lose. Next autumn will see local government elections: in September this year the AKP and MHP came to an agreement to bring these forward from March 2014 to October 2013. In August 2014 Turkish voters will for the first time directly elect their President. And in June 2015 Turks will again vote for a new parliament – but one which will not include Erdoğan and a number of his senior colleagues who have been deputies since 2002. AKP regulations prevent their standing again in 2015, and the Prime Minister has repeatedly underlined that he will not be a candidate for the assembly that year. He is expected to run for President in 2014. But while he clearly favours a more presidential system of government, there appears to be no such consensus within the country or even within his party on boosting the powers of the Presidency. Those who support a presidential system have argued that the clause in the constitution⁶ requiring the President to have no party affiliation only dates from 1961, and that, as President, Atatürk, İnönü and Bayar were party members. But the Gülen movement, which has been a major factor underpinning the grass-roots strength of the party, is wary of Erdoğan acquiring more power and is understood not to be enthusiastic about a presidential system. The division that opened between the movement and the Prime Minister in February has not healed. In June Erdoğan was moved publicly to ask Fethullah Gülen to return to Turkey. The latter politely but firmly declined. *Zaman* newspaper, previously always strongly supportive of the government, has been consistently carrying critical articles throughout the summer.

The confusion over the date of the presidential election was resolved by the Constitutional Court in June, when, at the request of the CHP, they ruled on the legality of the law pushed through Parliament in January fixing at seven years the presidential term of Abdullah Gül (who had been elected in August 2007 before the relevant clause of the constitution was amended). However, the Court also decreed that Gül could stand for a second term. This and subsequent presidential terms will be five years.

Differences have emerged between Gül and Erdoğan as the year has progressed. The day after the Prime Minister's congress speech, the President spoke at the opening of the new parliamentary year, and there were significant differences in his approach. He did mention

⁵ Interviewed by Cansu Çamlıbel, *Hürriyet* 17th September 2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/21483551.asp>

⁶ Article 101 of the 1982 Constitution (95 of the 1961 Constitution)

the European Union. The prospect of membership, he said, had added impetus to the reforms which had strengthened Turkey's economy and democracy and had raised living standards, and he expected Parliament to prioritise EU harmonisation legislation. While Erdoğan set a deadline for work on the draft constitution and said his party would if necessary go ahead with the support of only one opposition party, Gül stressed that the new constitution was the most important item on the national agenda and that the final text must be the product of maximum agreement between the parties, despite the difficulties. Right at the start of his speech he reiterated his belief (first articulated when he addressed the military academy on 27th April⁷) that all those who had been legally elected in last year's election should take part in parliamentary proceedings 'until a final judgement is given'. This referred to those elected members who have been held on remand in custody: they include members from the CHP, MHP and the pro-Kurdish BDP. Fury over the refusal to grant them parliamentary immunity after the June 2011 election led to a boycott of Parliament by the



CHP and BDP. Immediately after Gül's speech, the Prime Minister said he did not agree with the President that these men should be released. Equally controversially, Gül also declared that writers and thinkers should be able to share their views without fear, and that journalists should be able to operate without obstacles. No one, he said, should be imprisoned for expressing his views in the media, and there must be a clear distinction between inciting violence and expressing an opinion. Lack of such a distinction has been a feature of many of the most controversial legal cases against opponents of the government, military officers, journalists, academics and students.

These three areas where the President was clearly not on message as far as the AKP was concerned lie at the centre of the mounting criticisms that have been heard this year both in Turkey and abroad of the government and in particular the Prime Minister, who has been accused of being increasingly authoritarian and intolerant of opposition. The detained MPs are among a very large number of defendants either in the notorious Ergenekon and associated trials involving alleged conspiracies to overthrow the government, or in the equally controversial KCK cases, concerning allegedly pro-PKK activities. There has been mounting criticism of the indictments – involving highly suspect evidence and an alarmingly broad definition of terrorism (arguably alluded to by President Gül in his call for a clear distinction between inciting violence and expressing an opinion) – as well as of the legal processes and of the justice of keeping many hundreds of prisoners in poor conditions on remand for years on end. One batch of cases was concluded at first instance on 21st September, when verdicts were announced in the so-called Balyoz (Sledge-hammer) case. The sentences were severe: two retired generals were given 20 years, as was a retired admiral. Over 170 other officers received 13 years or more. If the verdicts were correct, the accused were guilty in 2003 of plotting various terrorist outrages to oblige the government to declare martial law, paving the way for a military take-over. However, patently defective evidence and obvious irregularities in court procedure undermined credibility in the verdicts.



The two investigative journalists Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener were released in March, and Ragıp Zarakolu, publisher and human rights activist and a defendant in the KCK trials, was released from detention on 10th April. But the large number of journalists still in detention still causes concern and is expected to be highlighted in the annual European Commission Progress Report on Turkey, due in October.

⁷ <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/371/82551/harp-akademileri-konferansinda-yaptiklari-konusma.html>

In April, the trial opened of the two surviving instigators of the military intervention of 12th September 1980, Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya, and in the autumn a number of witnesses gave evidence to the prosecutor investigating responsibility for the so-called 'post-modern coup' of 28th February 1997, including former Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, who had been leader of the junior party in the coalition at the time.

The grim death toll of soldiers and civilians killed by PKK operations continued throughout the summer, both in the south-east and in cities across Turkey. A police officer died in Hakkari in May from a suicide attack on a police station, and a bomb exploded in a bus in Foça in early August killing two soldiers. On 20th August, a car bomb exploded in Gaziantep killing nine civilians (including children) and wounding over 50, and in early September, ten soldiers were killed in the south-east. The Turkish military has been fully engaged with the PKK in the south-east throughout the summer, and large numbers of PKK fighters have been killed. An operation in Şemdinli in July resulted in the deaths of more than a hundred PKK fighters; 15 more were killed on 19th August in Hakkari and 20 PKK fighters died on 2nd September. Some fifty more died during September. The attacks on Turkish soldiers and civilians have caused deep anger, and the Prime Minister has accused the Syrian regime of providing support to the PKK. Iran is also believed to have been providing cross-border assistance.

In the political arena, the controversy over alleged links between the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and the PKK continues, with criticism of the party's reluctance to condemn PKK activities. Given the ongoing military operations in the south-east, events in Iran and Syria and the anger amongst Kurds at the KCK trials, the prospects for solving Turkey's Kurdish problem are not good. In June, Aysel Tuğluk was sentenced to 14 years in jail under anti-terrorist legislation, because of speeches she made. She had been joint leader of the Democratic Society Party (DTP), which was closed down by the Constitutional Court in December 2009. She was stripped of her membership of Parliament, but was re-elected as an independent in 2011.

Human rights organisations have been particularly concerned about continuing severe suppression of student protests. In June two students in Istanbul were sentenced to more than eight years in jail for holding a banner demanding free education in front of a building where the Prime Minister was holding a meeting. They were charged with membership of a terrorist organisation. Similar charges had been brought in February against students in Malatya who had been selling tickets to a concert. They were given sentences ranging from 1-13 years.⁸

The controversial bill restructuring compulsory schooling into three sections of four years each was voted into law at the end of March, allowing pupils to transfer to new Imam and Preacher Schools at an earlier age. Opposition newspapers have been carrying a stream of stories about de facto segregation being imposed in individual schools or during exams, and in September there were reports about pupils in Istanbul allegedly being obliged to enrol in Imam and Preacher Schools against their will.⁹ In September 3,000 new religious teachers entered the state system, and in June five million students were said to be preparing to attend summer Qur'an schools. Binnaz Toprak, a prominent academic who has written on the development of political Islam in Turkey and is now a CHP MP, spoke about a "conservative pressure" to conform to Islamic norms.¹⁰ All this followed the commitment

⁸ *Cumhuriyet* 2nd February 2012

⁹ *Hürriyet*, 26th September 2012 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/21554795.asp>

¹⁰ *Cumhuriyet* 3rd September 2012

made by the Prime Minister in February (see the March 2012 survey) to nurture a religious generation. Back in June, a picture of Atatürk was found in a dustbin in a school in Fethiye,¹¹ and in September, the Head of the Supreme Education Council (YÖK) announced that they were considering abolishing the course 'Atatürk Principles and the History of the Turkish Revolution'. The course had been introduced into universities as part of the higher education reforms introduced after the 1980 coup. Traditional secularists were horrified.

Gender issues continued to feature in public debate, often with a religious dimension. The most significant debate was about abortion, triggered by a speech by the Prime Minister on 25th May, in which he announced his opposition to caesarean births and his horror of abortion, which he likened to murder, mentioning specifically the Uludere incident last December, when Turkish planes had attacked what they thought was a PKK unit. It had turned out to be local Kurdish youths involved in minor smuggling. Over 30 people had been killed. The Prime Minister said Turkey needed a young, dynamic population. A few days later, it was suggested that legislation would be introduced to reduce the time limit for abortions from the current ten weeks to four weeks. This provoked a fierce debate: at four weeks many women may not know they are pregnant, and the proposal was seen as a way of effectively banning all abortions. One minister talked of banning abortions when a woman has been raped. But as the summer advanced, the government appeared to have moved away from legislating further in this area.

Development has continued apace. Work formally started on the third bridge across the Bosphorus in September, and in April the Prime Minister reiterated his determination to press ahead with other major infrastructural plans for Istanbul: the third airport near Silivri, the canal linking the Black Sea to the Marmara aiming to remove tanker traffic from the Bosphorus, and the creation of two new cities to the north of Istanbul near the Black Sea shores, one on each continent. These projects are highly controversial – not least because they involve the felling of many thousands of trees, with consequences for the climate and air quality of the city.

The combination in the south east of the continuing struggle with the PKK and the civil war in Syria are obvious threats to Turkey's ongoing political stability, particularly if Turkey finds itself drawn into a serious cross-border involvement. So is the rapidly deteriorating economic plight of the Iranian people. But two other threats loom: a collapse of the Eurozone would inevitably impact damagingly on the Turkish economy. And any move against Iranian nuclear installations by Israel and/or the United States would cause even more problems in Turkey's south east as well as a consequent steep rise in petrol prices.

A final note: in the March survey, it was reported that regulations would come into effect on 15th March to outlaw street markets and itinerant sellers. Despite this, markets and hawkers have remained in business. Someone realised at the 11th hour that depriving an estimated million people of their livelihood was not a very astute political move...



¹¹ *Sözcü* 19th June 2012.

The Greek Crisis - Crisis without End?

by James Pettifer

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Although to many observers of the regional scene the Greek financial crisis only began to unfold with the arrival of the PASOK government back in power in October 2009 and the subsequent ‘opening of the books’, it now seems a more or less permanent feature of the landscape. The Greek economy has been in more or less continual decline throughout the last four years and punctuated by ‘last chance’ European Union interventions and ‘bailouts’, only for the crisis to reappear a few weeks, months or even, as in summer 2011, days later after the EU leaders have gone home from Brussels. Yet Greece is still there, as a Euro zone member, and for all anyone knows may remain so for some time – or may not. As I have explored in a recent publication, *The Making of the Greek Crisis*, many features of the current situation repeat, in outline, events that have taken place intermittently over the last hundred years or more, while others are undoubtedly new.¹²



At the time of writing the crisis is in one of its periods of reduced tension as after the two general elections held earlier this year a coalition government has been formed under the leadership of New Democracy Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, a long standing Peloponnese politician from an old political family originating in the Methoni region. How stable the coalition will be remains to be seen – it has survived so far largely because of the political exhaustion of most players, on all sides, after the intense class conflicts of the last eighteen months, symbolised by the emergence of the Marxist-Green Syriza party in a serious challenge for power. Activists on all sides have retreated to the beach for a rest. It has also survived by not doing very much – there are major differences of view about policy within the coalition partners, particularly between New Democracy and the remnants of PASOK under Thessaloniki city leader Evangelos Venizelos. PASOK has been leaching support to Syriza, particularly among the often unemployed young, and has to maintain at least a leftist rhetoric to try to halt that process.

The immediate issue is how far the coalition feels able to go in meeting the demands of the EU leaders for further major reductions in public expenditure and wide scale sackings of civil servants and closure of publicly funded activities. It is impossible, at the time of writing, to predict the outcome of these discussions but on a common sense basis there is a sense that Greece may be becoming finally insolvent, and an exit from the Euro is quite possible.

The deeper issue for Greece’s neighbours is how far the crisis is now beginning to spread beyond Greece’s borders and affect regional political calculations. Will Turkey become involved? Cyprus already has a role, having an economic crisis of its

¹² Pettifer, J., *The Making of the Greek Crisis*, Penguin Short series, E-Book, London, 2012

own after the catalyst of the electrical power issues in 2010 and now the question marks that are emerging about the financial stability of the banking system in spring 2012. The Bank of Cyprus claims its difficulties are mainly – or only – caused by the backwash of bad loans and foreclosures in Greece, but the scale of government debt, at least as so far revealed by Nicosia government sources, is bound to cast doubt on this. Russian funds were sought in 2011 and were forthcoming and, if the EU is either unable or unwilling to get deeply involved in Cyprus finances, this factor is likely to grow in importance.

In Turkey the degree of interdependence in trade and banking with Greece is a matter of debate among experts, with many different views held. What is agreed, though, is that Greek-Turkish trade and economic and fiscal relationships are much more important to Greece than they are to Turkey. They are particularly important to some of the Greek banks, perhaps the most prominent being Eurobank which is a publicly-quoted company but ultimately controlled by the Latsis shipping dynasty.

At a political level, the unending crisis in Greece will undoubtedly strengthen the arguments of those in Turkey who feel that the EU accession process for Turkey, as part of a continuing and wider EU enlargement, has come to an effective end. Although Croatia is becoming a full EU member, the applications of the Western Balkan countries are making very slow progress, and the revival of ethno-nationalism in Serbia symbolised by the failure of the Tadic government in the recent elections and an ever-closer link between Serbia and Russia is bound to cause concern in Brussels. Some hopes have been expressed in pro-EU circles in Ankara that the departure of the Sarkozy government in Paris may mean a softening of French opposition to Turkish EU membership. But there is little evidence so far of meaningful change, and it is very hard indeed to see major public-opinion constituencies in important EU countries being willing to advance Turkish EU membership ambitions while the EU itself is in such difficulties.

In all European countries there is a rise in support for xenophobic and nationalist parties, and in Greece the arrival of the effectively neo-fascist 'Golden Dawn' party in Parliament was a shock to international community opinion, most obviously in Israel and in countries with a large Jewish community like the United States. Is there a danger of a nationalist 'spillover' affecting the generally improved climate in Greek-Turkish relations in recent years? In terms of general cultural and trade contacts, this does not seem to be the case. Greek tourism in Istanbul is still flourishing, and there does not seem to be any acceleration of tensions in the traditional issues regarding the position of the Turkish-speaking Muslim minority in Thrace centred on the Komintini region. So, once again, it is in Cyprus that the most difficulties are likely to arise. The discovery of major hydrocarbon resources offshore of Cyprus could have provided an opportunity for reconciliation between the communities there and in the region as a whole with Cyprus's neighbours, as a recent report by the International Crisis Group research organisation has argued, but, in the increasingly difficult regional economic climate and with the conflict in Syria continuing, it does not seem very likely that this will occur.¹³

¹³ See 'Cyprus The Last and Best Chance for Peace', International Crisis Group, Brussels, May 2012, www.crisisgroup.org

Much of Greek public opinion, understandably deeply involved and preoccupied with their own economic crisis, is not well informed about what is happening in Cyprus and the potential there for rapidly increasing regional tensions. The loss of a Parliamentary majority by Mehmet Ali Talat in the Turkish-majority part of the island in spring of this year was hardly reported in the Greek press, for instance, although this event effectively terminated the talks process with the Greek Cypriots on any meaningful basis. There is little now to be expected from the United Nations led peace process, or talks between the two communities leaders. As ICG rightly pointed out, the main danger is that the *de facto* partition of the island will become absolute and permanent, overshadowed by the deepening economic problems on both sides of the Green Line. External powers, as always, are important. In the United States there is quite a widespread view that the problems of the Cyprus economy and government have been caused by the fact that the Marxist AKEL party leads the government and there is a danger that in some quarters on the American right, the crisis may be seen as an opportunity to try to destabilise AKEL and replace it with a different administration. In Russia the situation also offers major opportunities to increase regional influence, through Russian loans and other financial operations, but the positions of the Putin government often seem opaque. The Greek crisis in general has offered Moscow a major opportunity, as the ongoing deal for Moscow to buy the Greek main energy distribution company indicates, along with increasing Russian influence and activity in the other more 'eastern' Balkan nations such as Serbia and FYROM/Republic of Macedonia. The Putin government does not seem to have a clear and defined Balkan and East Mediterranean policy, other than the use of energy supply power through GASPROM and other organisations, and the Balkan countries are small players on the international scene. But, as a large and growing economy and with its geostrategic position, Turkey is quite different. Moscow has some of the same energy supply weapons to use to influence Ankara government policy but has so far shown little inclination to deploy them.

These are obviously, in terms of current international relations, highly speculative matters, and it could be argued that at some point the European Union will recover from its current decline and internal ructions and the dangers to stability outlined above will drift into irrelevance. This is the optimistic reading of events. But if the general decline in the world economy continues, tensions about policy in Ankara are bound to increase. Compared to say thirty years ago, the Turkish economy is much more integrated into international trade and globalisation processes than it used to be, and cannot in the end escape the consequences of the global downturn. In most countries, particularly in those in the eastern Mediterranean region, an increase of nationalism follows economic decline, and not only in the nations most affected by decline and debts, like Greece and Spain, but in prosperous counties such as Holland and Finland. Turkey has so far remained insulated from these trends but it must be a moot point how long the country will be able to remain in that position.

The Arab Spring: A 'Blessing in Disguise' for Turkish-British Relations?

by Oğuzhan Göksel

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After a brief summary of the main characteristics of relations between Turkey and the United Kingdom, with a particular emphasis on its 'uniqueness', this article will attempt to interpret the potential effects of the Arab Spring on the relationship and assess whether it can be defined as a 'historic chance' to strengthen bilateral ties.

The foreign relations between Turkey and Britain can be traced back to the early 16th century and Britain is among the earliest of Western nations to have made contact with the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the bilateral relations have always been unique among Turkey's contacts with European nations. The two nations have not fought with each other as frequently as Turkey has fought with other European states. This has largely freed the relationship from mutual prejudices and deeply rooted national hostility towards each other. Despite the military conflict between the two countries in World War I, best remembered for the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915, the leaders of the new Turkish Republic were quick to emphasize the importance of strong ties with London and the inter-war years then witnessed a series of agreements and treaties signed by two governments, followed by the long alliance of two countries within NATO. In addition, the sheer physical distance between the two countries and the geopolitical positions of Britain and Turkey on the 'outskirts' of Europe have had a dramatic impact on the formation of their political culture and identities as neither of them have ever fully become or been seen as 'European'¹⁴. Ironically, this has been positively reflected on Turkish-British relations as the two 'non-European' nations have eventually gained a larger space to manoeuvre in bilateral relations, independent from the set of cultural, historical and strategic factors shaping the pair's oft problematic relations with European nations such as France.

The special character of Turkish-British relations is best demonstrated in the long British support for Turkey's European Union membership application¹⁵. This is often humorously interpreted as a sign of Britain's desire to find another 'non-European' partner within the EU better to disrupt the nature and mechanisms of the supra-

¹⁴ Philip Stephens 'How long will Britain stay in the EU?', 9 December 2011, Financial Times [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/d9e7cd56-226a-11e1-923d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz21CibziUs>.

¹⁵ Judy Dempsey 'Why Turkey Needs Britain Inside the EU', 5 April 2012, *Carnegie Endowment* [Online]. Available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/05/why-turkey-needs-britain-inside-eu/a6xs>

national organization with which the majority of British people has never quite felt at ease due to widespread fears of Brussels' potential threat to the sovereignty and independence of London¹⁶. The convergence between the two countries' foreign policies is also demonstrated in the Atlantic-orientation of their attitudes since the end of World War II; both have traditionally put more emphasis on developing and maintaining strong ties with Washington rather than with fellow European neighbours.

Today, Turkish-British relations stand on the verge of another turning point in the light of the sudden political changes the Arab Spring has brought to the Middle East. One observer commented that, since the Arab Spring, the regional balance of powers has been rapidly shifting as the old American policy of emphasizing 'stability' through the support of authoritarian regimes has finally come to an end and nowadays, the US is increasingly focusing on the Pacific Ocean and the rise of Chinese power at the expense of the Middle East¹⁷. In light of this, Turkey and the European Union are two actors that could possibly fill the political vacuum in the coming years with a new strategy promoting democratization and economic liberalization. At this point it is important to note that the perception of the EU in the region has never been particularly positive despite attempts to spread its influence to the region through the European Neighbourhood Policy in recent years. On the other hand, Turkey's prestige has been rapidly rising in the last decade due to many factors such as the Turkish government's pro-Arab approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. According to a formal investigation carried out by the European Institute for the Mediterranean in February 2012 and presented to the European Parliament, Turkey is being perceived as the most supportive country of the Arab Spring, ahead of all the European Union members, Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council¹⁸. Recent surveys like the crucial TESEV poll clearly demonstrate that there is strong demand from the Arab public for a 'Turkish model'. That poll produced a striking result by revealing that 66 percent of respondents in the Arab World believe that Turkey can be such a model for Middle Eastern countries¹⁹.

It seems that Turkey is filling the political vacuum and emerging as a key regional power as Europe has failed to produce effective policies towards the region since the start of the Arab Spring. In addition to the cultural differences between the Arab societies and Europe, the recent internal problems and deep divisions within the EU caused by financial crisis and Greece's imminent economic collapse have prevented the EU from focusing on the region and allowed Turkey to gain a highly influential role in regional politics, unprecedented since the days of the late Ottoman Empire.

¹⁶ Philip Stephens 'How long will Britain stay in the EU?', 9 December 2011, *Financial Times* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/d9e7cd56-226a-11e1-923d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz21CibziUs>.

See the survey for widespread euroscepticism in Britain: *Standard Eurobarometer 71: Public Opinion in the European Union*, European Commission official report, September 2009.

¹⁷ Guisepe Lenzo 'The Arab Spring: An Incredible Chance for EU-Turkey coordination?', 22 March 2012, *Europe's World* [Online]. Available at:

http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/CommunityPosts/tabid/809/PostID/2970/TheArabSpringAnIncredibleChanceforEUTurkeycoordination.aspx

¹⁸ ANSAMED 'EU beaten by Turkey at support to Arab spring', 13 June 2012 [Online]. Available at: http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/nations/france/2012/06/13/EU-beaten-Turkey-support-Arab-spring-study_7029628.html

¹⁹ Mensur Akgün, Sabiha Şenyücel Gündoğar, Gökce Perçinoğlu and Jonathan Levack 'The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2010', *TESEV Foreign Policy Programme*, TESEV Publications, 2011.

Turkey's emergence as a key regional power in the last decade necessitates that, if the UK wishes to assume an important role in the affairs of the Middle East, relations with Ankara should be prioritized as no European power could claim to have the same level of political clout in the region nowadays. Surely London must have realized this as the British government has begun to seek a closer relationship with Ankara. As such, two governments signed a 'strategic partnership' document in 2007 during Prime Minister Erdoğan's London visit. During Prime Minister Cameron's visit to Turkey in July 2010, the document was updated to strengthen further the alliance. The updated document indicates that Turkey and Britain 'have agreed to work together more closely to boost the economy, combat terrorism, address regional conflicts and push Turkey's EU bid'²⁰. It is important to note that the document puts a special emphasis on the shared vision of two countries regarding the Middle East, implying that they would cooperate with each other to establish peace, democracy and respect for human rights in the region. During Cameron's visit, at a joint news conference, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan said, "...this is the golden age of Turkey-United Kingdom relations"²¹. Right after the beginning of the Arab Spring, on May 2011, an even more dramatic sign of Turkey's new importance for Britain emerged as British embassy officials in Ankara announced that the UK will expand its diplomatic missions in the country due to Turkey's growing role in the Middle East, G-20 membership and emerging global influence²². The same statement indicated that while Britain was reducing the staff in its European consulates, Turkey was the only 'European' country where the British number of staff was growing.



Since the Arab Spring, Britain has been pro-active in supporting democratic revolutionary movements in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria²³. At a time of severe recession and continuous budget-cuts, the British government did not even hesitate to intervene in Libya during the NATO operation, a move also supported by Turkey. The two countries' vocal support for the Syrian rebels and calls for President al-Assad to resign intensified this year. Unlike most EU countries, Ankara and London seem very willing and determined to follow the political developments in the region and act as necessary. As mentioned above, both countries share the same vision for the region, namely the establishment of working democracies more responsive to the demands of their people. This objective should be followed by policies aimed to help these societies recover from the collapse of authority, security and economy. Indeed, Britain and Ankara have interest in the re-construction of the Middle East economies through financial support and advice as this would prepare the conditions for a complete liberalization programme to help them integrate into world markets which

²⁰ Fulya Özerkan 'Turkey, Britain vow to boost relations', 28 July 2010, *Hurriyet Daily News* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=turkey-britain-vow-to-foster-ties-2010-07-28>

²¹ *World Bulletin* 'Turkey, UK relations at golden age: Erdogan', 27 July 2010 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=61872>

²² İpek Yezdani 'UK to expand its activities in Turkey', 16 May 2011, *Hurriyet Daily News* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=uk-is-expanding-its-diplomatic-missions-in-turkey-2011-05-16>

²³ Eugene Rogan 'Regional Overview', in *The Arab Spring: Implications for British Policy* (Conservative Middle East Council), October 2011, p. 7.

would then allow Turkish and British businesses new opportunities to bolster their own economic growth through direct investment in these new markets. The abilities and resources of Turkey and Britain are limited individually but cooperation in the affairs of the Middle East would enable the development of large scale projects and initiatives to help the locals in post-Arab Spring countries and also increase their own political and economic influence in the region. At a time when the economic pillar of the EU faces the possibility of collapse and the US is turning its gaze to the awakening dragon in Beijing, Britain and Turkey have a historic chance to emerge as the influential players in the Middle East if they cooperate. Both countries need each other for different reasons. Britain lacks the cultural appeal of Turkey and its emerging role as an 'inspiration' or 'model' for the Middle Eastern peoples but Turkey lacks the financial expertise, accumulated capital and large scale enterprises of Britain. Thus a junction of the two indeed promises to bring the 'best of both worlds' for them.

As argued above, the Arab Spring should indeed be seen as a 'blessing in disguise' for Turkish-British relations because the long-term opportunities provided by the political changes in the Middle East far outweigh the temporary and short-term instability and chaos caused by the uprisings. For now, the leaders of both countries seem to have agreed on the importance of bilateral ties, particularly since the Arab Spring in 2011. Only time will tell if this newfound understanding can be sustained and strengthened through further intensification of their ties.





Update on Cyprus 2012

by Clement Dodd

Those who have the patience to follow the twists and turns of the seemingly never-ending Cyprus problem will recall from the last Cyprus Update that there is now a new complicating factor to be taken into account, namely the discovery of large hydrocarbon and gas deposits south of Cyprus. Turkey and the TRNC insist that under the terms of the 1960 settlement of the Cyprus conflict the Turkish Cypriots have the right to a share of the considerable wealth that will accrue from the exploitation of these resources. Turkey and the TRNC have objected to the exploitation of these deposits before a political settlement is reached through the negotiations taking place between the two sides. Turkey has also declared its right, on behalf of the TRNC, to start offshore drilling in five blocks within the Greek Cypriots' self-declared Exclusive Economic Zone immediately south of Cyprus, and extending to the island of Rhodes. This area includes the site where gas and hydrocarbon deposits have been discovered, and which are to be exploited by an American company on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus.

In September 2011 Turkey and the TRNC signed an agreement to explore for hydrocarbons and gas in the areas mentioned, an agreement that, significantly, was approved, in July 2012, by the Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, for publication in the *Official Gazette*. Turkey has started to drill for hydrocarbons in the TRNC, but without success so far. It has not yet undertaken drilling in the disputed sea areas, despite claiming its right to do so. This could be seen as a serious warning to foreign companies not to engage in further exploration in these areas on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus. Nevertheless the Greek Cypriot government has opened a second licensing round that has seemingly attracted a large number of foreign companies.²⁴ However, there will be problems for the Greek Cypriots in the marketing of natural gas. A liquefaction plant would be extremely expensive and uneconomic for the amounts of gas so far projected. Transmission by pipe to Greece would also be very costly. The cheapest way to export the gas would be through Turkey, so this may become a factor with potential to influence Turkish Cypriot/Greek Cypriot relations.²⁵

A solution through osmosis?

These events are at present worsening relations between the two sides, though some Greek Cypriots believe that the anticipation of wealth in the South will encourage the Turkish Cypriots to be less demanding in negotiations for a federation. They also believe that it will boost the process of osmosis, the re-absorption of Turkish Cypriots, though as a minority, into a state that will be able to provide a much more prosperous life than is likely to be achieved in the North.

²⁴ See a report in *Cyprus News*, no.272 London: Cyprus High Commission,, [June], 2012.

²⁵ For a fuller account of this problem see 'Aphrodite's Gift: Can Cyprus Gas Power a New Dialogue?', European Report No.216 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012).

Many Turkish Cypriots work in the South and often shop there too. Some accept benefits made available to them, including health facilities and the provision of identity documents, including passports. Encouraging osmosis, the Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister, Erato Kozaku Markuli, recently called on all 'ordinary' Turkish Cypriots to rejoin the Republic. In line with this policy a Turkish Cypriot has recently been appointed to work for the Greek Cypriot delegation to the EU in Brussels. In response, the Turkish Cypriot authorities are at pains constantly to remind their citizens that they would again become a disadvantaged minority in the South if they abandoned independence, and would once more be treated as second-class citizens by the Greek Cypriots. In fact many Turkish Cypriots still distrust their neighbours. Recent polls have shown that most Turkish Cypriots want recognized independence. Interestingly, there is some evidence to suggest that the prospect of joining the TRNC to Turkey is not quite as daunting as it used to be.

The leaders' negotiations come to an end

In March and April this year the UN Secretary-General and his representative in Cyprus, Alexander Downer, still held on to some hope that the two Cypriot presidents, Demetris Christofias and Derviş Eroğlu, would come to some accord on the major issues dividing them. It was not to be. The issue of property, particularly that left by Greek Cypriots in the North in 1974, is probably the most difficult problem to solve. Essentially those Greek Cypriots who want to return to live in their property, instead of accepting compensation or exchange, want to live under Greek Cypriot rule. This impinges on the problem of the territorial division of the island between the two sides. The Greek Cypriots want the two issues to be taken together, but the Turkish Cypriots insist on a clear territorial and governmental division, which would mean that some Greek Cypriots returning to their property would have to do so under Turkish Cypriot rule. In the meantime, it is possible for individuals to seek redress in their particular cases from the Immovable Property Commission (IPC) established in the North in 2006, with the approval of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), as explained below.

By the end of April it was clear that no progress was being made in the negotiations. Eroğlu favoured a suggestion emanating from the UN that the problem should be referred to an international conference composed of the Guarantor Powers of the 1960 Treaties, namely the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey, together with the two Cypriot leaders. The Greek Cypriot side rejected this proposal on the reasonable enough grounds that without agreement by the two sides on major problems there could be no progress. Eroğlu's view was that new ideas and initiatives needed to enable negotiations to succeed might emerge from a conference. In the end the UN abandoned the project.

In the absence of progress the UN informed the two sides that the negotiations would be downgraded. The UN's team in Cyprus would engage, it was said, in shuttle diplomacy with each side in place of attending meetings of the two leaders and their advisers, which were getting nowhere. These meetings declined later into meetings of officials and experts on both sides that were intended to tackle technical issues, and to encourage Greek and Turkish Cypriots to work together more, thus hopefully building mutual confidence.

On the collapse of the leaders' negotiations each side blamed the other. One result of the impasse was the resignation, in late May, of Eroğlu's special aide, Kudret Özersay. Frustrated by the complete lack of progress in the negotiations his aim is, apparently, to create a movement with the object of 'pulling us all together'. Suspecting that the intention was to create a new political party President Eroğlu, a dedicated long-serving member of the governing National Unity Party, did not approve of Özersay's action. There is much interest in what Özersay may do. He is extremely well informed on the Cyprus problem: he worked under the late President Denktaş's principal aide, Ergün Olgun.

Proposals on Varosha (Maraş)

Whilst the negotiations have been drifting on to their negative conclusion other events of some significance have occurred. There have been views expressed, outside the negotiations, on Varosha (Maraş) the area of land south of Famagusta (Gazi Mağusa) occupied by the Turkish military and more or less derelict. The Turkish Cypriot side has suggested that it might well open the area to its former Greek Cypriot inhabitants, though this would be under Turkish Cypriot government, which would be anything but welcome to them. If Greek Cypriots do not return to Varosha, Turkey may well have to meet expensive claims for compensation.



The Greek Cypriot side responded to these suggestions by demanding the return of the walled city of Famagusta to the Greek Cypriots, the management of Famagusta port by the European Union, and the government of Varosha by the United Nations, if not by the Greek Cypriot government. A factor that, according to the Turkish Cypriots, would have to be considered in any negotiations is the opening of their airport, Ercan, to international traffic. The Greek Cypriot government immediately rejected this proposal on the grounds that it impinged on its sovereignty. There has been no progress on Varosha.

A two-state solution?

Seeking support for international recognition, in early April President Eroğlu visited the headquarters of the Organization for Islamic Co-operation (OIC) in Jeddah where he called upon Saudi Arabia to further the international recognition of the TRNC: he also called for the acceptance by the OIC of the TRNC as a full member of the organization, replacing its present 'observer' status. Eroğlu has also declared that it is time for a review of UN resolutions against recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which followed the Declaration of Independence in 1983. However, the issue of recognition really goes back to the questionable general interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 186 of March 1964; this led to the recognition of the purely Greek Cypriot government then in power as the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The moves by Eroğlu to seek recognition, and consequently the removal of the damaging embargoes on the TRNC, alarmed the Greek Cypriots. Many assumed that Turkey and the TRNC were working towards a Plan B, a two-state solution that

some Greek Cypriots fear has already come about *de facto*, and is unlikely to be abandoned for the sake of a federation by either the Turkish Cypriots or Turkey.

The Immovable Property Commission

In the absence at present of a solution, which would have to deal with the property question overall, some Greek Cypriots are having recourse to the Immovable Property Commission (IPC), as mentioned above. Through this route Greek Cypriots may submit claims for restitution of their property, or for compensation for its loss, or for exchange with abandoned Turkish Cypriot property in the South. The Greek Cypriot government has not encouraged applications, especially for exchange of property.

By June this year the Court had received 3,365 applications, of which some eight per cent (241) have been settled. Of these 241 settlements 233 were for compensation, these coming to a total of £77 million, which has been paid by Turkey.²⁶ Progress is slow, but the IPC is reportedly overworked and understaffed. Moreover the Greek Cypriot applicants have to work with Turkish Cypriot lawyers and officials to substantiate their claims, a process that is expensive, lengthy, and often obnoxious to the Greek Cypriots. Also it is claimed that compensation does not properly reflect the rise, or potential rise, of property values since 1974.²⁷ The IPC is due to close in 2014, having so far clearly not made a major impact on the problem.

An exchange of property case

As mentioned above, the Greek Cypriot government has always discouraged any voluntary exchange of property between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, lest it seemed to be legitimizing a new ownership of lost properties. It was therefore disquieting for the Greek Cypriot government when, in July this year, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot agreed to exchange lost properties. As this questionable exchange had the support of the ECHR, which, significantly, found no objection to it on grounds of human rights, the Greek Cypriot authorities accepted it. However, the Greek Cypriot authorities had developed the abandoned Turkish Cypriot property by building two schools on it. So, on the advice of the Attorney-General the land was then bought from the Greek Cypriot for €13 million, this being seen as in the public interest. It was a very beneficial exchange for the Greek Cypriot if his land in the North was not of similar value. Property exchange could prove expensive to both sides.

The future for negotiations

The UN seems intent on hanging on in Cyprus despite the failure of the negotiations. Probably the UN has in mind that in the Greek Cypriot presidential election next February President Christofias (who is not standing for re-election) will be replaced by Nicos Anastasiades, the leader of DISY (The Democratic Rally). According to a recent poll Anastasiades is likely to win, but he is at present seeking the support of DIKO (the Nationalist Democratic Party), which is hardline on the Cyprus problem.²⁸ Nevertheless, despite also having some hardliners in his own party, Anastasiades,

²⁶ This information is from an article by Hermes Solomon, *The Cyprus Mail*, 24 June 2012. The ECHR holds Turkey to be responsible for the governing of the TRNC.

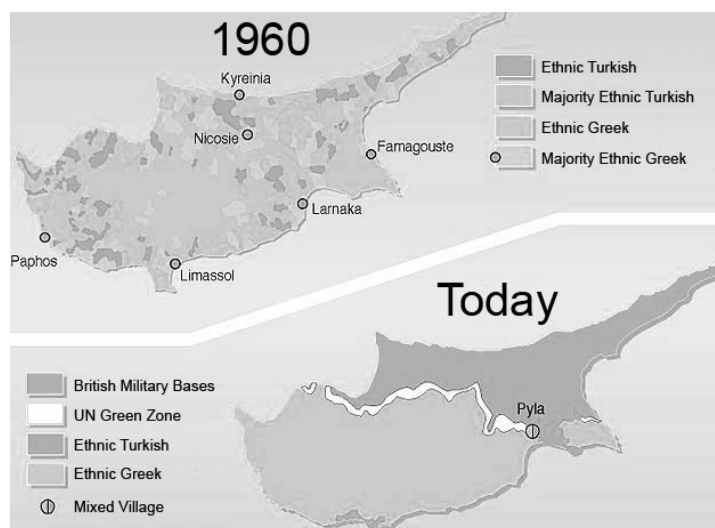
²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Information on prospective voting is from a poll in September 2012, as reported in the *Cyprus Mail*, 18 September 2012

has been advocating a weak federation, which now has some general support. Anastasiades says that he will not lead any negotiations, but will negotiate only in conjunction with other party leaders. This rather surprising, and puzzling, approach underlines a widening range of feeling in the Greek Cypriot community on the nature of an acceptable solution. The UN may take some hope from this likely change in the presidency and stay committed to more negotiations for a federation, despite 38 years of failure. It has also to be borne in mind that it may well be thought advisable for the UN to maintain a presence in Cyprus lest Turkish and Turkish Cypriot hostility to the Greek Cypriot search for hydrocarbons should lead to serious tensions in the area, as may turn out to be the case.

Recognition of the TRNC?

Could President Eroğlu ever obtain the recognition he wants by the rescinding of UN resolutions condemning Turkish Cypriot independence? As suggested above, the issue goes right back to 1964, and the UN Security Council's Resolution 186 of 4 March. It will be recalled that in that resolution the Government of Cyprus was called upon, *inter alia*, to take all measures necessary to stop violence, to accept a UN Peace Force and to participate in the appointment of a mediator.



These references to the Government of Cyprus must surely be taken to refer to the joint Government of Cyprus as established under the Constitution agreed in 1960. This situation could surely not be changed just because by 1964 the Turkish Cypriot members of the government had fled their offices, claiming to be afraid for their lives. They said that they had no option but to do so. They were among the many who had to seek safety in the

Turkish Cypriot fortified enclaves when the Greek Cypriots decided, in accordance with their Akritas Plan (never denied) to overcome the Turkish Cypriots, by force if necessary, and oblige them to become a minority, not a partner, in the new state.

It is not the wording of the Resolution, but its interpretation by the UN and other states that is at stake. From the beginning the British Government's opinion was that any action to establish a UN Peace Force required the consent of both communities. On the day the Resolution was passed, the British Government delivered an *aide-memoire* to the UN Secretary-General stating that until such time as the 1960 Constitution was amended through negotiations, all parties 'had no alternative but to conduct their activities in accordance with the [1960] Constitution and with the Agreements.'²⁹ After the Resolution was made, British and Turkish protests

²⁹ Quoted in Ahmet C. Gazioğlu, 'Security Council Resolution 186 and United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), *Perceptions* March-May, 2001, Vol.VI, No.1).

continued, but came to nothing. The British High Commissioner in Cyprus at the time observed, 'Our protests will inevitably annoy the [Greek] Cyprus Government and may adversely affect British interests, particularly our bases'.³⁰

Very unfortunately for the Turkish Cypriots, the UN, and all member states, save Turkey, have since treated the purely Greek Cypriot rump government that assumed power as the government of the Republic of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots certainly believed that the 1960 Constitution had been forced upon them, but the way to proceed was, surely, to seek a change of the Constitution in the proper way.

That the political recognition of the Greek Cypriot government came about almost certainly reflected the political aims and fears of the major members of the Security Council at a time when the Cold War was still raging. In the Turkish Cypriot view this did not in any way justify the actions of the UN in allowing a purely Greek Cypriot government to come to be recognized as the government of the Republic of Cyprus. According to Denktaş the Turkish Premier, İsmet İnönü, was persuaded by the USA and the UK that the word 'government' referred to the government as established by the 1960 Constitution.³¹

There seems to be a strong case for legal review of the lack of recognition of the political rights of the Turkish Cypriots: a great injustice seems to have been done to them as joint founder members of, and participants in, the government of the Republic of Cyprus as established in the Constitution. Certainly, after 1964 the Cyprus problem got out of hand.



³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Rauf Denktaş, *Hatıralar* [Memoirs], vol.1, pp 151ff. ff. See also Claude Nicolet, *United States Policy Towards Cyprus, 1954-1974: Removing the Greek-Turkish Bone of Contention* (Mannheim and Möhnese: Bibliopolis, 2001), p.218, where he states that President Johnson persuaded İnönü to accept the Resolution. An account of the events surrounding Resolution 186 is given in my *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 60-3.

FROM THE 2012 TASG SYMPOSIUM**The constitution-making process in
Turkey:****Between law and politics**

by Ece Göztepe

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Part 1

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 after the War of Independence from 1919 to 1922, which had followed the First World War. In 1921 the *ad hoc* Parliament, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, created a revolutionary constitution to establish the foundation stone of the forthcoming state. This was a very short, pragmatic and flexible constitution to handle the organisational problems regarding the coordination of the Independence War.

After the establishment of the Republic on 29th October 1923 the newly elected Parliament was given the duty of writing a more functional constitution to comply with the structure and competence-sharing rules of an established state. The first Republican Constitution of 1924 was written in the spirit of the sovereignty of the parliament. So the main rules and principles of British parliamentarism were transformed into the Turkish constitution regardless of the lack of equivalent social structures, political customs and judicial framework. Ultimately the pluralistic democratic experience of the Turkish Republic as of 1946 ended in the military coup by the Turkish Armed Forces in May 1960. After that a Constituent Assembly was established to write a new and modern constitution designed to put more emphasis on power sharing of state organs to anticipate power concentration and misuse of competences by any state institution. If we consider the rules of the 1961 Constitution objectively, it was a democratic constitution which has systemised the fundamental rights and freedoms on the level of the strong West European democracies and has clearly regulated the competences of the legislative and executive powers as well as the judiciary under the light of the checks and balances principle. And, finally, the Constitution established the Turkish Constitutional Court as the safeguard of constitutional order protecting the supremacy of the constitution and, in so doing, preventing the state institutions from exceeding their competences.

But the radical change to a constitutional democracy has been criticized by the conservative political parties who have come to power since the 1961 Constitution came into force. Complementary to this critique the first so called post-modern military coup was staged by the armed forces in 1971. At that time, the military

forced the government to resign though the parliament was held open. Although the military kept the constitution in force, it imposed substantive revisions upon the parliament. The roots of this strategy lay in the post-1968 social movements and struggles in Turkey. According to the military the 1961 Constitution was too libertarian for the Turkish political system. So, because of the extreme political tension between political parties, social mobilisation of non-parliamentary opposition and - especially - the armed political group activities in the 1970s (and even after substantive constitutional amendments) the democratic constitution could not find a social or political correspondent to be applied. In the end, this era of democratic experience ended in a third military coup in September 1980 as well. Shortly before this the conservative and liberal political circles had already begun to search for a new constitution or a strict consolidation of the existing constitution itself. What they had in mind was not to amend the incurable constitution but to envisage a totally new one. So it was no surprise that the 1982 Constitution was largely based on the recommendations of those conservative and liberal political circles.

The five military rulers of the military coup established the National Security Council. In the words of Ergun Özbudun, the Council “blamed the excessive liberalism of the 1961 Constitution for the breakdown of law and order in the late 1970s. Consequently, they set out to make a constitution in order to strengthen the authority of the state at the expense of individual liberties”³². The constitution-making process was shared between an Advisory Board whose members were selected by the National Security Council and the Security Council itself. The five members of the Council had the final say, so that the suggestions of the Advisory Board were not binding and were often overridden by the Council. So, the unrepresentative constitution-making procedure can be seen as the main reason for the legitimacy debate on the current 1982 Constitution.

The philosophy of this Constitution could be summarized as follows: its main aim was the protection of the state against the actions of the citizens. Fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed, but indeed, the state expects that the citizens would prefer not to make use of them. So, one could say that, the aim of democratic constitutions to protect the citizens against the encroachments of the state failed completely³³.

Since the beginning of the civil regime in autumn 1983 the authoritarian character of the constitution has been criticised extensively. Indeed, since 1987 it has undergone eighteen amendments. Sometimes these were of major consequence, some were minor, so, in the end, the constitution resembled a rabbit’s warren which needs cohesive action between all constitutional provisions. Although the amendments aimed at democratization of the political system, the constitution is for the time being not a self-consistent text and the discussion regarding its legitimacy has been ongoing since 1983. On the other hand, the substantial content of the constitution has also been altered in the last 30 years through judicial interpretation by the Constitutional Court (e.g. the use and limits of emergency powers by the executive, the meaning of laicism etc.).

³² Ergun Özbudun (2012), ‘The Turkish Constitutional Court and Political Crisis’, in: Ahmet Kuru/Alfred Stepan (Eds.), *Democracy, Islam and Secularism*, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 149.

³³ See also Özbudun 2012: 149.

An overview on the constitutional history of Turkey addresses the need of the Turkish people for a democratic constitution which has been written by the people or their representatives without any pressure from military or other forces outside democratic control. But on this point we should turn to the theoretical aspects and rules of constitution-making since these build up the core of the current political and judicial discussions in Turkey.

Modern constitutionalism dates back to the 1787 Constitution of the United States of America and the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Men and of the Citizen. Both of these constitutional texts include the distinction between constituent power (*pouvoir constituant*) and constituted power (*pouvoir constitué*). Almost all written constitutions, including that of Turkey, include therefore some irrevocable articles or principles and special provisions which make the constitutional amendments more difficult than ordinary legislation. There is a great variety of constitutional provisions that regulate and combine qualified parliamentary majority principle with multiple decision-making bodies, special time delays or approval by the people with a referendum. With regard to the previously mentioned distinction between the two types of using state power, the current Turkish discussion about the ongoing constitution-making process should be analysed in light of three questions:

1. Is a constituted power allowed to make a wholly new constitution without any boundaries within the existing constitutional rules?
2. Could the constituted power abolish the irrevocable provisions of the constitution?
3. Is it possible to make a new constitution in a democratic society without a military coup or popular revolution?

It is pertinent to remember that, as of September 2011, the Turkish Grand National Assembly has undertaken to consult constitutional law experts and to ask lay persons as citizens about their wishes and opinions regarding a democratic constitution. The aim was to finish the so called data-collecting phase by the end of April and to begin in May with the writing of the new constitution. At the traditional reception on April 23rd the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Cemil Çiçek, said that they were at the end of data collecting and wished to conclude the writing process by the end of 2012. But even though the parties represented in the parliament would have agreed on the text of a new constitution, they would prefer to let the people decide through a referendum to set the new constitution in force. Now we can turn to the answers to these questions.

A constituted power uses the competences which are given to it by the existing constitution. The constitution also regulates the procedures of decision-making of this power and the limits of this competence. It means that almost all written constitutions provide a central core which should not be altered or abolished by the constituted powers whose purpose forms the constitution itself. Therefore all political parties already know, at the beginning of a political contest, what powers they have according to the constitution, what restrictions they are subject to and with which institutions they are dealing in regard to governmental activity. The political parties are not sailing uncharted waters when they join the political struggle for power. Under this aspect a constituted power can, with the exception of the irrevocable

articles (Art. 1, 2 and 3), theoretically change the whole text of the constitution. In the Turkish case the constitutional amendment rules are written in Art. 175. According to which,

- The constitutional amendment shall be proposed in writing by at least one-third of the total number of members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly,
- Proposals to amend the Constitution shall be debated twice in the Plenary Session,
- The adoption of a proposal for an amendment shall require a three-fifths majority of the total number of members of the Assembly by secret ballot,
- If a law is adopted by a three-fifths or less than two-thirds majority of the total number of votes of the Assembly, and is not referred by the President for further consideration, it shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall be submitted to referendum,
- In relation with these provisions Article 4 of the Constitution states that, the provision of Article 1 establishing the form of the state as a Republic, the provisions in Article 2 on the characteristics of the Republic, and the provision of Article 3 shall not be amended, nor shall their amendment be proposed,
- Lastly, the Constitutional Court shall examine the constitutionality of amendments in respect of their form. It means, in the words of the Constitution, ascertaining that requisite majorities were obtained for the proposal and in the ballot, and that the prohibition on debates under urgent procedure was complied with.

To be continued in *Review No 21*



A Turkish Delight

Life in an Anatolian city 9000 years ago:
the archaeological excavations at Çatalhöyük.

by Shahina Farid

Çatalhöyük Research Project Field Director 1997-2012

Many generations ago, hundreds of families called this place home. Today we are rediscovering their lives. – On site welcoming statement.

The site of Çatalhöyük is located in central Anatolia in the modern region of Konya. Today it sits in the middle of an agricultural landscape with little to indicate that roughly 9000 years ago this was the location of a thriving Neolithic settlement. The Neolithic period is defined as the time of transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle,

when people pursued food sources to survive and lived in seasonal camps or temporary rock shelters, to locating in permanent settlements where they began herding livestock and planting crops.

The story of Neolithic Çatalhöyük began near a network of pools joined by small channels. People built and lived in houses made of mud brick furnished with fixtures made of clay and plaster. They elaborated the plaster walls with murals of geometric and figurative designs and created relief sculpture of bulls heads and horns and they buried their dead below the living room floors.

The site is made up of two mounds, the East and the West. The East Neolithic mound of Çatalhöyük was a settlement inhabited for over 1400 years between 7400 to 6000 BCE. Up to eighteen stratifications of occupation have been identified as people abandoned old houses, filled them in, and built new ones on top as well as extending outwards. Through centuries of this repeated practice an artificial mound of about 21 metres at its highest point was produced from virgin soil which, by the end of the period, extended over 13.5 hectares (33.5 acres) with a population between 3000 – 8000 people at any one time. At or about the end of the occupation on the East mound the focus of settlement moved to the West mound, attributed to the Late Neolithic and following Chalcolithic period, which continued in use until 5500 BCE. The transition from Neolithic to Chalcolithic appears to have been seamless, continuing from the last activity at the top of the East mound to the West mound. The definition of this later period is based on technological changes distinguished primarily through pottery production. After the Chalcolithic period both mounds of the site were used intermittently as burial grounds. These burials span the Classical, Late Byzantine and Early Islamic periods but there was no major occupation that disturbed the Neolithic or Chalcolithic sequences.

Today we know that the site was founded on a palimpsest of different environments and types of vegetation including marshy areas and, perhaps, small shallow lakes. This richly diverse environment was bordered to the south and east by the mountain ranges of Karadağ, Karacadağ and Hasan Dağ. The relatively slow moving water channels may have provided clean drinking water, although they may well have dried up considerably in the hot summers. They supported small fish, freshwater shellfish, waterfowl and amphibians. The proximity of the river provided excellent aquatic resources; there were reeds for matting and roofing; juniper and oak timbers used in construction were brought down from the mountain ranges. The settlement's location in the middle of a marsh allowed wild plants, water birds and eggs to be exploited. Through drier periods rich alluvial clays, sand and lake marl clay could be extracted from the settlement's edges to be used as building material.

Each house was constructed with its own set of four walls built side by side against neighbouring structures, creating tightly clustered buildings. There were no ground level access points and no streets or alleyways have yet been identified between houses. People moved around at roof level, which may have been at differing heights and traversed by a series of steps and small ladders. Thus the roofscape may well have been a focus of daily life along with activities inside the buildings. Access into a house was by ladder from an opening through the roof located against the south wall. Between groups of houses were open areas where domestic waste accumulated. It is from these deposits that the wealth of the daily lives of the Neolithic population is learnt through their refuse. Inside the houses was an array of

evidence of everyday life 9000 years ago and evidence of daily activities and household production within a highly organised configuration of the 'furniture'. Shallow platforms, benches, defined cooking areas and clay storage bins were arranged into zones of activities that dictated the use of space in a house plan that was repeated site wide and through all temporal sequences excavated to date.

Different styles of cooking and food preparation were indicated by the presence of both ovens and hearths and baked clay balls found in large quantities were used as 'pot-boilers' in cooking. Pottery vessels appear not to have been used for cooking until midway through the sequence when a gradual change in technology created a stronger fabric that was then followed by an increase in the use of pottery. Other vessels were made of wood and basketry. There were different types of stone and worked bone tools, obsidian and flint all indicative of numerous and diverse activities. Clay and stone figurines depicting animals, gender-less and human figures, including the iconic 'mother goddess' figurines: robust representations of fecundity, which have attracted goddess groups from around the world to visit the site as a place of homage. Items of personal adornment found include beautifully worked, highly crafted bone and stone beads, rings and pendants.

Perhaps one of the most compelling aspects of the site is that the dead were buried below the floors of the houses. Whilst this could reflect a prosaic custom it seems likely to reflect continuity in kin lineage, which can also be identified in other aspects of practices. Some houses had over 60 burials and others as few as two or three, or even none at all, suggesting that some houses may have been designated 'kin-ship' houses where most of a kin-group was buried. The majority of human burials were primary interments bound by woven reeds or matting into tightly crouched positions. Babies were often buried in baskets made of reeds. Most burials were disturbed due to the repeated use of the same burial location; each time a grave was cut it disturbed the previously buried body parts and it did not seem to matter that on occasion a stray armbone would be kicked into the corner of the room and left there. In general grave goods were not the norm but when they are found there maybe a bone ring or pendant, stone and bone bead necklaces or anklets. Sometimes coloured pigment of blue, red or green is found held in a shell container and often with small finely crafted bone spatula. A few skeletons have even been found with removed skulls, which can be linked to the skull cult that is widespread in Anatolia and the Levant in the Pre-pottery Neolithic periods.

The site however, is possibly best known for its concentration of art in the form of wall paintings, relief sculpture and elaborate installations embellished with animal parts. The most dominant of these are wild auroch bucrania and horncores set in the sides of benches and pedestals. Some of the wall paintings are abstract compositions of geometric patterns in red and black on the white background of the plastered walls, or designs of composite handprints. All colours identified at Çatalhöyük to date are mineral based. Others are narrative including hunting scenes with small human figures in opposition with oversized wild animals. It is the complex narrative nature of the art that gives Çatalhöyük a special significance even today. After the exciting discovery of parallel sites in South Eastern Anatolia the Çatalhöyük material remains the densest concentration of symbolism found so far in the Eastern Mediterranean dating from this time.

Neolithic Çatalhöyük was first discovered in the late 1950s and excavated by James Mellaart between 1961 and 1965. Since 1993 an international team of archaeologists, led by Ian Hodder, has been carrying out new excavations and research, in order to shed more light on the people that inhabited the site. The project works at the site under the auspices of the British Institute at Ankara with permission and support of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The project is indebted to its donors and collaborators. The main sponsors of the project are Yapı Kredi and Boeing. Other sponsors are Shell, Hedef Alliance and Konya Şeker.

Fig 1. A reconstruction of the settlement during the spring floods. Much of the environment reconstruction relies on the ecofacts of carbonised seed and plant remains.



Fig 2. Excavations of mudbrick houses through time. The settlement grew as a steady development of house over house without any serious breaks or disturbances. But, despite being a highly organized settlement, there is as yet no evidence of central administration or social hierarchy.

Fig 3. Reconstruction of the internal fixtures and fittings of a 9000 year old mudbrick house.



Reviving Alevi Identity in the AKP Years: An Ethnographic Perspective

by Caroline Tee

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The issue of Alevi identity came to public attention in Turkey around the time of the so-called 'Alevi revival' in the late 1980s. Since then, a sizeable element within the community has been involved in reviving and reformulating Alevi heritage and traditions, and attempting to define Alevilik to the outside world. Religious, cultural and socio-political elements are all playing an important part in this modern 'Alevi movement', and its major goal is the official recognition of Alevilik by the Turkish state.³⁴ This recognition has been hitherto unforthcoming. Today, in the increasingly hegemonic political and religious landscape of the AKP era, the Alevis appear to be faced with a major challenge.

A popular stereotype associated with the Alevis, derived from their turbulent relationship with Istanbul during the Ottoman era, is one of protest and the subversion of authority. This is exemplified by the iconic image of the folk poet Pir Sultan Abdal, which, *saz* raised aloft in defiance, is easily recognizable in Turkey as an Alevi symbol. There are, however, voices within the modern Alevi movement that defy this stereotype of rebellion, and reflect a relatively conciliatory approach both to engagement with the institutions of state authority and to majority discourses on religion and national belonging. This paper explores the case of one such Alevi group, the Derviş Cemal Ocak from Erzincan, through a brief ethnography of its rural origins as well as the revival activities in which it is engaged in the present day.

National Alevi Institutions: the Cem Vakfı discourse

Revival activities in the group are focusing on the restoration of certain sacred sites (tombs of ancestral saints), and an interest in reformulated religious ritual. Through these activities, the group is emphasizing aspects of its Turkish cultural and ethnic origins as well as its sense of religious identity as (Alevi) Muslims. In both of these aspects, the direction of the group's revival reflects the interpretation of Alevilik espoused by one of the major institutional voices of the Alevis in Turkey, the Istanbul-based Cem Vakfı.

There is some debate within the Alevi community on the issue of Alevilik's inclusion within Islam. The Cem Vakfı's perspective is that Alevilik is indeed an Islamic tradition. It presents it as a kind of synthesis of Islam and Turkish culture, based on the religious authority of the Qur'an as well as the cultural heritage of Turkic saints such as Hacı Bektaş Veli and Ahmet Yesevi. The Cem Vakfı is open to dialogue with

³⁴ An important part of the modern Alevi movement is taking place amongst the diaspora community in Germany. The German movement is, however, shaped by rather different political and societal influences, and it is with the movement in Turkey that this paper is concerned.

the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA), and seeks recognition and provision for Alevilik as a valid interpretation of Islam alongside the Sunni one. It is noticeably more conciliatory on the subjects of ethnic as well as religious identity than another major national institutional Alevi voice, the Alevi-Bektaşî Federation. The Federation's discourse is generally more overtly politicized: it refuses to engage with the DRA, and demands its abolition on the grounds that its existence violates the principle of secularism. It also tends to emphasize the pre-Islamic heritage of Alevilik, as well as the mosaic of ethnicities and linguistic traditions (Kurdish and Zaza, as well as Turkish) that are represented within the Alevi community.

The affinity of the Derviş Cemal Ocak with the Cem Vakfı discourse seems to be predicated by its *ocak* identity, which provides both religious legitimization according to an Islamic idiom, as well as the claim to Turkic origins and ethnicity.³⁵ The term *ocak* denotes, in Alevilik, an extended family of religious leaders (*dedes*) who claim descent down a sacred lineage. A network of *ocaks* constituted the backbone of traditional, Anatolian Alevi society, which was organized according to the affiliation of non-sacred, follower lineages to particular *dedes*. The Derviş Cemal Ocak takes its name from a 15th century Anatolian holy man, Seyyid Derviş Cemal, and its members trace their descent through him to a 13th century companion of the Turkic saint Hacı Bektaş Veli, called Seyyid Cemal Sultan, and before him to the Prophet Muhammad.³⁶

Homeland of the Derviş Cemal Ocak in Erzincan

Until the onset of mass migration, which began in around 1960 and continued until the 1990s, the *ocak* was concentrated around its spiritual and geographical centre, the village of Zurun – renamed Çayıryazı in the Republican era but still referred to within the *ocak* by its Ottoman name. Zurun is located high in the remote mountains of southeastern Erzincan, near to the border with Tunceli. It is at the centre of a cluster of six villages, known as the Tanyeri villages, which were all traditionally inhabited by Zaza-speaking, Derviş Cemal *dedes*.³⁷ Follower Alevi *dedes* have historically been spread across the wider region. *Dedes* would travel from Zurun and the surrounding villages to run *cem* ceremonies for followers, and to provide the spiritual, moral as well as judicial leadership that was characteristic of the traditional institution of *dedelik*.

³⁵ The Cem Vakfı's appeal to Alevi *ocak* background is widely recognized amongst Alevi in Turkey.

³⁶ This narrative of sacred descent is found in varying forms in all the Alevi *ocaks*. It is based on the supposed intermarriage of Turkic saints – the Horasan Erenleri, or 'enlightened one of Khorasan' - with the descendants of Muhammad through Ali as the Turkic tribes migrated westwards from Central Asia into Anatolia. The Alevi *ocaks*, therefore combine Turkish cultural characteristics with the sanctity of descent from the Prophet.

³⁷ Zaza is a northwestern Iranian language with a concentration of speakers in Tunceli. Although it has been influenced by its proximity to Kurmanji Kurdish, it is genealogically closer to Gurani and the Iranian Adhari dialect. Speaking Zaza is not considered by the *ocak* to be an indication of non-Turkish ethnicity; rather, it is said that the *ocak*'s ancestors pragmatically adopted the local language after migrating into eastern Anatolia.

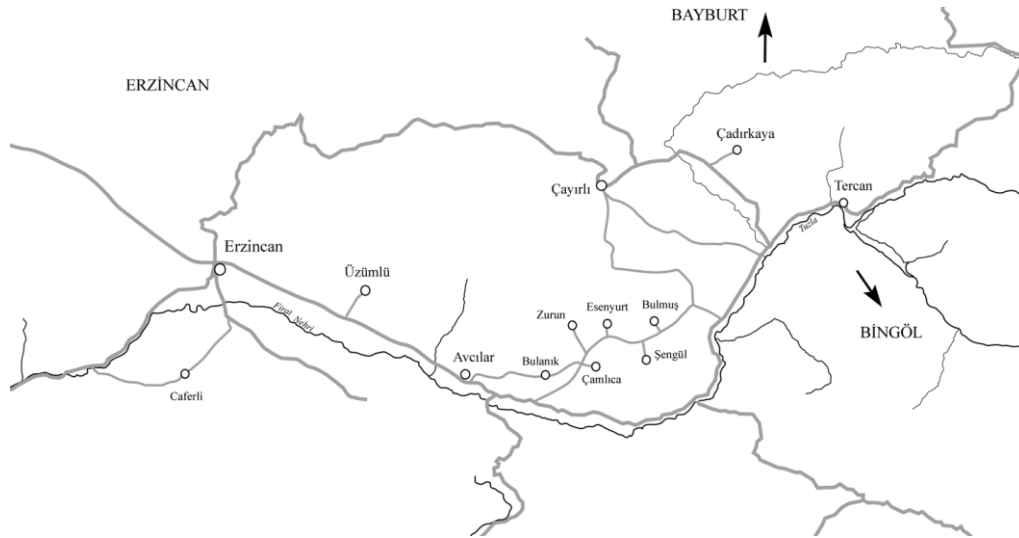


Fig. 1: Map showing distribution of the Tanyeri villages in Erzincan province.

Zurun is the so-called *serçeşme*, or source, of the *ocak*, a term which demarcates it as the place where charismatic spiritual authority is located. Since its settlement, probably in around the 16th century, it has been the home of the Şeyh Dede, the head of a hierarchy of *dedes* within the *ocak*, believed to be a direct descendant of Derviş Cemal and possessor of *keramet*, or the ability to perform miraculous acts. The *tekke* (lodge) of the Şeyh Dede in Zurun, which had fallen derelict following migration, was restored and converted into a modern *cemevi*³⁸ in 2000, a project which was the first revival activity to take place within the *ocak*. Villagers who return to the Erzincan homeland as summer visitors from their new, urban locations can now take part in the central Alevi ritual, the *cem* ceremony, at the Zurun *cemevi*.



Fig. 2: the cemevi at Zurun.

³⁸ Alevi meeting house. *Cemevis* did not feature significantly in pre-revival Alevilik, and are largely a feature of the modern movement.

Istanbul-based Revival Activities

A great number of Dervis Cemal Ocak people now live in Istanbul, and it is here that the *ocak* has recently been re-grouping.³⁹ In February 2010, a large-scale *cem* ceremony was held at Bağcılar Cemevi in Istanbul, to which all members and followers of the *ocak* were invited to attend. This was the first *cem* of the *ocak* in its new, urban setting, and its strong attendance figure (over five hundred people) revealed a popular desire for the *ocak* to reclaim and revive its religious traditions and practices. Shortly afterwards, an official *ocak* organization (*dernek*) was established to co-ordinate and oversee future revival activities. Its title was 'The Association for Solidarity, Proliferation and Protection of Seyyid Cemal Sultan Culture'; it was upgraded in 2012 to the status of pious trust (*vakıf*).

This pious trust, which is based in Istanbul, is currently directing the *ocak's* revival activities. Besides the resurrected *cem* ritual (the February *cem* in Istanbul has since become an annual event), it has also been overseeing the restoration of other sacred sites besides the one at Zurun. The most significant of these, which has lately become the focus of the *ocak's* activity and financial resources, is the tomb of Seyyid Cemal Sultan, 13th-century companion of Hacı Bektaş Veli and earliest *ocak* ancestor in Anatolia, in the western province of Afyonkarahisar.

The Tomb of Seyyid Cemal Sultan

This tomb did not play an important part in the religious life of the *ocak* during the rural era, and was rediscovered only about three years ago. There is currently an extensive *ocak* project underway to renovate and develop the site. Building work began in the summer of 2011 (and is on-going in 2012) to structurally overhaul the existing buildings, which include the tomb itself as well as an outhouse, as well as to build a *cemevi*, a guesthouse and an *aşevi* (kitchen) for the preparation of sacrificial food when the *ocak* is gathered together there.

The tomb has also become the site of an annual *ocak* festival, the Seyyid Cemal Sultan Anma Töreni, or memorial ceremony. The first such event took place in May 2009, and has happened every year since. When I attended it, in May 2010, there were upwards of 500 people there, most of whom had come from Istanbul. The festival was dominated by religious and cultural elements. It was, first and foremost, an organized *ziyaret*, or small-scale pilgrimage, to the tomb of Seyyid Cemal Sultan. Most people who attended visited the tomb to offer prayers there. There was also a large *kurban*, or sacrifice, carried out. Sheep were slaughtered to this end, and a communal meal of sacrificial food was prepared and consumed together. The sacrifice would normally take place alongside a *cem* ceremony, and indeed, the *ocak* plans to run a *cem* at the annual festival as soon as the building work is completed and there is a suitable space to do so.

The cultural aspects of the festival included the singing of Alevi poetry to *saz* accompaniment by various *aşiks*, and the performance of the *sema*, the rotational dance performed in the *cem*. This was carried out by a youth-group from a *cemevi*

³⁹ Many also live in Germany, and some in other Western European countries. Others live in different cities in the west of Turkey, namely Izmir and Antalya, but of those who have relocated within Turkey the majority have gone to Istanbul.

in Istanbul, who, as is common within the Alevi movement today, take regular evening classes in dancing the *sema*. For the performance, they wore the traditional Anatolian folk costume often adopted by such groups, since the *sema* began to be performed publically in the Alevi revival.



Fig. 3: Seyyid Cemal Sultan Memorial Ceremony in Afyon, May, 2010.

The tomb of Seyyid Cemal Sultan is attracting a degree of interest that has meant the focus of contemporary *ocak* activity, rather than being in the Erzincan homeland of Zurun, is instead hundreds of miles away in western Turkey. The appeal of the Afyon site can be understood accordingly: firstly, it emphasizes the *ocak*'s direct association with Hacı Bektaş Veli and the western Bektaşî Order, something which brings it to a relatively 'central' position both religiously and politically. (The Bektaşî Order represents in many ways a more conciliatory face of Alevilik that was historically much closer to the Sublime Porte). This association distances the Derviş Cemal Ocak from the comparatively rebellious and independent Kurdish tribes in the east. Secondly, the narrative of Seyyid Cemal Sultan that is represented by the tomb site embeds the origins of the Derviş Cemal Ocak in Turkish history and culture. This situates the group centrally in terms of its claim to ethnic identification with the 'official' Turkishness of the Republic, and distances it from the thorny issue of Kurdish or Zaza ethnicity.

Concluding Remarks

The case of the Derviş Cemal Ocak presents us with evidence that Alevis are finding grounds for engagement with powerful, semi-official narratives surrounding religious and cultural identity in Turkey today. The *ocak* is still rejecting and subverting the Sunni interpretation of Islam, and in that sense defining itself according to the age-old juxtaposition of the 'Sunni other'. It is also, however, finding it perhaps expedient to emphasize those aspects of its corporate identity that offer it the potential for engagement with that 'other'. For the Derviş Cemal Ocak, it is largely its *dede* heritage that is making this possible.

The prospects for Alevis of Kurdish or Zaza ethnicity who are also of follower lineage to approach similarly central ground, religiously and politically, seem relatively bleak. They are, comparatively, quite alienated from the twin criteria of Turkish ethnicity and religious legitimization within the parameters of Islam that dominate the public

discourse. Yet it also remains to be seen whether the Alevis sympathetic to the Cem Vakfı discourse, embodied here by the Derviş Cemal Ocak, will prove any more effective in achieving the demand for official recognition of Alevilik than their politically more vociferous brethren.



NEZİHE MERİÇ (1925-2009)

THE IRREPRESSIBLE NARRATOR (Part I)

by Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy

Writer and Translator

Nezihe Meriç, a writer whose stories made an enduring contribution to modern Turkish literature, passed away on August 18, 2009. The articles written by her colleagues and friends in literary magazines and newspapers after she died were testaments to her impressive writing career which had lasted almost for six decades. Her quest for authenticity, her desire to express the thoughts and feelings of a young woman born after Turkey became a republic, were the motivating forces of her creativity. She was always defined as the first Turkish woman writer born after the Republic. She herself was amused by this description and felt that such statements had to be supported by analysis and interpretation of the role bestowed on her. Yet it is worthwhile to ponder on the meaning of this description. This implies an awareness of the historic period that was crucial for the emancipation of Turkish women.

By the time Nezihe Meriç was publishing her first short stories in the 1950s, women in Turkey had won their voting rights. Women entered all the professions hitherto closed to them. However, these women were a minority; the majority of Turkish people still lived in rural areas and was largely illiterate. In many of her early short stories, Nezihe Meriç's characters were young women like herself, emancipated and free to appear in the public sphere, yet at the same time facing the hostilities of the outside world not quite ready for the changes. The inheritance of the patriarchal past had not disappeared. Her themes dealt with the plight of women in their domestic lives, the emergence of male-female friendships, frankness in sexuality, the price of non-conformism in society, poetic descriptions of beauties of nature in not yet fully urbanized corners of the cities and an almost utopian yearning for a simple life. She said that every time she went outside she would have at least ten stories to write when she was back home. Her stories were told in an idiomatic everyday Turkish. She had an impeccable ear for the rhythms of colloquial Turkish, particularly the speech of women she represented in her work.

Perhaps this language is what Julia Pardoe, a British travel writer, had heard when she arrived in Istanbul in December 1835. As she stood on the deck of her ship and gazed at the busy Istanbul harbor, she saw women wearing the *yashmak*, which covers all the face except the eyes, huddled together traveling in caiques and chatting in harmonious Turkish that was like music in their mouths.⁴⁰ This was the language that was passed orally from generation to generation.

Nezihe Meriç believed that each generation lived its own fate. This was not a passive belief but the thoughts and feelings of an active woman witnessing the tremendous changes in the society she was living in and writing about it to save it from oblivion. In the 1950's Turkey was going through unprecedented changes due to industrialization and urbanization. In some of her stories she narrated the lives of the people who migrated to the cities from the villages.

In her book of memoirs, *Çavlanın İçinde Sessizce* (Inside the Waterfall, Silently, 2004), she expresses a kind of reluctance to write a memoir, but the reader gets wonderful glimpses of her life and of her writing career. Nezihe Meriç was born in 1925 in Gemlik, a small town on the shores of the Marmara Sea. She spent her childhood in small towns of Turkey where her civil engineer father, Halis Bey, worked on road-building projects in the early years of the republic. Vast spaces of these Anatolian towns, from the snowbound eastern town of Karaköse to Kırşehir and to Eskişehir, made indelible impressions on her young mind. In Karaköse in winter nights they were telling stories about bandits, all the roads were covered with snow and cow dung was used as heating fuel. In all these towns she attended public schools. She was able to go to a bookstore and buy a book for the first time in her life when she was a secondary school student in the larger city of Eskişehir. She also saw her first movies there and became acquainted with the radio. Her father was an educated man and wherever they went, two magic trunks containing his books, musical instruments and paints and brushes accompanied them. Her mother, Muattar Hanım, provided all the domestic comforts in the difficult conditions that existed in the provincial towns of Turkey. But this was a shared fate. They were not alone and there was a sense of solidarity and good neighborly feeling. These experiences provided the cultural stimulation and the background necessary for her future career as a writer.

After high school Nezihe Meriç went to Istanbul where she entered the University, studying Turkish literature and philosophy for two years but, somewhat dissatisfied, she abandoned her studies without getting a degree. Perhaps she did not want to delay getting down to her writing adventure. In Istanbul she could meet young men and women of her generation who, like her, had limited means to sustain themselves but were determined to find their way in the field of arts and literature. She studied music and worked as a music teacher for eight years in a primary school in Heybeliada, a beautiful island in the Marmara Sea. She was twenty years old when she wrote her first short story 'Ümit' (Hope), using a pen name. This story was selected among other contestants and published in the magazine *Istanbul*. She also

⁴⁰ *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, Volume I (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1837), p.15

had eight short stories published in 1951 in a special issue of the magazine *Seçilmiş Hikâyeler* (Selected Short Stories).

Nezihe Meriç married writer-editor Salim Şengil in 1956. They published magazines and books. In 1968 she was the editor of the literature magazine *Dost* (Friend). She was arrested for publishing the poems of Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963). She was tried and sentenced to one and a half years in prison. She managed not to surrender and lived clandestinely for many years with her young daughter until the general amnesty of 1974. These were the years of anxiety that curtailed her creativity.

Her first two short story collections *Bozbulanık* (Murky Affairs, 1952), with 17 stories and *Topal Koşma* (Lame Running, 1956), with 10 stories, represent the voices of young women like herself relentlessly searching for answers about the place of modern women in a changing society. This quest was also taken up independently by other women writers who were born between 1929 and 1938. Here we can mention Adalet Ağaoğlu, Sevim Burak, Leylâ Erbil, Selçuk Baran, Sevgi Soysal, Fûruzan, Ayla Kutlu and the poet Gülten Akin. They were all educated in the public schools of the republic in the new Latin alphabet. Women writers born in the 1940's and the following decades added to an unprecedented efflorescence of women's contribution to modern Turkish literature. Equality of the sexes had finally arrived in literature, if not in life.

In the long history of the Ottoman Empire there were only a few women poets who were from the elite class. Here we are talking about six hundred years of history when even many of the Ottoman Sultans wrote poems! Poet, novelist and essayist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) in his seminal book *The History of Nineteenth Century Turkish Literature* speaks about the importance of women's role in society and in the development of modern literature. He mentions the fact that the Palace ceremonies were without women (p. 11). Many Palace women were foreigners and could not contribute to the development of the language (pp. 19-20). And finally what he calls the absence of male-female relationships (p. 31), by which he might have meant the strict separation of the sexes in Ottoman society, was among the factors that curtailed the earlier development of a Western type of fiction which could only start towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴¹

It was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that the formidable Turkish woman writer Halide Edib (1884-1964), who was also a political activist and a fervent participant in the nationalist struggle (1919-1922), took her place among the male writers such as Hüseyin Rahmi, Halit Ziya, Mehmet Rauf and Yakup Kadri who were creating their first works in the field of fiction. Her contribution to the development of Turkish literature entering into its modern phase is multifaceted both in her use of subject matter and the introduction of an entirely new type of women characters. She created two heroines in her novels *Ateşten Gömlek* (*Shirt of Flame* -1922) and *Vurun Kahpeye* (*Strike the Whore* - 1926) who were dedicated to the national struggle for the independence of Turkey. She also created leading women characters in the novels *Handan* (1912) and *Kalb Ağrısı* (*The Heartache* - 1924). In these two novels, the treatment of the inner lives of the women protagonists and their resistance to

⁴¹ Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (first ed. 1949). Çağlayan Kitabevi, İstanbul.

accepted norms was truly unprecedented. The great sexual attraction and unconsummated love affair between Major Hasan and strong-willed heroine Zeyno in *The Heartache* was a daring theme for its time. Their quail hunting expeditions in the suburbs of Istanbul were the signs of Halide Edib's attributing of a certain degree of androgyny to her female characters. However, these women came from the upper classes and their life experiences were different from those of the majority of Turkish women who lived even in a large city like Istanbul.

As the western style of fiction writing became an important part of Turkish literature in the first decades of the twentieth century, several women writers started writing romance novels. They were serialized in newspapers and published and became popular. However, a more multi-dimensional and socially critical approach, as in the works of Nezihe Meriç and her contemporaries, could only take place after a few decades of modernization and secularization both in life and in literature.

In an in-depth interview Nezihe Meriç gave to Asım Bezirci in 1983, she said: "I have always loved to live among people – streets, avenues, bazaars, markets, ferries, buses, theaters and movie houses... I have always looked around, observed, thought about, recreated and then narrated. The inner worlds of people always fascinated me. This approach contained all facets and aspects of realities of what is called life. And all this made me feel very excited."⁴² This is the affirmation of the presence of the modern Turkish woman in the public sphere.

In her first book of short stories, *Boz Bulanık* (Murky Affairs, 1952), all the seventeen stories involve ordinary people living their everyday lives and interacting with people around them. In the story 'Umut Fakirin Ekmeği' (Hope is the Bread of the Poor, 1950) a young woman is walking on an endless dusty road on a hot summer day to visit her husband in a hospital. She feels faint and squats under a tree. An old lemonade seller nearby sees her and offers her a glass of lemonade. They start talking and exchange their life stories. The description of a hot summer day and the sympathetic attitude of the old man trying to help this woman to find a job, in perfectly rendered Istanbul Turkish, is a gem of narration disclosing the deep humanity of its characters. In the same collection the story 'Özsu' (Lifeblood) is narrated by a young woman recovering from an illness resembling a depression. The main character is Hayriye, the wife of a working class man, who brings happiness, order and beauty to a street where the narrator lives in a run-down neighborhood of Istanbul. She is a woman who loves life and helps all her neighbors. But her presence is not tolerated by her landlord, who evicts the couple and their young daughter. However, the magical change she managed to bring into the street lives on.

Nezihe Meriç takes up her heroine Hayriye again in a two-act play *Sular Aydınlanıyordu* (The Waters Were Illuminated, 1969). She is the central character, but does not appear on the stage. Eight women of different ages, from a teen-age

⁴² Asım Bezirci, *Nezihe Meriç*, Monografi, Evrensel Basım Yayın, Temmuz 1999, p. 61.

An invaluable book on Nezihe Meriç's career, published posthumously, includes articles by critics about her work until the 1980's. Asım Bezirci, a critic, essayist and translator, was among the 33 victims of the Madımak Hotel fire of 1993 in Sivas which was set up by fanatic reactionaries to kill a group of intellectuals and artists meeting there.

girl to an elderly woman who knew Hayriye, express their opinions about her - some for, some against – which create the tensions in the play and provide the clues to their characters. All the eight roles were played by one actress.

In *Topal Koşma* (Lame Running) there are ten stories, all called ‘Susuz’ (which could be translated as thirsty or desirous) whose characters are young people (teachers, artists, professionals) caught in clashing values of society. The story ‘Thirsty VII’ is a perfect example of absurd situations that a young woman, Meli, a teacher, experiences. She lives alone. One evening a male friend, Ahmet, a young lawyer, drops in. He is ill with high temperature. Meli’s next door neighbor Sofiya, a Greek woman who runs a small dry-cleaning shop, happens to walk in and take charge of the sick man by preparing an old-fashioned hot toddy with cognac and quinine and putting him in the young woman’s bed. The two women sip the left-over cognac. They are raided by the police who were after the young lawyer and are taken to the police station for being caught in this “morally unacceptable” situation. The lawyer is arrested and the women are released. The reputation of the young teacher will be ruined. Her nouveau-riche cousin and his wife who happen to drop by are shocked. They invite Meli to their tastelessly furnished villa to discuss her improper behavior. The young woman is determined to stand up for her principles. Her image as a free woman is drawn perfectly by Nezihe Meriç. She is dressed in a simple linen skirt and a blouse with rolled-up sleeves, wearing sandals on her bare feet. Her simplicity contrasts with the rich wife’s attire. She is unruffled. She feels she can kick this villa and its furniture with her sandaled foot. She is defying both restricting traditions and the petit-bourgeois hypocrisy. But above all the free young woman shocks her cousin and his wife by expressing her opinions on virginity, love and marriage – by demystifying the accepted values including a run-of-the-mill concept of romantic love. She even dares to utter the word abortion. Although the symbols she defends represent her defiance more than her actual life, their shock value is great.

Nezihe Meriç’s themes of sexual freedom were further explored in her third short story collection *Menekşeli Bilinç* (Minding the Violets, 1965): the stories in this collection emphasize the lack of awareness among women in perceiving their plight. Although they are educated and earn a living, they are still tied to old customs. In the story ‘Minding the Violets’ a young girl leaves her family’s house and declares that, “I will not join the caravan of dead girls,” as her older sister did.

Nezihe Meriç’ first novel, *Korsan Çıkmazı* (Pirates Alley, 1961), won the Turkish Language Society’s prize for novel in 1962. In it two young girls Meli and Berni, whose families live in the eastern provinces of Turkey, are sent to Istanbul to live with an elderly couple to complete their education. With the help of this couple they become more sophisticated in the ways of the world. They are also initiated into the world of arts, especially Western music. They both acquire university education. Meli becomes a literature teacher. Berni studies music. Both married, they live in the same building on a street called Pirates Alley. The novel contains two parallel narrations. The first starts with Meli meeting her old friend Ahmet (the lawyer who was arrested) at a bus stop. They decide to go to an outdoor restaurant where Meli’s husband joins them later. The waiter who had settled Meli and Ahmet in a cozy corner of the restaurant is taken aback because he thought they were lovers. Here Nezihe Meriç hints at the idea of friendship between men and women. After they leave the restaurant Meli and her husband decide to walk home and are attacked by

a gang of rowdies in the dark streets of Istanbul. There is a hilarious encounter with the police and the story ends in the early hours of the morning when they reach home. The parallel text printed in italics and placed alternatively with the actual story involves the lives of Meli and Berni from childhood on as stream of consciousness, going inward, questioning the rules of society restricting freedom. The short story 'Thirsty VII' is incorporated into the text. There is an attempt to make sense of the world, to find something to hold onto which seems to be elusive.

All the books mentioned above give a portrait of Turkish society in the 1950's and 1960's, not only in terms of social customs but also in perfectly delineated life styles, houses, furniture, clothes, food, etc., that provide the realistic aspects of Nezihe Meriç's story telling.

To be continued in *Review No 21*

Poetry

Gülay Yurdal Michaels, Poet and Translator

YAZGÜNÜ

Şeytanı
Kendi oyununda bozguna
Uğratmak istedim -
Elde var bir.

Özele ilişkin soru
Sormadan
Ve ıslak koruklarını Rumeli'nin
Yormadan
Elde var iki zaman içinde
Denizdeki kumu aşar.

Umut tükenmedi
Yaşadığımca...

Dört güvercinli bahçede
Böyle ötüşüldü

Ve minikleri de geldi
Yemeğe
Ve rakı içenleri
İtidal ile
Kovmadan.

SUMMERDAY

I wanted to repel
Satan
In his own game -
With one at hand.

Without asking
Personal questions
And without tiring out
The wet grapes of Thrace
With two at hand in time
Goes beyond sand-on-sea.

Hope never ended
As long as I live...

This was sung so In the garden
With four wood pigeons.

And the wee ones
Came to eat
And not to expel
The raki drinkers
With moderatio



UNIVERSITIES CHALLENGED

by David Barchard

Writer and Journalist

These days universities in Turkey are often literally part of the landscape. Drive through any modest Anatolian town, even ones that in the UK would be too small to aspire to have an institution of tertiary education, and you will see, usually on the outskirts, one or more blocks of buildings with a notice board outside proclaiming them to be the faculty offshoot of the local provincial university. The worldwide expansion of higher education has come to Turkey and it is accelerating. As a World Bank report puts it, “The country is looking to expand from an elite education system with low participation to a mass system with much higher access and participation and a greater diversity of educational programs and institutions.”*

In 2005, according to this report, Turkey had 77 universities, of which 53 were state-owned and 24 privately-owned. Five years later according to YÖK, the Ankara-based Higher Education Board, there had been a striking increase, with 79 state universities and 49 private ones and 3 special training institutions. Many of the new ones are rumoured to have affiliations with various faith communities though, if so, this fact is not, at least as yet, publicly acknowledged.



The impact of this expansion can be seen everywhere. An Istanbul student on a bus told me he was studying in – wait for it – Ahlat University, north of Lake Van. That seemed to be the short straw as far as university places are concerned. He must have done badly in the national grading examination, held each spring, to select university intake. For the top hundred Turkish students, the world is their oyster, and they move to good universities with comfortable scholarships. Indeed the top 5,000 usually get scholarships if they go to one of the new universities.

These are the ‘Foundation Universities’, a new category of fee-paying schools, ‘private but not for profit’, which has sprung up alongside the traditional state universities. Scholarship winners aside, students at these new schools pay around US\$15,000 a year – a figure close to the tuition charges now levied by many British universities. State universities have found it harder to introduce realistic fees. Many of their intake are students from families with very low incomes who struggle even to pay the low fees currently charged, so higher fees could imply gross social injustice. Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan recently announced the scrapping of the *harç* (tuition fees in the state universities). I think he was right to do so but what financial model can be applied instead remains to be seen. Some state maintenance scholarships are available for students with low incomes, but they offer pathetically inadequate amounts of money and students have only to fail one exam – something it is very hard indeed not to do at least occasionally given the plethora of tests – to lose the award.

The first (and probably still the best) private ‘Foundation University’ was Bilkent, founded in the 1980s by the late Ihsan Doğramacı, a titan of the Ankara scene, who

also set up Hacettepe University and the country's Higher Education Council. Variants on his model have multiplied across the country. A provincial coastal town like, Mersin, with a million inhabitants now has three universities – two of them recently founded, private and as yet with tiny student numbers. The wave of new private universities follows the boom in the Turkish economy over the last ten years. There seem to be plenty of families who can afford to pay \$15,000 a year to educate their children. But many of the newer and smaller universities appear to be financially insecure and only time can tell how they will do in the next big economic downturn.

Meanwhile higher education has rolled out to parts of society where all formal education was unknown a few generations back. Even in Turkish villages these days you can hear remarks from young people about how they might do postgraduate degrees, while young shop assistants in provincial towns take time off in the afternoons to attend classes at the local university, usually working for a two year diploma. Places in these institutions seem to be available more or less for the asking.

So far this change in the geography of higher education has produced – as it was intended to do – a noticeable improvement in the availability of applied engineering and technological skills, even down to quite humble social levels. Struck by the detailed grasp of his subject (far in excess of his British counterparts), possessed by a man recently mending my fridge, I asked him where he had been educated, and he was indeed a graduate of a technical vocational school and had gone on to other course work subsequently. On the other hand it is hard to detect anything other than a decline in the general level of core skills derived from the humanities even in the best metropolitan universities.

The standard of written Turkish in academic institutions seems to have slipped badly behind what was acceptable in late Ottoman and early Republican times. It shows most clearly in the written language. Books and articles these days are almost always written in an opaque Turkish of syntactically complex and repetitive sentences with a limited vocabulary which shows much awareness of current fashions and vogues, but none of style or literature. History too is largely a *terra incognita*: compare history articles in Wikipedia, the Turkish on-line encyclopaedia, with those in its English-language counterpart. Historical awareness is mainly confined to a few key events, notably 1071, 1453, and the War of Independence, and even good biography is rare. This reflects the low prestige of history and the humanities compared to International Relations. After engineering (universally the top subject), it is 'business administration' which seems to get the cream of the student intake, especially in the elite universities.

Yet despite the expansion, Turkey still lags behind almost all other OECD countries in its provision of higher education: in 2009 for example, according to the OECD figures, the UK with around 7.5 million people aged 18-24 turned out 538,000 graduates, compared to 303,000 in Turkey (with 6.2 million people aged from 18-24.) This might matter less if the quality of instruction and education were higher. However the model of instruction is very much that of bureaucratic training via rote learning. Emphasis is very much on the class room, lecturing and memorisation, rather than the library and reading and critical thinking and originality.

A few leading institutions, but very few – Boğaziçi, METU, and Bilkent – have world class libraries and a comprehensive range of on-line library services such as JSTOR to match. In many other libraries facilities seem to be vestigial and online facilities very limited. “Students don’t need libraries because they don’t get time to read more than is served up to them by their instructors during course work,” said a foreign instructor in an Ankara university. He was only too right. Some students may spend up to 35 hours a week in classes. With more than 20 hours of classes, students hardly have time to do much book reading anyhow. When I explained that, as an undergraduate, I used to read perhaps a dozen books and articles each week and that I only did one or two subjects at a time, students would look puzzled, even disbelieving. The assumption seems to be that where hours of classes are concerned, massive overloading means better. At some universities there are even classes at the weekend, and one luckless student at a private university which I have not mentioned here – told me – I think truthfully – that he and his friends regularly had to attend classes at 8 p.m. on Sundays. In fairness to that particular university, it needs to be said that these classes were intended to compensate for time lost on sandwich courses, internships, and the like. But one wonders how a generation raised on practices like that will turn out. The effect of long hours on ambitious students who are high ‘B’s struggling to break through into being ‘A’s is often counterproductive. They take on one course or even two too many to boost their average – and then succumb to overwork and tiredness.

To keep the pressure up, most universities – as in some other Mediterranean countries – resort to constant tests and examinations. So students work unfortunately usually through the small hours, often rising at midday or in the afternoon. This means that the best students are also sometimes the drowsiest ones too. One student in my class had to be formally warned, that if he sank into a catatonic slumber again during a lesson, I would summon medical attention. There seemed to be no questioning of the management and educational policies which create this situation: perhaps it is driven by memories of the 1970s when students had lots of time on their hands and filled it with politics and unrest – things which are extremely marginal features of Turkish campus life these days, despite the expansion in numbers.

So staff are overloaded. One unlucky American colleague of mine in Istanbul was teaching a whopping 28 hours a week to classes totalling 530 students. He was very conscientious but it took him a month to mark examination scripts. Universities routinely expect instructors to teach 15 or more hours a week, and then perhaps to produce one or two cited articles a year on top of that. (Hence the avalanche of draft articles from authors in Turkey that tumbles almost daily onto the desks of editors of learned periodicals across the world, only a few of them getting anywhere near the target standard.) The bureaucratic ethos pervades staff hours. In most universities instructors are expected to be in their rooms during office hours if they are not in the class-room. Going to libraries is not considered an acceptable reason for absence and moving off campus for an hour or two, even at lunchtime, may be regarded as a serious offence.

Language is another unresolved issue. When I first knew Turkish universities, the Ankara University Political Science Faculty taught in Turkish but somehow ensuring that its staff and better students mostly had excellent English. Today a silent battle goes on behind the scenes between nationalist politicians and bureaucrats who

would like to see Turkish made the language of instruction, and academics and parents who insist on English. Universities which do not offer instruction in English can expect to be penalised by the market. But higher education in a foreign language is a daunting challenge. English is particularly hard for speakers of a non-Indo-European language with an agglutinative synthetic grammar. Students who come from English-medium lycees (or even French-medium ones) tend to have a very high level of spoken and reading skills in English. My impression was that there is a need for much more continuing education in writing and fluency in the language of instruction and that campus language schools underperform.

For the moment English dominates and the language of instruction in most of the leading universities, though not the second tier ones, is English. Will this continue? The present Minister of Culture is in favour of making Turkish a recognized language of scholarship. If this implied a decline in the availability of English-language instruction, that would be a loss. Turkey and its economy do benefit strongly from the spread of English and other language teaching, which has helped make Turkey into a successful merchant state – and by some economic criteria it still exports less than it ought. More language skills and writing sophistication are needed.

As regards policy and administration, most of the new schools shop *à la carte* from the American system. Anything not to their taste is discarded. Discussion and democracy, below patriarchal levels, are not much in favour. There is surprisingly little debate on policy, feedback, or pooling of ideas. Yet in many respects the system moves forward reasonably well. Nevertheless if Turkey is to build on the real advances of the last generation in higher education, it needs a deeper discussion about what its long term needs as a society are, beyond producing more engineers – and how to achieve them.

*http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTECAREGTOPEDUCATION/Resources/444607-1192636551820/Turkey_Higher_Education_Paper_062907.pdf



The Young Turks in Turkish history

by Stefano Taglia

History of the Near & Middle East, SOAS, London



The Young Turk organisation is mostly known for the revolution it carried out in 1908, which reinstated the constitution suspended in 1878 by Sultan Abdülhamit II and ushered in the Empire's final few years. Many scholars have provided an analysis of the period,⁴³ but most have focused on the post-revolutionary era. The organisation

⁴³ See, among others, Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969); and Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor* (Leiden: Brill, 1984).

was created in the late 1880s but the preparatory work done before the revolution remains largely unknown.⁴⁴

This article sheds light on pre-revolutionary Young Turk history. A first section aims at providing the reader with a more comprehensive picture of the movement in general, giving an analysis of more specific developments in the period in question – from the emergence of the group in 1889 to the closing of the intellectual interlude in 1902. The second section considers the reason why the larger public should be interested in this side-lined period of Ottoman history, which has been, indeed, extremely formative for the future and which jumpstarted many of the debates that are still current today.

The Young Turk organisation was founded in 1889 at the Royal Medical Academy, with the name Ottoman Union Society, *İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*. The four founding members were: İshak Sükûti, Mehmed Reşid, Abdullah Cevdet, and İbrahim Temo. In light of the fact that, after 1908, the organisation started adopting Turkist policies, it is interesting to note that none of the four figures mentioned above was of Turkish origin: Sükûti was a Jew born in Diyarbakır, Mehmed Reşid was from the Caucasus, Abdullah Cevdet was of Kurdish origin and Temo was an Albanian from Macedonia. Soon after its establishment, the organisation expanded and started recruiting not only students but also functionaries of the administration.⁴⁵ Not long after, one of the members, Dr Nâzim, was sent to Paris to establish contact with Ahmet Rıza who had moved to France in voluntary exile and had started the publication of a journal, *Mechveret* (in Ottoman Turkish) and its more European oriented supplement (in French). The journal had a double aim: advertising a political alternative to the government in Istanbul, and serving as a forum in which both Ottoman and European intellectuals would exchange views and put forth ideas for the ideological and political future of the Empire. By 1895, the Ottoman Union Society, now the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), had managed to establish a central branch in Istanbul plus centres in Paris and Cairo.

By the beginning of 1896, a wave of arrests drastically changed the nature of the internal branch, resulting in voluntary exile for many members. Meanwhile, in Istanbul, the students had been replaced by high-ranking bureaucrats from various ministries, men from the military establishment and some *ulema*, who were keen on adopting violent means, such as a *coup d'état*, to remove the Sultan from power. The members of the external branch were mostly intellectuals attempting to change the social and political realities of the Empire through a drastic but peaceful socio-cultural revolution.

These differences in perspective brought about a rupture, with the internal branch contesting Rıza's authority. This created an impasse in the activities of the external branch and a wave of returns of former émigrés to the Empire. The inactivity of the external branch gave Abdülhamit II the opportunity to concentrate on the internal

⁴⁴ The notable exception has been the work produced by Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), and *Preparation for a Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁵ Paul Fesch, *Constantinople aux derniers jours d'Abdul-Hamid*. 2nd ed. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), 341.

organisation, which, by the end of 1896, was dealt a deadly blow.⁴⁶ From then, until the revolution of 1908, the internal branch disappeared and the struggle between the opposition and the Sultan seemed to have been won by the Sublime Porte. In 1899, however, a new event bolstered the members of the Young Turk movement, especially those residing in Europe. This was the flight of Damat Mahmut Pasha,⁴⁷ who landed in Marseilles and moved to Paris with his two sons Sabahettin and Lutfullah. Sabahettin was to become, together with Rıza, the dominating figure of the opposition abroad. Both men emerged as productive writers and engaged intellectuals. In some ways, the rupture between the two branches of the organisation – internal and external – was a key event in the intellectual development of those Young Turks who remained in exile after 1896. Their physical distance from the regime and their relative autonomy, due to the lack of a structured and unified leadership, gave some of the opponents the time and space to associate with both Ottomans and Europeans who were engaged in political and social engineering on a global scale.

Their time in Paris was equally divided between European intellectual circles and carrying out activist work. For this reason, it is fair to assume that the two were interested in presenting a reform plan for the Ottoman Empire as much as in being accepted as equals in the French intellectual environment they frequented. Both convinced élitists,⁴⁸ Rıza and Sabahettin soon became regular attendees of various philosophical circles. Rıza was deeply influenced by the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte, enjoyed the friendship of Pierre Laffitte and the company of Demolins and Le Bon and in fact participated in the latter's weekly Wednesday lunches, *les déjeuners du mercredi*. He also started contributing to journals such as *La Revue Occidentale* and *The Positivist Review*, and partook in the founding of the International Positivist Society. Sabahettin befriended the famous French poet Pierre Quillard and Countess Mathilda Colonna de Cesari, director of *La Revue d'Europe*. He was greatly influenced by the *École de science sociale*, and the philosophy of Frédéric Le Play, Henri De Tourville and, above all, Edmond Demolins. It was the latter's work that absolutely mesmerised Sabahettin and gave him an approach to social and cultural reform.

Both men used this intellectual context to shape a vision for a future Ottoman Empire. What is most interesting about these plans were their synthetic nature, result of an amalgamation of the different environments they lived in and the various experiences they had.⁴⁹ Rıza formulated a political approach to reform that entailed

⁴⁶ A vivid account of the numbers of prisoners, their conditions and the torture they were submitted to, can be found in Abdullah Cevdet, "La Fortresse de Tripoli," *Osmanlı Supplément Français* 2, no. 13 (1 August 1899): 2.

⁴⁷ Mahmud Pasha was the grandson of Sultan Abdülmecid and his mother the sister of Abdülhamid II. Mahmud had previously served as state counsellor and Minister of Justice.

⁴⁸ Rıza and Sabahettin admired Gustave Le Bon's approach to the historical ineffectiveness of the crowds in achieving anything. See Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of the Revolution* (Wells: Fraser, 1968) and *The crowd: a Study in the Popular Mind* (London: Ernest Benn, 1947).

⁴⁹ Rıza wrote two timely pieces: *The Moral Bankruptcy of Western Politics in the East* (Ahmet Rıza, *La Faillite Morale de la Politique Occidentale en Orient* (Paris: Picart, 1922) and "Tolerance Musulmane," *La Revue Occidentale* 13 (1896): 304-317. Sabahettin concentrated his reform plan in a book (*How can Turkey be saved?*) written on the blue-print of another book written by Demolins: Edmond Demolins, *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1898). See Mehmet Sabahettin, *Türkiye Nasıl Kurtarılabilir?* (İstanbul: Kadar Matbaası, 1918).

the upholding of Ottomanism as a proto-national idea which left absolutely no space for ethnically based discourses. Religion was to be tailored for the private sphere although it would still be recognised as a central cultural point of reference. A critical aspect of Rıza's ideology was the adoption of positivism as the foundation of his thinking: the religion of science positioned all humanity on the same scale and, therefore, provided an avenue to equality for the Ottomans. All this reform was to be achieved by the Ottomans alone, without any external help. What is not clear from Rıza's writings is whether positivism was the means through which Islam could be seen as compatible with progress, or whether recognition of the importance of Islam was temporal and would eventually give way to a more strict reading of positivism. Sabahettin's plan of reform entailed a much deeper change at the societal and cultural level. He found Ottoman society to be too dependent on the central government for the provision of employment and sustenance. Because of this, he advocated a drastic cultural change at the family and school level. Children would be raised with an emphasis on individualism, the development of a sense of private initiative, and a reliance on practical and applied education. These changes would then have a strong impact on the three productive sectors, which Sabahettin viewed as central: agriculture, industry, and commerce. All this needed to be accompanied by a political change: the Empire would be administratively organised on a federal system. By doing this, ethnic and religious tensions would subside and the empire pacified.

In terms of their political activism, Rıza and Sabahettin organised the first Congress of Ottoman Liberals that was intended to bring about concerted action against the regime in Istanbul; instead, this Congress signalled the end of the intellectual phase of the Young Turk organisation. The two sides radically disagreed on the topic of external help and the role and importance of ethnic differences in the political re-organisation of the Empire. From their own writings about the event, it seems that the split was partly due to their intellectualism and elitism that hindered the configuration of concrete political plans. Their approaches to reform were too ideological to be reconciled and the two ideologues too convinced of their respective stances to be able to compromise. Another congress was convened in 1907 but it did not have a noteworthy outcome and it was not as representative as the first one. In fact, the first congress was the first and last instance in which Ottomans of all different ethnic and religious background had come together. By 1907 the essentialist nationalism of European provenance had already started to take root.

Even though Rıza and Sabahettin did not manage to initiate the cultural, social, and philosophical change that they had hoped to introduce to the Empire, they nonetheless managed something less tangible but surely more lasting: they ushered in the debate on Islam and its reconcilability with progress to the twentieth century. The two, who represented the tip of the iceberg of a generation of Ottoman intellectuals who were also part of the Young Turk movement, bridged the synthesis of tradition and innovation from the more religiously based modernisers, such as Jama ad-Din al-Afghani and Rifa`ah al-Tahtawi, to the more secularist ones of the twentieth century, such as Ziya Gökalp and Mustafa Kemal himself. We could say that the writings and the synthesis of Rıza and Sabahettin initiated a debate that is still on-going today and that addresses the nature of Turkey in the same way it defined the nature of the Ottoman Empire. The ideology put forth by the advocates of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis (TIS) in the 1980s echoes much of the ideas of the

two Young Turks in question, including a discourse on an entrepreneurial mindset that Sabahettin was hoping to instill in the population back in the 1890s.

A last consideration is due. If, as I claim in this piece, the intellectual Young Turks were so formative and their discussions still echoed today, why were they forgotten as part of Ottoman history as a whole and even within the more specific history of the CUP? The answer lies in their underlying belief in Ottomanism. All the post-Ottoman states opted, in their nation-building process, for a nationalist discourse that was essentialist, based on the idea of a shared language and/or ethnicity.⁵⁰ Ottomanism, on the other hand, represented a proto-nationalist concept based on a shared land and historical experience that superseded ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences. Actually, it made of these differences the archetype of the uniqueness of the Ottoman phenomenon. In this sense, it had to be erased as a past experience, because it could present itself as an uncomfortable antagonist and render the state building processes of the twentieth century questionable.



The Accidental Hoteliers

by Maggie Oliphant

Hotelier, Historian and Traveller

Two years ago we decided to look for a holiday house somewhere warm – preferably hot – where for much of the year we could enjoy the sort of life that some people have when no longer working every day. Nick, my husband, would swim, dive, fish, have a little boat and play his piano more; I would have time to walk a lot, visit ruins, read extensively and finally finish writing a couple of half completed books. We would enjoy long, languorous evenings watching the sun set, accompanied by a glass of cool, crisp wine, whilst discussing – depending on where this idyll was situated – in which of our favourite tavernas, locandas or lokantas we would have a delicious meal.



Two years on, we are in Turkey, spending our summers running a boutique hotel in a deeply rural and primarily agricultural village south of Ephesus, in a valley twelve kilometres from the sea⁵¹. Although it is certainly hot in the summer, it can by no means be described as such for much of the year; it rains heavily in spring and autumn and sometimes snows in the winter. Unless we get away, as

⁵⁰ This was the case for all of the successor states: from Kemalist Turkey to the Balkan states and the former Arab provinces.

⁵¹ www.museshouse.com

from time to time we do, there is little swimming, recreational walking, piano playing, reading and ruin visiting and absolutely no diving, fishing, boating or writing. As for the wine and delicious meals, that is what we give to other people.

So when we ask ourselves and each other how this came to pass, we can only say that we were seduced, we fell in love with a property and a village, we took leave of our senses – they all mean the same thing – and that is really the best answer that we can give as to how, with no previous experience, we have become hoteliers in Turkey instead of retirees enjoying a gentler pace of life.

Having decided on Turkey, we observed that much of the beautiful coastline in between the protected national parks was rapidly being covered with identikit holiday houses and apartments. We then shifted our search a little inland, not realising that as foreigners we couldn't simply buy an old village house and restore it, as in France or Italy. It is an excellent notion as the inhabitants and their children are not priced out of their homes by foreigners and the villages do not die but continue to function, with *bakals*, barbers, *çay* houses, and schools. This knowledge however, was only acquired after we had lost our hearts and we then discovered that actually we had to buy a business in order to acquire the property.

Sitting under the large walnut tree in the shady courtyard garden, listening to the cooing of doves and the sounds of the village beyond the high walls, it suddenly seemed an entirely reasonable and feasible proposition to run a small hotel. After all, didn't we enjoy cooking, didn't I enjoy decorating rooms, was not Nick IT literate and an experienced businessman and finally, was not I familiar with the ancient history of the region? 'Yes' to all of these, but as anyone with a modicum of common sense would have realised, there is far more to running a hotel than either of us had yet grasped.

In reality, we run a very small business, being open for half of the year and with only five guest rooms, so perhaps that is why we seem to have made it work and for the most part enjoy doing it. But the whole venture has required and continues to need, much more organisation than we had imagined. Firstly, we inherited two full time staff, a Turkish husband and wife team, who viewed us with some anxiety as we, with no experience as hoteliers, would now be responsible for their livelihood; but of course, we too would be depending on them. Gradually we came to know each other and developed the essential mutual respect and trust that is needed to run the hotel.

Every month a small mountain of bureaucratic, administrative and accounting procedure has to be undertaken – fortunately these aspects were already well established prior to the purchase with an excellent accountant and systems in place. All this was put to the test recently when the *jandarma* descended in force – six of them – to check that all our licenses and tax matters were up to date; on another occasion there was a spot check of the swimming pool water – although worrying at the time, such monitoring shows us that in this industry, at any rate, such matters are well regulated.

Almost inevitably this perfect property turned out to be not quite so perfect and we have had to carry out far more building work than originally envisaged. Luckily, basic artisan skills are still widespread in the village and in almost no time, or so it seemed,

the work was done. Ibrahim the village builder, 'Messy' Ahmed the plumber/electrician and several others, were all highly experienced, enthusiastic and more than capable of translating into reality, the previous evening's 'back of a cigarette packet' design – the weed is still widely used here. Not only did they do the work well, but they arrived when they had said they would and worked long days with seemingly few tea breaks; we had never experienced such extraordinary phenomena in our London life.

We spent our first winter huddled over the warmth of one or other the *sobas* that we had installed, managing this splendid workforce and apart from acquiring some basic Turkish, trying to learn some of the skills required for running an hotel – marketing, advertising, room pricing strategies, menu design and suchlike. To us this was all a strange and brave new world.

Finally, our past experiences in engineering/IT and ancient history began to play their part as the arrival of the first guests drew near. The website that we had designed and installed appeared to be working well and there was a frisson of excitement at each of these early bookings and as they came through, there were many enquiries for information on the archaeological sites that we had highlighted. Our very efficient I-pad app. allowed us to juggle the bookings to meet our guests' requirements and their seemingly endless demands for bespoke itineraries all around Turkey. After thirty emails from one guest we had tactfully to explain that we were not running an international travel agency but a five bedroomed hotel.

The guests! What can one say to convey our great pleasure in meeting most of them, but that we have thoroughly enjoyed the many and various conversations with people from all over the world. This and introducing them to the ancient past of Anatolia has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this new venture. Many have been seriously interested in the history and culture of Turkey; some, who came only to see the Greek and Roman ruins, often leave determined to return in order to visit Hittite sites, Troy, or the Phrygian and Lydian remains or Byzantine or Ottoman Turkey or indeed, simply to enjoy the country's immense variety of landscape and culture.

Once we began to cook for our guests another wonderful discovery was made – the sheer delight of using the freshest and most flavoursome ingredients. Kirazlı Köy (Cherry village) is a certified ecological village, apparently the first in Turkey; locally



the area is renowned for the abundance and high quality of its crops and as a result, people come from nearby towns to enjoy the wholesome food served in several village *sofras*. In the Ephesus Museum in Selçuk there is a statue found in Kirazlı in 1975. It dates from the early second century AD and is a representation of Priapus, the Greek and Roman rustic god of fertility and procreation, who protected gardens, vineyards, fruit plants and livestock. On his erect phallus he bears a large tray on which are piled the produce of the area - including grapes, figs and pomegranates, exactly as one sees in such profusion in the vineyards and orchards surrounding the village today. Presumably the Imam's honey, which we serve in the hotel, is also a continuation of an ancient tradition of apiculture in the area. And as so often, people who are not wealthy, but for their

produce, are generous and we often receive gifts of fruit and vegetables and in return give jams and chutneys, the latter an unfamiliar flavour to our neighbours.

Although one might sometimes think that tractors outnumber people and that ugly power pylons and unattractive new houses replacing the old stone ones, are changing the face of the village, there is still a rich traditional life here. Men sit smoking and playing *tavla* and *okey* in the *çay* houses, whilst their wives in *şalvar* and headscarves talk on their doorsteps or on old sofas outside the houses, watching their children playing in the street. Groups of ladies dry and shell beans, thread and hang peppers or aubergines to hang on their terraces and lay out tomatoes and various fruits to dry and so much of this is still done communally. One hears the neighing of horses and the braying of donkeys and together with smaller livestock, goats and sheep, they are kept in the courtyards along with the tractors, cockerels, chickens, guard dogs and visiting cats. The sound of the drums is still heard marking a wedding or circumcision celebration to which all are invited, including us. On Sundays during summer the village ladies sell their produce, fresh or bottled, and their handicrafts to passing tourists – there are not actually very many – and over it all, five times a day is the call of the muezzin.

Yet only fifteen minutes away, in the nearest Aegean resort town, in shops, shopping malls and clubs, Turkish and international pop is now the backing music of daily life. Boys in jeans and tight T-shirts and girls in mini-skirts and the latest fashions – all made in Turkey – parade along the seafront or whisk along on mopeds. At Ephesus and other archaeological sites, thoroughly modern guides in command of several languages and often the latest international sartorial rules, shepherd their semi-naked charges around the ruins and back to their cruise liners, by way of several lucrative visits to carpet, leather and ceramic 'outlets'. And, nearer to home, a couple of kilometres away, the young employee of a new state of the art boutique wine producer tells us that she is fasting because it is *Ramazan*. Happy the country that can encompass such paradoxes and how fortunate are we to live here, surrounded by this multi-layered world, both past and present.



The Atatürk Society of the UK



The Atatürk Society of the UK (ASUK) is apolitical, non-profit making and dedicated to promoting the ideals and principles of Kemal Atatürk which include secularism together with education and governance. Also important are gender equality, freedom of speech and of religion and freedom of the press with a strong emphasis on an independent judiciary within an independent state. Atatürk's dictum 'Peace at Home, Peace in the World' encapsulated the basis of his domestic and foreign policy and this represents one of ASUK's main tenets.

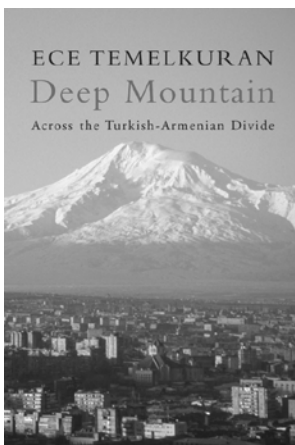
ASUK was founded in London in 1997 by Muammer Aksoy, with Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu as Honorary President, to bring together Turks and people of Turkish origin in the UK. It is a sub-branch of the Federation of European Atatürk Societies and is affiliated to the central organization, the Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği, in Ankara. ASUK is also a founder member of the Federation of Turkish Associations (formed in 2003 and now with 16 members) and works closely with it on occasion. There are currently 250 members operating with a management committee of seven, including a president and a deputy president. Membership is open to anyone, subject to committee approval.

ASUK organises seminars, conferences, exhibitions and meetings, covering a diverse range of topics to impart Atatürk's ideas and progressive system of thought to a wide audience in the UK. It also aims to provide opportunities to develop and enhance the true meaning of Atatürk's ideals, free from misrepresentation and prejudice. Some of ASUK's main activities include the celebration of Turkish National and Republican holidays as well as remembering Atatürk on the anniversary of his death.

Although most activities are in Turkish, ASUK also holds meetings in English. A recent example was the very popular January 2010 conference at SOAS when speakers included Dr Andrew Mango and Fuat Kavur, a Turkish opera producer. There is a website (www.ataturk.org.uk) and, since 2010, an English language blog (<http://ataturksocietyuk.com>).

Betula Nelson

Books Review & Publications



Deep Mountain: Across the Turkish-Armenian Divide by Ece Temelkuran

Verso, 2010 (English), 288pp,
ISBN-10: 1844674231; ISBN-13: 978-1844674237

My Grandmother by Fethiye Çetin

Verso, 2008 (English), 144pp,
ISBN-10: 1844671690; ISBN-13: 978-1844671690



There is a book, quite easily found in any reasonably-sized Turkish bookshop, its name written in block capitals along the spine: *Ermeni Dosyası* ('The Armenian Dossier'). Written by former Turkish diplomat Kamuran Gurun, and ominously

subtitled 'The Myth of Innocence Exposed', it has been a popular amongst Turkish readers ever since first being published in 1983. Packed with imposing-looking graphs and statistics, its main thesis can be summarized thus: 1) The numbers claimed by the Armenians as killed in the 'events' of 1915 are far too high and, in fact, Ottoman soldiers were themselves also killed in large numbers at the same time. In any case, the Armenian population was far from innocent, with many rebelling against the Empire and often colluding with the advancing Russian forces on the eastern Anatolian frontier. Essentially, the book implies, the Armenians got what they had coming to them. For those interested, a new English-language print run of the book came out only earlier this year. However questionable its scholarship, 'The Armenian Dossier' is unquestionably significant, if only for the fact that it represents what has been the official Turkish narrative for almost 100 years.

Encouragingly however, this is not the only story on the shelves any more. While they still may not attract the sales figures of more flattering histories, voices dissenting from the official line are being increasingly heard in today's Turkey. Ece Temelkuran was once a columnist with daily newspaper *Habertürk* (ironically enough one of the mouthpieces of the nationalist establishment) and her *Deep Mountain*, published in English in 2010, is part of this new, questioning tendency. Temelkuran set herself the apparently simple task of meeting Armenians, talking to them, listening to them, and reporting back for the Turkish audience. Eschewing the directly political, she preferred 'to write about Armenians, not necessarily what happened in 1915', and while this may seem like a modest undertaking to an outsider, in Turkey it was a brave and taboo-shaking exercise. Quite how perilous the path was can be judged from the example of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, to whom Temelkuran dedicates the book. Dink decried the politics of megaphone slogans and foreign parliamentary writs on the issue, and instead spent years trying to get the two sides talking to each other honestly about their shared history and common trauma. He was assassinated for his troubles in 2007 by an ultra-nationalist Turkish gang, outside the Istanbul office of his newspaper. Dink's killing could have acted as either a spur to writing, or a warning against it, so – first and foremost – *Deep Mountain* should be applauded as an act of bravery.

The book is divided into three parts, the first detailing Temelkuran's encounters with the Armenians of Armenia itself, and the other two her meetings with the Armenian Diaspora communities in France and the United States. The picture painted of Armenian capital Yerevan is of a cultured but impoverished city of feeble opportunities and feeble ambitions, still to recover from the end of the Soviet Union and now crippled by the closed (since 1993) border with Turkey. Whilst bitter enmity for Turks exists, the Armenian Armenians are perhaps most concerned with the practical matter of getting the border open again, and with it securing an economic lifeline. The French and American Armenians, however, have come to adopt the genocide as *the* essential, irreducible feature of what it means to be 'Armenian'. Meeting numerous community leaders, academics, artists, and businesspeople, Temelkuran describes the trajectory that emerges again and again in the Diaspora: How the first generation of Armenian migrants to Europe and America were most concerned with 'getting on' and fitting into the adopted culture, and how it is only with the second and third generation – threatened by the identity-engulfing vortex of a new homeland – that the genocide has been revisited and latched on to as an unshakable, almost pathological core. As one of the Los Angeles Armenians revealingly says: "you need to create an identity, something to hold on to both

culturally and individually. Turkey's refusal to recognise the genocide is what binds those of us in the Diaspora. Were the genocide to be recognized, it would probably be the end of us". Pain has become 'the pillar propping up the home', and to release that pillar means oblivion. Similarly, many Turks – afraid of losing their country and seeing recognition as threatening their own oblivion – cling just as fast to their own selective amnesia. In a striking phrase, the author at one point describes it as a 'huge industry. Not just politics and money; a psychological industry too, for both sides. An industry of anguish'. The most sympathetic portraits in the book are thus reserved for those who are able to understand this identity paralysis and rise above such acrimony, recognising the absurdity of an official political 'debate' that doesn't go much deeper than one side screaming "It was genocide!" while the other responds "No it wasn't!"

Perhaps inevitably, the book occasionally lapses into worthiness, though not nearly as often as you fear when you read the following meaningless fluff early on: 'If an Armenian were to lose their way one day anywhere in the world, they'd be able to locate the capital of Armenia by consulting the map of their heart. They would navigate toward it by reference to the coordinates of pride and fear, of mourning and loss'. Worse, when she moves on to Los Angeles, Temelkuran cannot help but offer a steady stream of unhelpful anti-American swipes. These come off as stale, predictable, and not a little immature (constant sneering about cigars and McDonalds, really?!) But these are minor criticisms, and should not detract from the more important qualities of a book that is sensitive, honest and 'engaged' in the best sense of the word.

Another modern voice with little time for the official Turkish narrative is Fethiye Çetin, a human rights lawyer currently representing the deceased's family in the grimly ongoing Hrant Dink case. Çetin spent her whole youth believing she was of 'pure' Turkish stock, until one day her aging grandmother, Seher, took her aside. Seher revealed that she had been born an Armenian Christian, originally named Heranuş and plucked from a death march in 1915 by a Turkish gendarme commander who went on to raise her with his wife as a Muslim Turk. Translated into English in 2008, *My Grandmother* is Çetin's elegiac description of this story.

The first section of the book contents itself with gentle, sepia-tinged descriptions of a rural upbringing with her family in the eastern Turkish province of Elazığ: her beautiful sisters; her grandfather, whose mood always depended on how hungry he was; her grandmother, the charismatic matriarch of the family, powerful but taciturn, somehow never able to bring herself to sing, as if always harbouring the secret that would one day be revealed to Fethiye. The central revelation does not come until midway through the book, but when it does Çetin writes that what she heard 'did not fit with anything I knew. It turned the known world on its head, smashing my values into a thousand pieces'. Seher, or Heranuş, was one of the *kılıç artığı*, the 'leftovers of the sword' of that traumatic period; only one of her sisters was also spared, while the rest of the family – including uncles, aunts, cousins, and her mother – was killed. The second part of the novel consists of Çetin trying to digest this heritage, and also trying to forge a reunion of the two sides of the family which now – like so many Armenian families – is 'scattered like pomegranate seeds' across the world.

It is a quietly powerful book, modest but courageous. There are no unnecessary fireworks or forced emotions. In a way, it could be seen as a manifestation of the

very thing Temelkuran advocates in 'Deep Mountain', a kind of picking up of the baton. There is little in the way of direct politics and no recriminations: I don't think the word 'genocide' is mentioned once in the entire book (and that's not because of Turkish laws against these things). It's simply a human story, told in an unshowy, humane way.

Both Temelkuran and Çetin manage to address the vexed Armenian issue with admirable clarity, concerning themselves with the personal and the human as a kind of riposte to the debilitating rancour of the official, political dispute. Both try to chart a precipitous course between two entrenched sides that long ago stopped listening to each another; neither condemns anything other than this willful deafness. In the years to come, one can only hope there are more books published like these two, and fewer like *The Armenian Dossier*.

William Armstrong



RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

Bozdoğan, Sibel & Akcan, Esra. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*. (Reaktion Books: 2012). ISBN-10: 1861898789

Hecker, Pierre. *Turkish Metal: Music, Meaning, and Morality in a Muslim Society*. (Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series). (Ashgate Pub Co: 2012). ISBN-10: 1409438481

O'Connell, John Morgan. *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923-1938)*. (Ashgate Pub Co: 2013). ISBN-10: 1409447413

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Barry, Quintin. *War in the East: A Military History of the Russo-Turkish War 1877-78*. (Helion and Company: 2012). ISBN-10: 1907677119

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Hasanlı, Jamil. *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945-1953*. (Lexington Books: 2011). ISBN-10: 073916807X

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Özkan, Behlül. *From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey*. (Yale University Press: 2012). ISBN-10: 030017201X

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Fethiye, Çetin & Freely, Maureen. *My Grandmother: An Armenian-Turkish Memoir*. (Verso: 2012). ISBN-10: 1844678679

Ertürk, Nergis. *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey*. (OUP: 2011). ISBN-10: 0199746680

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POLITICS AND SOCIOLOGY

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Hakeem, Farrukh B; Haberfeld, MR & Verma, Arvind. *Policing Muslim Communities: Comparative International Context*. (Springer: 2012). ISBN-10: 146143551X

Hale, William. *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774* (revised and updated version of William Hale's *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*) (Routledge: 2012). ISBN-10: 0415599873

Kadioğlu, Ayşe & Keyman, E Fuat. *Symbiotic Antagonisms: Competing Nationalisms in Turkey*. (University of Utah Press: 2011). ISBN-10: 160781031X

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Compiled by Arın Bayraktarođlu



Important Message from the **TASG Membership Secretary**

Members and subscribers of the *Review* are reminded that subscriptions for 2013 are due on 1 January 2013 and it would be appreciated if payment could be made without the need to send reminders. The current rates can be found overleaf in this *Review* or on the website.

Members and subscribers are also reminded that we have a website where there is information about past and future TASG events and details of subscriptions rates as well as a 'contact us' facility, which can be used, for example, to notify a change of address, or give us an email contact address, or request extra copies of the *Review*.

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The main aims of TASG are:

- to promote interest in and knowledge of Turkey and the Turkish area by means of lectures, symposia and exhibitions
- to generate support for Turkish studies
- to maintain the regular publication of *TAS Review*

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Please give details of any particular interests in, or connections with, Turkey or Turkish Studies which you have you. This information will help TASG to cater for members' interests.

For any communication please take advantage of our website address
www.tasg.org.uk or our email attached to it: info@tasg.org.uk

Please return to:

Mr Keith Bowtell, Treasurer, TASG
Stanton Lodge, Shelveys Way
Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5QJ

To join the
Turkish Area Study Group

Either Go to the Website www.tasg.org.uk

Or email the Administrative Secretary
Mr Stephen Parkin – snjp@btinternet.com
and ask for an application form

HELP!

The Turkish Area Studies *Review* is in search of editorial help. We would like to hear soon from friends of TASG who might contribute to the compilation, editing, and/or production of this well-received publication. Anyone who would like to know more about working with the Editorial Team is invited to contact
Brian Beeley (bw.beeley@gmail.com) **OR**
Sigi Martin (sigimartin@hotmail.com)

Request for contributions

TAS *Review* welcomes articles, features, reviews, announcements and news from private individuals as well as those representing universities and other relevant institutions. Submissions may range from 250 to 2500 words and should be written in A4 format or, preferably, sent electronically to the Co-Editors at bw.beeley@gmail.com and/or sigimartin@hotmail.com. Submissions for the Spring issue would be particularly welcomed by 15 February 2013.

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