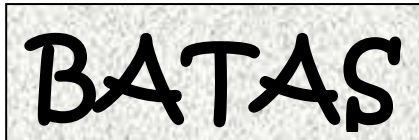


# Turkish Area Studies Review

Bulletin of the British Association for  
Turkish Area Studies



[www.batas.org.uk](http://www.batas.org.uk)



## **The 2016 John Martin Lecture**

Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 7.15 pm

### **Professor Margaret MacMillan**

Professor of International History at the University of Oxford

on

**Winding up the Ottoman Empire:  
From Paris to Lausanne**

in

The Khalili Lecture Theatre

SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London  
WC1H 0XG

**Registration from 6.45 pm**

Free entry for BATAS members and all full-time students (on production of student ID  
Entrance charge for others £3.00)

To be sure of getting a seat, you may reserve a place by contacting Events Coordinator Rezan Muir:  
[rezan.muir@gmail.com](mailto:rezan.muir@gmail.com)

## **Spring Symposium 2017**

Saturday 6 May

at Wolfson Lecture Theatre, Senate House, University of London

Details will follow (see also [www.batas.org.uk](http://www.batas.org.uk) for more information)



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 are exclusively those of the contributors themselves.**

## Editorial

Friends of Turkey are increasingly dismayed and confused by developments in the country. Admiration for Turkey's economic progress in recent years and for Ankara's readiness to accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees from the turmoil in neighbouring Syria is now tempered by concern about the treatment of individuals and groups whose views differ from those of the current establishment. Turkey-watchers were saddened in July to see an elected government facing an attempted coup. We had thought that the country is now exclusively committed to political change by ballot. The one cheering aspect of the tragic event was that the population of Turkey, in its unequivocal rejection of the violence – whoever was behind it – demonstrated precisely this commitment.

We are grateful to William Hale for his comprehensive coverage of recent developments in our lead article. Professor Hale shows how Turkey was already facing constitutional change and renewed fighting with the PKK when the July coup attempt brought new problems for foreign relations as well as for the internal cohesion of the country – although there has at least been official support for President Erdoğan from all political parties represented in the *Meclis*.

Once again we thank Clement Dodd for updating us on Cyprus, which has of late been crowded out of our news and press reports by major political and military confrontation in the wider region. We have articles by speakers at BATAS' successful 2016 Symposium at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where topics ranged from child marriage to Kurdish society in London and a look at English in the Turkish educational system. We also have our regular features and further contributions – including Jill Sindall's full report on the recent Workshop organised in Ankara by the British Institute at Ankara and the International Strategic Research Foundation. BATAS Chair Celia Kerslake writes about the Gagauz people following her recent visit to Moldova. And to reflect this *Review's* wide-ranging interest in Turkish area studies we also include as usual contributions on books, music and poetry – and even some personal reminiscences.

This year's John Martin Lecture will be given by Professor Margaret MacMillan on 23 November – see details on inside cover of this *Review* – and BATAS then looks forward to our 2017 Symposium to be held at the Senate House, University of London, on 6 May. A list of speakers and topics will appear on the BATAS website shortly.

BATAS' Council is currently planning to make this *Review* universally accessible via the website. Members will receive full details of changes, including a reduction in the membership fee for those who no longer wish to receive a hard copy.

As ever we are grateful to all our contributors and to our proof-readers for making this *Review* possible and we welcome suggestions for articles, reports or comments for future issues.

Brian Beeley  
Co-Editor

Sigrid-B Martin  
Co-Editor



## Turkey's Politics since March 2016

by  
William Hale  
Emeritus Professor, SOAS, London

### Domestic Political Turmoil:

Since March 2016 Turkey's domestic politics have suffered two major upsets – first, the resignation of former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, following behind-the-scenes clashes with President Tayyip Erdoğan, and his succession by Binali Yıldırım and, second, an attempted coup d'état by rebel elements in the armed forces during the night of 15-16 July. The result leaves Turkey poised between two contrasting scenarios – a reassertion of Tayyip Erdoğan's campaign to convert Turkey into an illiberal democracy, dominated by himself or the establishment of a cross party consensus, embracing the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and two of the main opposition parties. This leaves the Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP) as the sole pro-Kurdish party in parliament, out in the cold, with its associates in the illegal Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) continuing its campaign of violence against civilian as well as military targets. In the south-east, horrific terrorist attacks attributed to the Syrian-based Islamic State organisation (IS) continue to inflict a sickening death toll. In response, units of the Free Syrian Army, backed by Turkish armour, have crossed the border into northern Iraq to capture IS bases.

### April-May 2016: the downfall of Ahmet Davutoğlu:

A clash between Prime Minister Davutoğlu and the President had been expected for some time, as the two had apparently disagreed over the President's plan to alter the constitution, giving him full executive powers and reducing the premier to a subordinate. In practice, it could be argued that this subordination already applied, thanks to the President's tight control over the AKP's organisation in the country, but critics were unwilling to give this *de facto* situation constitutional legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> In opposing Erdoğan, Davutoğlu, had the support of liberal opinion but he was in a fatally weak position, since he had owed his appointment entirely to the President and had no independent support base within the party. In late April, on Erdoğan's orders, Davutoğlu, as nominal party Chairman, was stripped of his powers to appoint district and provincial party executives. On 1 May a vituperative WordPress blog entitled the *Pelican file*, and apparently written by a journalist close to Erdoğan, referred to Davutoğlu as a 'traitor'. Among other things, it accused him of opposing the President over the constitutional issue and trying to broker a peace deal with the PKK when the President opposed this, and of giving pro-western signals in an interview with *The Economist*.<sup>2</sup> The break-point between the two came on 4 May at a meeting in the presidential palace, after which it was announced that the AKP would hold an 'Extraordinary Congress' in May, in which Davutoğlu would not stand as a candidate for the leadership (the date was later announced as 22 May). Davutoğlu implied that he had not resigned voluntarily, but in a humiliating climb-down claimed

<sup>1</sup> This and the following narrative is based on contemporary press reports in *Hürriyet* and *Hürriyet Daily News*, with other sources referred to separately. AA

<sup>2</sup> Mustafa Akyol, 'How mysterious new Turkish blog exposed Erdoğan-Davutoğlu rift', from [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05)

that he felt ‘no reproach, anger or resentment against anyone’, affirming his complete loyalty to the President.<sup>3</sup> Just before his resignation took effect, parliament passed a controversial bill stripping 139 Deputies of their immunity from prosecution. Although this affected some members of all the parties, it was regarded as a first step towards the removal from parliament of some or all of the 59 HDP Deputies – a significant worsening (if it happened) of Turkish-Kurdish tensions.

The overall impression that Turkey was moving further towards autocracy and intolerance under Erdoğan was strengthened on 22 May when the obedient party congress elected the sole candidate, Binali Yıldırım, as its new party chairman and hence Prime Minister. A former Minister of Transport, Yıldırım was known as a close associate of Erdoğan: in his acceptance speech, he began by saluting him as ‘our leader, the architect of a bright Turkey’,<sup>4</sup> and called on the party to press ahead with Erdoğan’s plan for an executive presidency. The new cabinet, announced on 24 May, appeared to consist almost entirely of Erdoğan loyalists. Over the next month the government prepared plans to strengthen its powers over the judiciary, threatening to put further curbs on political dissent.

Meanwhile, the fight against the PKK continued. On 2 June Prime Minister Yıldırım claimed that the PKK’s attempts to take over sections of south-eastern towns and cities had been defeated, and that the emphasis would now be on the reconstruction of shattered districts. Nevertheless, the PKK was able to revert to its traditional tactics of hit-and-run attacks from its mountain bases, with a steady toll of casualties among civilians as well as the police and army. A particularly bloody car bomb attack in Istanbul on 7 June which killed 11 people, including seven policeman, was pinned on the ‘Kurdistan Freedom Falcons’ (TAK),<sup>5</sup> a radical offshoot of the PKK. A second and more devastating terrorist attack on Istanbul’s Atatürk airport on 28 June killed 48 people, including the three suicide gunmen, but this was blamed on the Islamist terrorists of the Islamic State (IS) organisation, based in Syria. While no-one could blame the government directly for the tragedy, President Erdoğan was sharply criticised for his ‘wilful blindness’ towards IS in the past.<sup>6</sup>



### **July 2016: the attempted coup and its aftermath:**

A much more serious, and generally unexpected challenge to the government’s authority came on the night of 15-16 July when a group within the Turkish armed forces attempted to seize power in the name of a ‘Peace at Home Council’. They were apparently supported by elements of the First Army (based in Istanbul), the Second Army (Malatya) and the Third Army (Erzincan) as well as sections of the navy, air force and gendarmerie. In the aftermath, more than 6,000 military personnel, plus 9,000 police officers, were said to have been arrested, including 157 of the 358 generals and admirals:<sup>7</sup> of these, Erdal Öztürk, Commander of the Third Army, Adem Huduti, Commander of the Second

<sup>3</sup> BBC News website, 5 May 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet*, 22 May 2016

<sup>5</sup> Constanze Letsch, ‘Istanbul attack on police vehicle kills 11’, *The Guardian*, 7 June 2016. For further information on TAK, and its relationship with the PKK, see Mahmut Bozarslan, ‘Who is TAK and why did it attack Ankara?’ from [www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/turkey-outlawed..](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/turkey-outlawed..)

<sup>6</sup> See Simon Tisdall, ‘Turkey paying a price for Erdoğan’s wilful blindness to Isis threat’, *The Guardian*, 29 June 2016

<sup>7</sup> Figures from BBC News website, 20 July 2016 and *Hürriyet Daily News*, 29 July 2016



Army, Admiral Nejat Atilla Demirhan, Commander of the Mediterranean Region of the Navy, and Air Force General Akin Öztürk (former Chief of Air Staff) were the most senior. On the other hand, the vast majority of the armed forces remained loyal to the government – including, most crucially, Chief of the General Staff (and thus senior commander) General Hulusi Akar, Commander of the First Army General Ümit Dündar, Commander of the Land Forces General Salih Zeki Çolak, and Commander of the Air Force General Abidin Ünal. With four of the most senior commanders openly opposing them, and the government left free to resist, the rebels had little chance of success, and at worst risked provoking a civil war.

The rebel action began at around 9.00 p.m. on 15 July when 20 fully equipped soldiers entered the military headquarters in Ankara, taking General Akar hostage, and trying to persuade him to back the coup, which he steadfastly refused. General Çolak was invited to the headquarters and immediately apprehended, followed by General Ünal, who was abducted from a wedding in Istanbul by helicopter. Having bombed the police special forces headquarters at Gölbaşı, just outside Ankara, killing 42 people, the rebels took over the buildings of the state broadcaster TRT at around midnight, forcing the news reader Tijen Karaş to broadcast a statement claiming that Turkey was now ruled by the 'Peace at Home Council', and that 'the Turkish armed forces have completely taken over the administration of the country'.<sup>8</sup> That this was not the case became clear around one hour later, when President Erdoğan, who was on holiday at the time in the Aegean resort of Marmaris, broadcast from a smartphone held up to a camera of the national TV network CNNTürk, denouncing the coup and calling on the people to take to the streets. In a poll conducted later by the Andy-Ar polling organisation, an astonishing 84 percent of respondents claimed to have seen this broadcast.<sup>9</sup> To ram the message home, Erdoğan also sent a text message to every mobile telephone in Turkey – in effect, almost the whole population. This was followed by similar broadcasts by deputy premier Numan Kurtulmuş and the Mayor of Ankara Melih Gökçek. As the thousands of anti-coup demonstrators filled the streets, it was noticed that they included supporters of all the main political parties, including the pro-Kurdish HDP.

Amid the rising public protests, at around 1.00 a.m. on 16 July the rebels were forced to withdraw their forces from Atatürk airport, which they had earlier occupied, as well as the TRT building in Ankara. In Istanbul, a crowd of protestors faced down rebel tanks which had attempted to close the Bosphorus Bridge. In a dramatic move, the tank crews abandoned their weapons and surrendered to the police – a clear sign that the ordinary soldiers, who had merely been obeying orders from the rebel commanders, had no stomach for a fight against unarmed demonstrators (apparently they had been told by their superiors that this was merely an 'exercise'). Nonetheless, the rebels in



<sup>8</sup> For a video-recording see 'Tijen Karaş: "Bildiriri Silah Zoru Altında Okudum, Hayatımın En Zor Yayınıydı"', from Onedio website (<https://onedio.com/haber>) 16 July 2016: (Ms Karaş later stated that she had been forced to read the pronouncement at gunpoint).

<sup>9</sup> Eniş Şenerdem, 'Andy-Ar araştırması; Seçmen siyasetteki ılımlı havanın devamını istiyor' BBC Turkish news website ([www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler](http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler)) 28 July 2016.

Ankara refused to back down and, around 3.00-3.30am twice bombed the parliament building as well as the presidential complex from helicopters. Meanwhile, Erdoğan left his hotel in Marmaris, boarding a Gulfstream executive jet in the nearby airport at Dalaman. After he left the hotel, a hit squad of Special Forces soldiers attacked it from helicopters, with the aim of capturing the President or perhaps killing him.<sup>10</sup> According to a report in the pro-government daily *Yeni Şafak* of 4 August, Erdoğan's 'plane was saved from being shot down when the rebel pilot of an F-16 fighter was forced to turn back for lack of fuel before the presidential plane came within missile range'. Whatever the details, it was clear that Erdoğan had a narrow escape. By daybreak on 17 July, the coup had been suppressed. Unlike previous Turkish coups – successful or unsuccessful – the attempted putsch had caused serious casualties, with between 250 and 300 deaths<sup>11</sup>, plus many injuries: the big majority of those killed were soldiers, policemen and civilians who opposed the rebels, or were killed by chance in bombardments.

From the start, the government pinned responsibility for the attempted coup on the organisation of the elusive religious leader Fethullah Gülen, who had been living in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999. The Gülenist network, whose members penetrated the education system, the media, some business groups, the judiciary and other parts of the civil service – besides the police and armed forces – were engaged in educational and welfare work as well as religious reformism. Initially, they had been encouraged by Erdoğan himself, as a means of weakening the Kemalist groups who opposed the AKP: he broke with the network in 2013, but by then it had acquired a powerful degree of penetration into state structures.<sup>12</sup> In the aftermath of the abortive coup, pro-government media claimed there was a direct connection between the rebels and the Gülenist network<sup>13</sup> – a claim bluntly rejected by Gülen, who even claimed (without producing any evidence) that the attempt might have been staged by Erdoğan himself, so as to justify the subsequent crackdown on his movement.<sup>14</sup> Against this was some important evidence which came out afterwards: for example, General Akar related that while he was being held hostage, one of the rebels, Brigadier Hakan Evrim, had wanted him to talk directly to Gülen by telephone, with the aim of persuading him to support the coup.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, it is quite likely that the rebels included some who were not members of the Gülenist network, but opposed the AKP government for other reasons, such as that it was too Islamist, or anti-Kemalist. However, even if Gülen himself had not directly planned the coup, he still had some tough questions to answer. If, for instance, he favoured democracy, why had he not set up his organisation as a normal NGO, with open membership lists and executive bodies? If his aims were entirely innocent, why

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<sup>10</sup> Dion Nissenbaum, Adam Entous and Emre Peker, 'Turkish President Foiled Coup with Luck, Tech Savvy', *Wall Street Journal*, 18 July 2016

<sup>11</sup> Which figure one accepts evidently depends on whether those fighting on the rebel side are included. Pro-government media put the number of deaths at 246 police officers soldiers and civilians, but this evidently only includes those killed by the rebels: *Daily Sabah*, 21 July 2016.

<sup>12</sup> There is now a large literature on the Gülen movement, but see, in particular, M Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, eds., *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: the Gülen Movement* (Syracuse NY and London, Syracuse University Press, 2003) and M.Hakan Yavuz, *Towards an Islamic Enlightenment, the Gülen Movement* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> 'Direct evidence links Fethullah Gülen to coup attempt', *Daily Sabah*, 21 July 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Amana Fontanella Khan, 'Fethullah Gülen: Turkey coup may have been "staged" by Erdoğan regime', *The Guardian*, 16 July 2016.

<sup>15</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25 July 2016.



had he established a secret underground network, with no indication of who the members were or what they were aiming for? If, as he claimed, he had no ambition to take over the state, why had he allowed (maybe encouraged) its penetration of the judiciary, the police and the armed forces? These questions remain.

Whatever the role of the Gülenist web, the massive wave of arrests and dismissals included not only members of the armed forces but all those who were suspected of membership of the network. By 20 July the total number of people arrested or suspended from their jobs was reported to have already exceeded 50,000, including 15,200 teachers and other education staff sacked, 8,700 Interior Ministry workers, 1,500 staff in the Finance Ministry and even 257 officials working in the Prime Minister's office.<sup>16</sup> On 21 July, acting under Article 120 of the Constitution, parliament passed a bill instituting a State of Emergency, to last for three months. This would allow the government to issue decrees having the force of law (subject to subsequent endorsement by parliament), with restrictions on publications and freedom of assembly and broader powers of arrest. In announcing these measures Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmuş pointed out that a State of Emergency was permitted under Article 15 of the European Convention of Human Rights and that the French government had issued a similar decree following the terrorist attacks in France. He promised that "we will not reverse fundamental rights and freedoms. We won't retreat from our democratic gains".<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, critics – such as Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), the main opposition party - were concerned that the government might use these powers to conduct a general witch-hunt against its assumed opponents.<sup>18</sup>

### **The failed coup had repercussions for Turkey's foreign relations:**

Initially, the failed coup increased tensions between Turkey and its western allies. Thanks to their virulent opposition to Erdoğan and all his works, western commentators in what was supposed to be the liberal and progressive media, such as the British newspapers *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, came out in support of the coup against a democratically elected government, with a commentator in *The Sunday Times* praising the plotters as "a force for progress".<sup>19</sup> In the USA, on the ultra-rightist Fox News TV,



one commentator claimed that "this coup is Turkey's last chance to avoid becoming... an outright Islamist dictatorship... We should make no mistake, the people staging this coup are the good guys": the fact that they killed around 250 people in a ruthless bid to seize power was flagrantly ignored.<sup>20</sup> In the aftermath, the experienced commentator David Barchard was virtually alone in arguing that the government's decision to introduce a State of Emergency was "a prudent and predictable response to the

Erdoğan at funeral for those killed in coup attempt

<sup>16</sup> 'Turkey coup attempt: crackdown toll passes 50,000', BBC News website, 20 July 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 21 July 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 22 July 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Soumaya Ghannoushi, 'Why is Turkey's Erdoğan being demonised in the West?', *Middle East Eye*, 21 July 2016 ([www.middleeasteye.net/users/soumaya-ghannoushi](http://www.middleeasteye.net/users/soumaya-ghannoushi)).

<sup>20</sup> Mohamed Elmasry, 'Fox News's support for Turkish coup is true to form', *ibid*, 19 July 2016 ([www.middleeasteye.net/users/mohamed-elmasry](http://www.middleeasteye.net/users/mohamed-elmasry)).

situation it finds itself in”, although there was the serious risk that it could be used “in an unnecessarily draconian way”.<sup>21</sup>

In Turkey, much resentment was caused, among both the opposition parties and the AKP, by the fact that most western governments seemed much readier to criticise the crackdown on the Gülenists than to welcome the defeat of the coup. Ironically, Vladimir Putin was far quicker to send a message of support to Erdoğan than his western counterparts. With the exception of Britain<sup>22</sup>, none of the western governments sent any high-ranking visitors to Ankara to confirm their support for democracy until weeks after the event. In the case of the US, the initial reaction of Secretary of State John Kerry was simply to call for “stability and peace and continuity within Turkey”, without condemning the attempted coup. Later, President Obama called President Erdoğan, announcing that “all parties should support the democratically-elected Government of Turkey”,<sup>23</sup> but many Turks were left with the impression that if the coup had succeeded the US government would have happily accepted it, as it had in the case of Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

A particular point of dispute between Ankara and Washington was caused by Gülen’s residence in the United States. Immediately after the coup, the Turkish government demanded his extradition, eliciting the predictable response that this would be a matter for the American courts, and would depend on the nature of the evidence brought against him. As a sign that the US government would not seek to be totally uncooperative, a team of three officials from the US Department of Justice and a representative of the State Department arrived in Ankara on 22 July to provide technical advice on the extradition application to Turkish counterparts. It was nonetheless emphasised that whether Gülen were extradited or not would depend entirely on the courts in the US. Even if the primary court decision went against him, Gülen would almost certainly appeal, so the case could drag on for months.<sup>25</sup>

### **A bout of unprecedented harmony among Turkey’s main political parties:**

An important feature of the post-coup climate, albeit little reported in the western media, is that all the parties represented in parliament (that is, besides the AKP and CHP, the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and the pro-Kurdish HDP) condemned the attempted coup, and showed solidarity with the government on this issue. The declarations of unity climaxed on 7 August when ‘millions’ of citizens were reported to have attended a ‘joint democracy rally’ held in Istanbul’s Yenikapı district. Originally organised by the AKP, it was addressed also by the leaders of the CHP and MHP – the notable absentee being the HDP, which was excluded due to its failure to draw a clear line between itself and the PKK. In the words of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, “there is a new Turkey now”, in which all the politicians should learn lessons from the defeat of the coup – “and that includes me”. Similarly, the MHP

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<sup>21</sup> David Barchard, ‘Turkey’s state of emergency is justified but carries risks’, *ibid*, 22 July 2016 ([www.middleeasteye.net/users/david-barchard](http://www.middleeasteye.net/users/david-barchard)).

<sup>22</sup> Britain’s Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, visited Ankara on 20-21 July, and immediately called on the Speaker in the bomb-damaged parliament building: see the interview with British Ambassador Richard Moore, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 30 July 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Massimo Calabresi, ‘How John Kerry Handled Turkey’s Coup’, *Time*, 19 July 2016.

<sup>24</sup> See Murat Yetkin, ‘The Manbij timeline: Call it coincidence’, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 15 August 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Jillian D’Amours, ‘Turkey faces big legal battle to extradite Gulen’, *Middle East Eye*, 2 August 2016, ([www.middleeasteye.net/topics/turkeycoup](http://www.middleeasteye.net/topics/turkeycoup)).

leader Devlet Bahçeli recognised 15 July as ‘a milestone for Turkey’.<sup>26</sup> This solidarity clearly reflected the public mood, with a public opinion poll conducted shortly before finding that a big majority of respondents wanted the climate of cooperation to continue.<sup>27</sup>

The new mood bore some results during the six weeks following the attempted coup. On 25 July, President Erdoğan called in Yıldırım, Kılıçdaroğlu and Bahçeli for a tripartite meeting in the presidential office, at which the party leaders agreed to work on a package of limited constitutional changes affecting the judiciary, presumably aimed at preventing its infiltration by another anti-democratic organisation. Since the AKP had 317 seats in parliament, it would need the support of at least the MHP, with 40 seats, to achieve the minimum threshold of 330 to change the constitution or, better, with the CHP’s 133 seats, to do this without resort to a compulsory referendum (requiring 367). Two days later Erdoğan announced that he was withdrawing all court charges of ‘insulting the President’ against the opposition leaders. A similar move by Prime Minister Yıldırım, in which he dropped legal cases against 1,500 people, including politicians and journalists, was announced on 4 August. A first meeting of representatives of the three parties – AKP, CHP and MHP – on the proposed constitutional changes was held on 12 August. More significantly, on 23 August the three party leaders agreed that the inter-party panel could expand its scope to include consideration of 50 constitutional changes which had been agreed in 2013, but then blocked by the government’s reaction to the Gezi Park protests and its insistence on a shift to a presidential system.<sup>28</sup>

If achieved, these changes could include some significant improvements in Turkey’s human rights regime, and hence its relations with the EU, among other things. However, reforms could not exclude the Kurdish question, and the dialogue would therefore need to include the HDP eventually, as both Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and deputy premier Numan Kurtulmuş pointed out. Perhaps significantly, in these proposals neither Erdoğan or Yıldırım repeated calls for a presidential system, suggesting that they had perhaps decided to push this idea onto the back burner, at least for the time being. Should they change their minds, the climate of compromise would almost certainly end, and the prospect of democratic reforms be postponed once more. On a related issue, on 1 September, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu called on the EU to open negotiations on Chapters 23 and 24 of the *acquis communautaire*, covering judiciary and fundamental rights, and justice, freedom and security. If achieved, this should bring Turkey into line with European norms, but negotiations on these Chapters are currently blocked by Cyprus.

### **Continued problems in Turkey’s relations with the EU, especially Germany:**

In April Turkey and the EU agreed a plan originally put forward by Ahmet Davutoğlu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in March under which Turkey would receive €3 billion, rising eventually to €6 billion, to help care for the 3 million-odd Syrian refugees now in Turkey (see McLellan, *Review 27*, p.19). In return, Turkey would prevent people-smuggling across the Aegean, and take back ‘irregular’ migrants

<sup>26</sup> Quotations from *Hürriyet Daily News*, 8 August 2016

<sup>27</sup> Andy-Ar araştırması: see above, note 9.

<sup>28</sup> See William Hale, ‘Developing the Democratic Identity: Turkey’s Search for a New Constitution’, in Shane Brennan and Marc Herzog, eds., *Turkey and the Politics of National Identity: Social, Economic and Cultural Transformation* (London and New York, I.B.Tauris, 2014) pp.38-62.

arriving in the Greek islands, with one Syrian refugee resettled in the EU from Turkey for each migrant returned from Greece – a condition with which Turkey complied. The EU would also give Turkish citizens 90-day visa-free access to the Union's Schengen area, provided Ankara met 72 criteria on human rights and other issues. Implementation of these agreements – especially the last – proved difficult, however, since President Erdoğan refused to amend certain articles of Turkey's anti-terrorist legislation, demanded as one of the criteria. The EU had an interest in settling this issue, however, lest Turkey might back down on its commitment to prevent people-smuggling to the Greek islands, producing a new refugee crisis for the EU. In May it was reported that implementation of the visa deal would probably be postponed until the autumn, as five of the criteria had not yet been met. On the Turkish side, there seemed to be some possibility of compromise as Ambassador to the EU Selim Yenel announced that Turkey would be willing to alter its anti-terrorist legislation if this did “not impede the fight against terrorism”.<sup>29</sup>

Relations between Turkey and Germany took a further battering on 2 June when the Bundestag passed a resolution classifying the massacres and deportations of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War as genocide. The resolution caused a particularly harsh reaction in Turkey, at a moment when Turks felt that Germany needed their cooperation over the refugee issue. This was exacerbated by Germany's failure to react positively to the failure of the 15 July coup attempt. In response, Turkey blocked a planned visit by Bundestag members to the NATO air base at İncirlik near Adana, where six German reconnaissance aircraft and 250 German soldiers were stationed in support of the US-led campaign against the Islamic State forces in Syria. As a tit-for-tat, it was suggested that Germany might withdraw its forces from the base. At the end of August, hopes for a resolution of this issue were pinned on a planned meeting between Chancellor Merkel and President Erdoğan at the G-20 summit to be held in China on 4 September. In the meantime, however, there was recognition of the need to patch up the emotional climate, at least on the German side. On 18 August the German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière praised Turkey for its cooperation in the fight against terrorism: 12 days later Chancellor Merkel belatedly recognised that it was “right and important” to condemn the coup.<sup>30</sup>

Two important but little-reported results of the Turkey-EU deal over the refugee issue affected Turkey's overall relations with the Union. In an attempt to revive the long-stalled accession process, on 30 June negotiations were officially started on Chapter 33 of the EU's *acquis communautaire*, on financial and budgetary provisions. This followed the opening of talks on Chapter 17 on economic and monetary policy in December 2015. On 29 August the Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci also announced that talks to update and enlarge the Customs Union agreement with the EU, in place since 1995, would begin at the end of 2016 or early 2017. Since the improvements could be expected to cover services, government contracting and agricultural trade, they could bring important benefits to both sides – especially (to Turkey) in facilitating its agricultural exports. Such technical improvements could also avoid the political and emotional issues implicit in the accession process.

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 August 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted, *ibid*, 19 August, 30 August 2016.



## **Relations between Turkey and Israel took a long step towards normalisation:**

On 28 June the Turkish and Israeli governments agreed to end a six-year diplomatic stand-off: this had begun in May 2010 following a botched raid by Israeli commandos on the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, carrying aid to the Palestinians in the Gaza strip, in which ten Turkish citizens were killed. Under the deal, following an official Israeli apology, the Israeli government agreed to pay \$20 million compensation to the families of the *Mavi Marmara* victims. In return, all private Turkish claims against Israeli soldiers would be dropped. Although the economic blockade of Gaza would not be fully lifted, as Tayyip Erdoğan had originally demanded, Turkey would be allowed to send aid to the strip via the Israeli port of Ashdod.

The agreement, which was ratified by the Turkish parliament on 20 August, represented something of a climb-down for President Erdoğan, who had previously taken a hawkish line on this issue. On 29 August, high hopes of further advances were expressed by Amira Oron, Israel's *chargée d'affaires* in Ankara, who claimed that trade between the two countries could reach \$8 billion per annum. She also pointed out that Turkish and Israeli companies were discussing plans for a submarine pipeline to Turkey from Israel's Leviathan gas field, which could supply European markets as well as Turkey. A full return to normal diplomatic relations, with the exchange of ambassadors, was expected to follow in a few weeks.

## **A dramatic turnaround in Turkey's relations with Russia:**

Tayyip Erdoğan's decision to re-set Turkey's relations with its regional neighbours, following the change of government in Ankara, was unexpectedly productive in relations with Russia. These had reached a nadir in the autumn of 2015, following the downing by Turkish F-16 fighters of a Russian SU-24 'plane which had entered Turkish air space'. This sharply escalated a diplomatic confrontation in which Russia supported the forces of the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey backed his opponents in the Free Syrian Army (see McLellan, *Review* 27, p.17). Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded an apology as well as compensation for the loss of the Russian aircraft and the death of its crew. To give his stand economic force, he severely restricted the flow of Russian tourists to Turkey, which declined by 90 percent, as well as blocking Turkey's food exports to Russia. This provided Tayyip Erdoğan with a strong incentive to seek a way out of the crisis, although he rejected the idea that Turkey should apologise for defending its own frontiers. The result was a bout of intensive secret diplomacy involving the Chief of the General Staff, General Hulusi Akar, the businessman and former minister Cavit Çağlar and the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. As a result, a form of (Russian) words was found which Putin could interpret as an apology, but which was also acceptable on the Turkish side.<sup>31</sup>

The result demonstrated that autocratic governments like those of Russia could be much more nimble in solving a diplomatic crisis than liberal democracies, since they do not have to bother with justifying a change in policy to the media or parliamentary opinion. On 30 June President Putin signed a decree lifting the ban on package tours to Turkey and ordered his government to normalise trade ties. On 9 August Erdoğan

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<sup>31</sup> For the details, see Murat Yetkin, 'Story of secret diplomacy that ended Russia-Turkey jet crisis', *ibid*, 9 August 2016.



sealed the peace by flying to St Petersburg, after predicting that this would be “a new beginning. At the talks with my friend Vladimir I believe a new page in bilateral relations will be opened”. On the substantive issue of Syria he accepted that “without Russia’s participation, it’s impossible to find a solution to the Syrian problem”.<sup>32</sup> Talking to journalists in the plane returning from St Petersburg, Erdoğan announced that the two countries would be setting up a special committee, of representatives of the intelligence services, the military and the two foreign ministries, to prevent future confrontations. There would also be a direct ‘hot line’ between the two Chiefs of Staff. The main gain from this agreement, from the Turkish viewpoint, was that it allowed it to play a more active military role in Syria, without the risk of a head-on collision with Russia. Turkey had not abandoned its fundamental commitment to the ultimate removal of the Assad regime, but it now accepted that Assad himself could remain in a transitional government prior to a peace settlement, bringing Ankara closer to the Russian position.<sup>33</sup>

### **Policy towards Syria remains a major problem, causing serious differences with the US:**

Improved relations with Russia had the paradoxical result that, while basic Turkish and Russian policies on Syria were still far apart, differences between Turkey and its American allies were far more open and bitter. Essentially, Turkish policy in Syria had had two main objectives: first, to support the ‘moderate’ Sunni opposition to President Assad, demanding that any political settlement in Syria would have to include his eventual removal and, second, to prevent the Kurdish minority in northern Syria from achieving *de facto* independence or autonomy – and thus a base from which it could support attacks by the PKK in Turkey. Since 2015, Ankara had come round to joining the coalition forces opposing the Islamic State organisation in Syria, but there were still suspicions on the American side that in the past Erdoğan had been too permissive towards IS. More immediately, since the Obama administration was anxious to avoid anything other than a very limited US military presence on the ground, it had sub-contracted a major part of the struggle against IS in northern Syria to the ‘Syrian Democratic Forces’ (SDF), the main part of which was formed from the People’s Protection Units (YPG), the militia formed by the Democratic Union Party (PYD). The latter was and is the dominant Kurdish political movement in northern Syria, and is treated by Turkey as an extension of the PKK. The PYD denies the connection, although its leader Saleh Muslim admits to following the ideology of the PKK’s imprisoned founder, Abdullah Öcalan.<sup>34</sup> The US government agrees with the EU and Turkey in classifying the PKK as a terrorist organisation but refuses to do so in the case of the PYD/YPG – a source of constant friction with Ankara.<sup>35</sup>

Apart from assisting the international coalition against IS – primarily by allowing the use of the Incirlik air base by coalition forces operating in Syria and Iraq – Turkey’s

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 8 August 2016.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 22 August 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Aron Lund, ‘The People’s Rule: an Interview with Saleh Muslim, Part I’, Carnegie Middle East Center, *Diwan*, 27 February 2014 (<http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54675?lang=en>).

<sup>35</sup> A discordant note is struck by Massoud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, who accepts that the PKK and PYD ‘are exactly one and the same thing’. Asked whether the US government knew this, he replied ‘They know very well, but they don’t want to say they know very well... You know the top priority for us and the Americans is the fight against [IS] so they might turn a blind eye’: Amberin Zaman, ‘Massoud Barzani vows to fight corruption with same dedication as KRG has fought IS’, *Al-Monitor Pulse*, 22 March 2016 ([www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/03](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/03)).

main strategic objective was to prevent the establishment of a PYD-controlled state along the whole of its southern border. In this, Turkey apparently has the support of Russia, which opposes the establishment of a separate Kurdish political entity in northern Syria sponsored by the US. However, by August the PYD's ambition seemed close to achievement, as the SDF had pushed IS forces out of most of the border area, but for a 90-km gap between the Euphrates river in the east and a small strip of territory controlled by pro-Turkish Syrian Arab militias in the west, around the town of Azaz, an aim which was achieved by 6 September. On 12 August, they had captured the town of Manbij, several miles to the west of the Euphrates. Against this background, on 20 August a suicide bomber, thought to have been a young teenager sent over the border by IS, killed 54 people, including a large number of children, at a wedding party in the Şahinbey district of Gaziantep province, close to the Syrian border. In response, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu demanded that the border be "completely cleansed" of IS forces. As a result, on 24 September, around 1,500 fighters in the Turkish-backed FSA, supported by Turkish tanks, some special forces, and an artillery barrage from Turkish territory crossed the border close to the Syrian town of Jarablus, just over the frontier on the west bank of the Euphrates. The IS forces were rapidly expelled from Jarablus, after which the Turkish and FSA troops turned south to face the YPG forces in Manbij: these were subject to another artillery barrage, with the objective of sweeping both the IS and the US-backed YPG out of territory west of the Euphrates. On the first score, on 3 September Turkish forces extended 'Operation Euphrates Shield' by crossing the border near Kilis, some 25 km west of Jarablus, to attack IS forces in the town of al-Rai. The aim was evidently to establish a 'security zone' along the full length of the frontier between Jarablus and Azaz.

Coincidentally with the conflict over Manbij, on 24 August US Vice-President Joe Biden was in Ankara, where he gave public support to the Turkish operation, emphasising that "we have made it absolutely clear that they [the YPG forces] must go back across the [Euphrates] river. They cannot, and will not, under no circumstances [sic], get American support if they do not keep that commitment".<sup>36</sup> On the following day Secretary of State Kerry telephoned Çavuşoğlu stating, among other things, that the YPG militias were withdrawing to the east of the Euphrates.<sup>37</sup> On the ground, however, as Turkish-backed attacks continued, it became clear that the YPG were not withdrawing from Manbij. To add to the evident confusion in US policy, on 29 August, Brett McGurk, President Obama's Special Envoy to the anti-IS coalition called the clashes over Manbij "unacceptable" calling on all parties to concentrate on the struggle against IS and implicitly accepting the YPG presence west of the Euphrates.<sup>38</sup> There thus seemed to be an open contradiction between policies of different offices in Washington, with the *New York Times* reporting on 28 August that the Pentagon was supporting the YPG, while the CIA backed the FSA.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 24 August 2016

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 25 August 2016.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 29 August 2016.

<sup>39</sup> Anne Barnard, 'In Syria, Rebels Threaten Kurdish-Controlled Territory as US Allies Clash', *New York Times*, 28 August 2016.

## Crucial uncertainties remain in both foreign policy and domestic politics:

Early September saw the uncertainties and conflicts in Turkey's foreign relations unresolved. In settling disagreements with both the United States (over Syria) and Germany (over the refugee question), hopes were pinned on the G-20 summit in China on 4 September, at which Tayyip Erdoğan was due to meet both Barack Obama and Angela Merkel. Nonetheless, in the medium term it seemed doubtful that the Obama administration would take a sufficiently robust stand towards Syria as to resolve the conflict during the remaining months of its term. Assuming she were the next resident in the White House, Hillary Clinton was expected to take a more assertive line, and would probably need Turkish as well as Russian acquiescence in achieving it.<sup>40</sup> If, as a result, IS were defeated, then the US might abandon its alliance with the YPG, which would have no further military purpose. Hence, it was credibly argued that the PYD's plan of establishing 'Rojava' as an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Syria – in which Kurds only have a bare majority – had little long-term chance of survival, either politically or economically.<sup>41</sup>

Potentially, also, it seemed that Turkey's domestic politics might be on the cusp of important changes. In a little-reported message to party members delivered on 14 August, Tayyip Erdoğan had stated that

We can no longer act like we did before July 15. None of us can, including me as the President... In the same vein, the AK Party – which has been governing Turkey for the past 14 years – cannot act like it used to either. I hope that non-governmental organisations, media, professional organisations, and all groups representing different dispositions and schools [of thought] also feel the same way... The chairmen of political parties and people from all walks of life, who gathered at Istanbul's Yenikapı [Square] on August 7, became the harbingers of a new door [in Turkish *yeni kapı*] being opened in front of our country.<sup>42</sup>

If this were a genuine change of direction for President Tayyip Erdoğan, it would not be the first in his career since, prior to 2002 he had shifted from the hard-line Islamist positions of his youth to an emphasis on pragmatism and even a substantial input of democratic liberalism. After 2011 he had moved over to increasing authoritarianism and intolerance. Whether he would now shift back to a Turkish version of 'one nation conservatism' or would use the defeat of the 15 July coup simply to reinforce his personal power, remained an open and intriguing question.



<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Dan Roberts and Lauren Gambino, 'Hillary Clinton calls for more ground troops as part of hawkish Isis strategy', *The Guardian*, 19 November 2015, and Barbara Plett Usher and Suzanne Kianpour, 'Syria conflict: US diplomats press for strikes against Assad', BBC News website, 17 June 2016.

<sup>41</sup> See Fabrice Balanche, 'Rojava's Sustainability and the PKK's Regional Strategy', *Policy Watch* 2680, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 24 August 2016 ([www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/rojavas..](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/rojavas..))

<sup>42</sup> Quoted, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 15 August 2016.



# Update on Cyprus

## September 2016

by **Clement Dodd**

At the beginning of the period under review the TRNC was governed by an unlikely coalition of the leftist Republican Turkish/National Forces Party (CTP/BG) and the nationalist and rightist National Unity Party (UBP) This coalition came to an end in early April 2016 when the UBP resigned from the coalition.

This occurred because of divided views on a proposed economic protocol – an economic memorandum of agreement between Turkey and the TRNC on the terms governing Turkish financial aid to the TRNC from 2016 to 2018. Some aspects of the protocol were deeply questioned by the leftist members of the coalition. Being in favour of state enterprises as part of a welfare state, they disliked private sector participation in, and control of, the supply of water provided by Turkey and the distribution of the electricity to be provided by Turkey in similar fashion. The protocol also envisaged the reorganisation of the State Planning Organisation and some features of the judiciary to bring it more in line with the Turkish system. The protocol also included the need to grant citizenship to the many Turks who have in recent years come to work and live in the country. President Erdoğan has urged the TRNC to create citizenships for them.<sup>43</sup>

As the coalition government was holding back on agreeing the economic protocol, and was consequently unable to pay civil service salaries, the National Unity Party (UBP) abandoned the coalition, and formed a new coalition government with the Democratic-United Forces Party (DP-UG) led by Serdar Denktaş, son of the late President Rauf Denktaş. The new government does not, however, have a very secure majority in parliament, having to rely for support from four independent deputies.<sup>44</sup> Given the difficulties in these circumstances of decisive and effective government it was widely suggested that there should be new elections, particularly by a party with no representation in parliament, but gathering strength in the country. This is the People's Party, led by an academic, Kudret Özersay. This party stresses the need for less corruption in government and for more professionalism. A recent survey of 2057 persons in the Turkish Cypriot part of Nicosia/Lefkoşa suggested that, if an election were held, 33 per cent would vote for the People's Party. The next most popular party was the UBP, with 19 per cent of the vote.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The 2011 census revealed a total TRNC population of 286,257 (compared with a resident population in the South of 840,407). The indigenous Turkish Cypriot population is reported to be about 47.6% of the resident population, while indigenous Turks number 44.9%. However, there are more indigenous Turkish Cypriot citizens. As only citizens have voting rights, the indigenous Turkish Cypriots constitute a much larger proportion of the voting public, at around 70%. (Figures are from a study by Fiona Mullen, Director of Sapianta Economics, [www.sapianta.com](http://www.sapianta.com)).

<sup>44</sup> In the Assembly the Republican Turkish-National Forces Party has 20 seats and the leftist Social Democratic Party has 3. The National Unity Party has 18 and the Democratic-United Forces Party has 5,

<sup>45</sup> It is claimed that Özersay appeals particularly to younger voters. He served under Ergün Olgun when the latter was President Denktaş's official negotiator, and was more recently official negotiator during the presidency of Derviş Eroğlu.

## Relations between Turkey and the TRNC



The Turkish Cypriots have to be grateful to Turkey for providing water and, soon, much more electrical power. Nor could they at present survive without the considerable financial aid they receive from Turkey, let alone develop the economy, but gratitude is, as often in such circumstances, tinged with some resentment at having to be in such a demeaning situation. Some feel that they are coming too much under Turkish influence or domination. Not unexpectedly, therefore, some Turkish Cypriots resented the announcement that in June, in accordance with an agreement made in

2014, a Youth and Sports Office would be set up with Turkish personnel mainly, and under Turkish direction. Turkish sports organisations protested vociferously. So did the Turkish Cypriot Youth Organisation, though the Prime Minister, Hüseyin Özgürkün could not see why. Critics maintained that the real aim of the new sports organisation was to impose the Turkish life model on the Turkish Cypriots.

These have not been the only complaints about increasing Turkish influence in Turkish Cypriot society. The Turkish Cypriot Primary and Secondary School teachers' trade unions have also been complaining that some pupils are being given religious instruction by derviş orders. Surprisingly perhaps, in the past there has been little or no conflict between Muslims and Christians in Cyprus, who quite often lived together in mixed villages. Most of these complaints of Turkish domination come from the political left, whose adherents are more inclined to an agreement with the Greek Cypriots than those on the nationalist right. The present government has recently come under fire from the left for restricting the number of church services held in the TRNC by Greek Cypriot priests for a minority of Greek Cypriots who have not moved to the South.<sup>46</sup>

### Greek Cypriot/Turkish Cypriot Relations

These Turkish/Turkish Cypriot issues are disturbing, but Turkish Cypriot relations with the Greek Cypriots are more important if they are going to succeed in joining in a federation. So the Turkish Cypriots did not welcome the TRNC being recently dubbed a fake state by the Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister, Ioannis Kasoulides.

More important, on 23 May President Mustafa Akıncı was invited by the Turkish President to a dinner during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, at which the UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-Moon was also to be present. Learning this, and that Akıncı, had also had a meeting with Ban Ki-Moon, the Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades, who had also been invited, shunned the dinner. In his view Akıncı's meeting with the UN Secretary-General downgraded the status of the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus. The UN was held to be to blame, especially as, allegedly, the UN had given the assurance that no effort would be made by Turkey to downgrade the Republic of Cyprus in any way. Anastasiades subsequently decided as a result, to cancel some of the meetings arranged with the UN Special Representative in Cyprus, Mr Espen Barth Eide and President Akıncı.

This upset was followed by another, rather more important, disagreement when a serious fire broke out in late June in the Troodos mountain range in the South. Turkey

<sup>46</sup> It is difficult to say how serious, if at all, religion is becoming in the TRNC. The Turkish Cypriots are not notably religious, and differences between them and the Greek Cypriots on this score have not in the past been a serious source of friction.



offered to help with fire-fighting airplanes, but the Greek Cypriot government insisted that they had to land in, and fly from, Larnaca or Paphos in the South, where the control of operations was based. However Turkey refused to let its aircraft land in the South, opting to use instead the Turkish Cypriot airport, Ercan. The Greek Cypriot authorities rejected this offer on the grounds that Ercan was an illegal airport. The UN Secretary-General was definitely not amused, but perhaps did not remember, as Turkish Cypriots are apt to point out, that it was the UN, responding to pressure by the major powers at the time, that in 1964 began the process of recognising Greek Cypriot sovereignty over the whole of Cyprus in defiance of the 1960 Treaties.



The road to agreement seemed to be littered with obstacles. Another was the decision of the Greek Cypriot government to call for international tenders for exploitation of hydrocarbons in its declared Exclusive Economic Zone. This is a provocative issue. Turkey and the TRNC had objected previously to the unilateral exploitation of hydrocarbon resources that in their view belonged to both the Turkish and the Greek Cypriots (TAS Review 26, p.15). The Turkish Government found a reason not to continue its own challenging prospecting in the region when the international companies employed by the Republic of Cyprus decided no longer to drill there. It was hoped that this moratorium would hold, but the Greek Cypriots seem determined now to reopen the issue, which could easily bring negotiations to a halt again, as Turkey has warned them.

### The Negotiations

When the new Turkish Cypriot government assumed power. Former President Talat believed that this would make a solution of the Cyprus problem very difficult. The new government is certainly less than enthusiastic about President Akıncı's handling of the negotiations with Anastasiades, claiming that he is showing too much 'empathy' for little or nothing in return. The new government wants, reasonably enough, to be represented in the negotiating team, which is dominated by left-wing party members, but so far this request has met with no response. In fact relations between the president and the government are strained.

The negotiations are now becoming more than ever difficult as territorial and related issues are coming to be discussed. Allegedly there has been considerable agreement of governmental issues, but the Turkish Cypriot insistence on a revolving presidency is still said to be a major problem. Also issues relating to the return of property to Greek Cypriot owners, or its transfer to present Turkish Cypriot occupiers, are complex, with compensation likely to have big financial consequences.

There is no official information on what has been achieved so far in the negotiations. However, in early August the Turkish Cypriot newspaper, *Kıbrıs Postası*, relying it claimed on diplomatic sources, stated that 90 per cent of the issues at stake had been agreed, but not the issues of territory, nor guarantees of the settlement by Turkey, or by the Guarantor Powers of the 1960 treaties. This issue of guarantees for the Turkish Cypriots is to be discussed, with, no doubt, many other still outstanding issues, by both presidents with the UN Secretary-General in late September. These meetings are to be followed in November by a meeting of both sides with representatives of the 1960 Guarantor Powers.

On the issue of guarantees the Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Kotsias, has called for the complete removal of the system of guarantees, and the withdrawal of all Turkish forces from the island, a statement that the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry condemned. Like the Greek Cypriots, the Greeks seem to believe that a guarantee by the EU of any settlement would be enough.

### **Alleged Greek Cypriot Proposals**

The UN Special Representative in Cyprus, seems optimistic about progress in the difficult areas of territory and resettlement of Greek Cypriots in what is now Turkish Cypriot territory. He may be too optimistic. In late July Anastasiades reportedly put on the table claims that included the handing over of most of the Karpas peninsula, the whole of Morphou (Güzelyurt) in the productive north-west of the island, and cession of territory that would reduce considerably the Turkish Cypriot part of the central plain. All this, if achieved, would leave the Turkish Cypriots with less than 20 per cent of the island. The Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister, Hüseyin Özgürgün, has stated that Morphou will never be returned, an intention backed in the past by President Erdoğan. Under the alleged Greek Cypriot proposals the area to be ceded would be enough to resettle 100,000 Greek Cypriots. In addition, the resettlement in the remaining Turkish Cypriot territory of some 60,000 Greek Cypriots was proposed, which would amount to 20 per cent of the population in the Turkish region.<sup>47</sup> Hopefully, starting with these proposals is a bargaining tactic. Yet, oddly, Foreign Minister Kasoulides has recently stated that “a solution of the Cyprus problem’ is 95 to 98 per cent done”.

### **Conclusions**

President Anastasiades declares that the Republic of Cyprus will continue to block Turkey’s progress to EU membership, which now seems to be the aim of the Turkish Government, after a period of indecision. Yet, if a federation is formed in Cyprus, Anastasiades would hardly be able to persuade the Turkish Cypriot federal partner to agree to support him. He would have to rely on some other EU state to block Turkey’s progress to the European Union, which would be risky. The Greek Cypriot president must be aware that if, after a settlement in Cyprus, Turkey were to become an EU member, Cyprus would need significant, but probably unobtainable, derogations from EU norms to prevent its being overwhelmed by so large and powerful a neighbour. The EU system does not easily embrace the union of large and small neighbouring states, as current relations between Germany and Denmark underline.

It is the dangers of the much-vaunted ‘EU solution’ for Cyprus that former negotiator Ergün Olgun seems to have in mind when he asserts that “bizonality should be a fundamental criterion for the solution of the property issue”.<sup>48</sup> Indeed what is going to happen to bi-zonality, and bi-communality, the traditional UN requirements for a Cyprus settlement, under the norms of ‘the EU solution’ for Cyprus? They will be very hard to maintain.



<sup>47</sup> These claims were reported in *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 August 2016, in an article by Yusuf Kanlı, a Turkish Cypriot who works as a journalist in Turkey, and who is accurate and well informed in the articles he writes on Cyprus from time to time. He does not give the source of his information, but he would probably have learned about it from Turkish Cypriot ministers who had been briefed by Akıncı. The Greek Cypriot side may consider these harsh demands to be a necessary tactical starting point in the negotiations on these very difficult issues.

<sup>48</sup> In an article in the Turkish Cypriot newspaper, *KıbrısI*, 8 September, 2016.



## Turkey's Reflexive Return to the Balkans

by Timothy Less  
Cambridge

Director of the Nova Europa political risk consultancy,  
former British Diplomat

Since the founding of the imperial city at the mouth of the Bosphorus, whichever power occupied it has also tended to dominate the Balkans. In this respect, the last century or so has been historically anomalous because of Turkey's lengthy non-attendance on the Balkan stage. But are there circumstances in which Turkey is drawn back to the Balkans? And if so, what would the impact be on a fragile and divided region?

The absence of Turkey from its traditional Balkan hinterland is simply explained: for much of the last century the country has been weak while others have been strong. Its retreat began in the 1900s when the Ottoman Empire went into terminal decline, allowing others to fill the space it vacated. From the east, Russia established a sphere of influence in the Balkans after sponsoring the independence of the Serbs and Bulgarians. And, from central Europe, Austria directly annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the collapse of the European imperial system in the early twentieth century, Russia and Austria retreated from the Balkans, leaving a temporary power vacuum. However, the newly-founded state of Turkey was too weak, unstable and introverted to take advantage of this situation and re-assert any influence over the region.

Then, in the post-war period, the politics of the Cold War meant that Turkey did not get a look in. Instead, the two superpowers imposed themselves on what became a strategic frontline. Romania and Bulgaria were absorbed into the Soviet sphere, Greece fell under the influence of the West, Albania retreated into isolation and the United States and the Soviet Union maintained Yugoslavia as a neutral buffer to separate their respective spheres of influence.

A new opportunity for Turkey to assert its influence arose at the start of the 1990s when the two superpowers lost interest in the Balkans, creating a new power vacuum in the region. However, this opportunity was to be short-lived. As the region descended into internecine warfare, a powerful West – in the form of the US and the Europeans – imposed itself on the Balkans, locking the region into a process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Although Turkey developed a more visible diplomatic and economic presence in the Balkans through the 1990s and 2000s, it could not realistically challenge the West's leading role. Indeed, Ankara sub-contracted its Balkan policy to the EU, which it planned one day to join and which, in the meantime,

was willing to bear the cost of maintaining stability on Turkey's land route to Europe. Instead, Turkey applied its generic policy of 'zero problems' to the Balkans, seeking good relations with all its various states, regardless of their history or culture, and refusing to take sides in local disputes over borders and territory. All this stood in contrast to the period which had ended just a century before when Istanbul was the major external power in the Balkans.

However, things are changing because Turkey has at last gained the strength and confidence to be a regional player, and the West is losing its grip on the Balkans, creating the space, once again, for Turkey to take to the Balkan stage. The basis of Turkey's strength is its economy. For much of the twentieth century, the country's economic potential was stymied by political instability, bad government and geographical isolation. But this has now changed. At home, the government adopted a market-based approach to developing the economy while abroad the collapse of the old Eastern bloc allowed Turkey to integrate economically with Western Europe. Together these have unleashed a surge of growth that has doubled the size of the economy this century and lifted it to fourteenth place in the world, compared to twenty-first place in 1980. This economic power translates into political power. Turkey is steadily establishing itself as a major overseas investor and trading power, with a network of states in the Balkans and elsewhere, whose fortunes are bound to those of Turkey. Economic growth is also supporting the development of the Turkish military, whose budget has grown 20% this year alone to US\$21.2bn – far bigger than that of any of Turkey's immediate neighbours. This allows Turkey to buttress its international political objectives with hard power.

Meanwhile, Turkey's institutions are becoming more stable. After a long, complicated and violent struggle for control of power through the twentieth century, a single party is now imposing itself on the institutions of state, under a powerful leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has gained a massive power base in the country with his appeal to the aspirational working class. Furthermore, Erdoğan's power is strengthening. Following the attempted military coup in July, he has weakened the army's check on executive power, marginalised his opponents in the Gülenist movement and found a pretext for creating a presidential system of government. Meanwhile, European governments have effectively made clear that Turkey will never join the EU, ending Turkey's former deference to Brussels. All this gives Erdoğan a firmer hand with which to project Turkish power in the international sphere. In the Balkans Turkey has succeeded in forcing the locals to clamp down on the activities of suspected Gülenists.

In parallel with the rise of Turkey, the influence of the West in the Balkans is steadily declining. The process began last decade with the decision by the United States to downgrade its military and political commitment to the region and switch its priorities to other parts of the world. In its place, the European Union assumed the leading external role, promising the region democracy, prosperity and peace as an integrated part of the EU in return for compliance with its demands. But now the EU is struggling to impose its authority on the region as it grapples with a set of apparently unresolvable political crises that threaten its very survival. The evidence for this is manifold. In the eastern Balkans, Brussels' efforts to promote democracy, markets and the rule of law are having only minimal impact. Instead, Bulgaria and Romania remain gripped by local oligarchs who subvert the political system to their own ends. Both countries are imposing limits on the operation of the free market in

favour of economic protectionism. And Bulgaria is pursuing an entirely independent migration policy.

Meanwhile, in the western Balkans, which languish outside the EU but increasingly lack any hope of joining it, stability is declining. The fading prospect of EU membership, and with it, any hope of a normal life, is causing young people to turn on their governments in mass street demonstrations. Worryingly, unhappy minorities in divided states such as Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo are also sharpening their demands for some form of separation as the EU's promise of security wears thin. The demise of Western influence does not in itself imply a major new role for Turkey. However, one factor is likely to focus Turkey's mind – the return of a strong Russia to the Balkans, especially its Orthodox parts, since the end of the last decade.

Moscow has long seen the Balkans as a region of special interest. It is keen to develop transit routes for natural gas that bypasses Ukraine. It sees the Balkans as important to Russia's security, not just as a bulwark against NATO expansion but also as a bargaining chip in its dispute with the West. And the Balkans is a place where Russia can still genuinely affect outcomes, providing assurance of its continued Great Power status. To this end, Russia has successfully created a sphere of influence by sponsoring a local clientele – oligarchs, politicians, political parties, and so on – and championing the locals' political goals, whether separation for the Bosnian Serbs or Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo. This constitutes a serious threat to Turkey, whose relationship with Russia has long been conflictual. Today, the two are in dispute over their respective spheres of influence in the Black Sea and the Caucasus, and they stand on opposite sides on the politics of the Middle East. In the Balkans, they are starting to compete for influence in Bulgaria, where Russian influence touches Turkey's western border, causing one of its political parties to split between its pro-Russian and pro-Turkish factions at the end of last year.

Will all this create the geopolitical conditions in which Turkey might be drawn back into the Balkans in a more serious way? Inevitably, the answer takes us into the realm of conjecture in what is a highly fluid political environment involving multiple players, at both the local and international level. However, it is possible to envisage a sequence of events that could see Turkey return to the Balkans sometime this decade. This sequence begins with the destruction of Islamic State, which will probably happen next year or 2018. After two years of division, a crude international coalition is finally forming, involving the US, Russia, Turkey, Iran and various Arab states, which all agree on the need to destroy an organisation that is causing havoc in the Middle East. This will have two important consequences. One will be to galvanise Turkey's re-emergence as a regional power which, by dint of its geography, will bear primary responsibility for stabilising Syria and northern Iraq in the aftermath of Islamic State's demise. Turkey will inevitably use this opportunity to promote its basic objective in the Middle East – to replace secular dictators such as Bashir Al-Assad with moderate Islamists who are open to Turkish influence and investment, while keeping a lid on Kurdish nationalism. In pursuing this goal, Turkey will be backed by the US which, despite recent wobbles, will continue to see Ankara – whose views on Russia, Iran and radical Islam basically accord with Washington's – as its most reliable ally on the ground. This will lead to the second consequence, which will be an end to Turkey's awkward alliance with Russia. At the point when Turkey is trying to engineer regime change in Syria, Russia will insist on maintaining the status quo, as payback for the costs of its intervention and as a bulwark against



greater Turkish and American influence in the Middle East. The specific point of contention will be the question of whether the Assad regime gets to survive, building conflict into the fabric of the Russo-Turkish relationship.

Russia will respond to this by trying to put pressure on Turkey wherever it has leverage. The most obvious place is the Kurdish area. Russia supplied Syrian Kurds with weapons when its relations with Turkey turned bitter earlier this year, and will do so again, if required. In response, Turkey will apply pressure on Russia wherever it has influence. This will begin with Ukraine, where Turkey has already provided political support to Kiev in its contest with Russia for control of the Donbas and Crimea. In doing so, Turkey will again be backed by the US which is likely to focus its attention back onto Ukraine as the threat from Islamic State declines. As is so often the case in history, the Balkan peoples will become pawns in this larger drama. At a minimum, Russia, Turkey and the US will want influence in the Balkans to contain the ambitions of their rivals and to uphold their own strategic interests. This is a recipe for tension and declining stability, but not necessarily worse than that.

However, if Turkey and the US put sufficient pressure on Russia in Ukraine and the Middle East – regions which matter a lot to Russia – then Moscow is well placed to use the Balkans in another way – to create a regional crisis that consumes the energies of the US and Turkey and gives Russia a freer hand to act elsewhere. This point of entry for Russia is Bosnia's Republika Srpska, where the ruling party has threatened to hold a referendum on independence in 2018. All Russia needs to do to create a serious problem for its regional opponents is to back the Bosnian Serbs in their bid for independence.



A breach in the fragile post-Yugoslav settlement could easily spread. If the Bosnian Serbs made a break the Bosnian Croats would also abandon Bosnia, supported by Croatia. Kosovo Serbs could break from the majority-Albanian population. So too might the Albanians in Macedonia, who have already revived calls this year for some kind of separate status. Inevitably, such moves would create backlash from groups such as the Bosnian Muslims and Kosovo Albanians who would stand to lose much of the territory of their state if their unhappy minorities attempted to leave. Under intense political pressure, but lacking the power to stop the slide towards disintegration, the majority groups in all these countries would resort to their long-standing tactic of trying to enlist outside powers, above all the US, to fight their cause on their behalf.

This would pose a serious policy problem for Washington, which is committed in principle to upholding political stability in the Balkans but in practice is reluctant to get too deeply involved. Instead, it would prefer to offer political direction and logistical support from afar while delegating the heavy lifting on the ground to the Europeans. The question is who would do this. The UK, France, Germany and Italy would all be potential candidates but their commitment to stabilising the region is potentially limited, either practically or politically – especially if the crisis in the EU deepens. In this respect, Washington's gaze will inevitably turn to Turkey, with which the US will be working closely in the Middle East and the Black Sea; and which would have an interest in promoting stability and countering Russian influence on its Western border.

What form this involvement took would depend on the degree of instability. A stronger diplomatic role may suffice. However, if there was a serious deterioration in stability in the Balkans stirred up by Russia, then Turkey may be forced into a more robust intervention, such as taking the leading role in a NATO-led stabilisation force. The quid pro quo for any such investment of Turkish resources and energy would inevitably be a powerful voice in the politics of the region. Superficially, Turkey would continue the West's objective of promoting stability but it would inevitably want to do so on its own terms. This would mean promoting anti-Russian constituencies such as Bosniaks and Kosovo Albanians at the expense of pro-Russian ones such as the Serbs. The fact that both these groups are Muslim would provide an emotional underpinning to a hard-headed strategic objective.

Potentially, this might be where matters rest. Having re-asserted its presence in the region, Turkey would be able to consolidate its position by deepening its economic footprint in the region and winning over the support of groups like the Bosnian Serbs. However, this seriously overestimates Turkey's capacity to play any kind of leadership role, especially one which is legitimate in the eyes of the locals. Instead, Turkey would be seen by many as an unwelcome threat, and intensify the resolve of the Bosnian Serbs to pursue independence for fear of being subsumed into a centralised state, dominated by their local opponents and now backed by Ankara. In doing so, they would undoubtedly seek help from Russia which would remain committed to its political goal of building a sphere of influence while creating problems for Turkey and the West. There is a limit how far to push a line of speculation. But the risk to the Balkans is, literally, its Balkanisation, with all the major outside powers committed to backing their local clients in a mutually-exclusive contest over territory.

As matters stand, Turkey may have no plans to be drawn back into the Balkans in a serious way, with so much else to think about, both at home and abroad. But international politics may force its hand. For better or worse, the Balkans is linked, via Russia and Ukraine, to Syria and the Middle East, where Turkey is deeply committed politically. Unless Turkey is willing to concede to Russia an important role in the Balkans, with the power to cause chaos on its land route to Europe, then Turkey may have no choice but to return to the region.

In the process, Turkey would demonstrate the enduring relationship between the city on the Bosphorus and its proximate European hinterland. But while its intervention would be intended to maintain stability in the Balkans, it is more likely to end up complicating matters in ways that have the opposite effect. As Turkey adopts the mantle of a regional power with interests and responsibilities that extend beyond its national borders, it must quickly learn to make the best of this new reality.



## FROM THE 2016 BATAS SYMPOSIUM



## Turkish versus English in Higher Education in Turkey

by Sinan Bayraktaroğlu<sup>49</sup>  
University of Ankara, Faculty of Letters

### Part 1

Due to globalization, English has expanded worldwide and the demand for *English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)* has been spreading widely. This paper addresses the educational issues concerning *English Language Teaching (ELT)* in Turkey with special reference to EMI in *Higher Education (HE)* today. Causes for failure are analysed and recommendations presented for an effective reform in ELT. On account of the present HE system in Turkey and the academic mis-management of ELT, the implementation of EMI in HE is not only unrealistic in terms of its aims and objectives but is also a serious threat to educational quality. There are also problems with *Turkish as a Medium of Instruction (TMI)* at Turkish universities today stemming from the teaching of the Turkish language not being effective in primary and secondary education, and lacking the scholarly principles of 'language pedagogy'. It is unrealistic to expect success in ELT, let alone EMI, without an effective *Turkish language education (TLE)* as it is through the *native language education (NLE)* that we learn 'how to learn'. In short, we observe today a serious 'language problem' in universities posing a threat both to the basic principles of the Turkish Republic and to its future generations. The medium of instruction in HE should be Turkish, but at the same time an effective and professional English Language Education policy should be adopted. In short, it is high time for Turkey to conduct an extensive reform of its language education policies.

John Adams, the second President of the United States, prophesied in 1780 as part of his proposal to Congress to establish an American Academy: "English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age".<sup>50</sup>

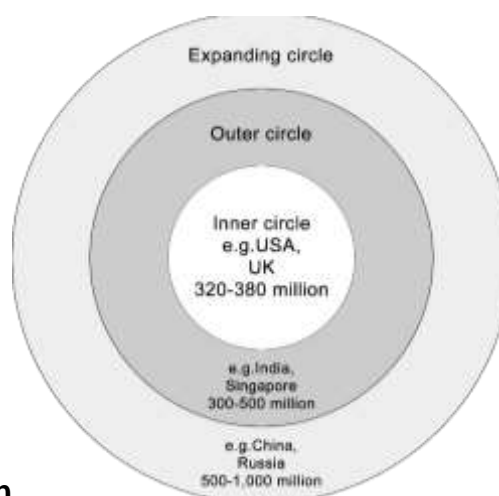
Today, in the 21st century, English represents an unparalleled 'lingua franca', with its "enormous functional flexibility".<sup>51</sup> It is spoken at a practical level by some 1.7 billion people worldwide – that's one person in every four. By 2020, it is forecast that two billion

<sup>49</sup> Professor Dr Bayraktaroğlu was founding Director of the Cambridge Centre for Languages at Sawston Hall, Cambridge, UK.

<sup>50</sup> "Letter to the President of Congress" (5 September 1780), in C.F. Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Vol. 7 (Letters and State Papers 1777–1782)*, Boston: Little, Brown (1852), p. 249. Also cited in D. Crystal 2003, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003), p. 74

<sup>51</sup> J. House, "Communicating in English as a lingua franca", *EUROSLA Yearbook 2* (2002), pp. 243–261.

people will be using it – or learning to use it.<sup>52</sup> Thus English has become the ‘operating system’ of global communication, covering virtually anything from international relations to science and from international business to tourism and popular culture. The presence of English can be felt in all existing media. According to the British Council’s ‘World English Project’, very rough estimates indicate that there will be some three billion speakers of English by around 2040 - more than 40% of the global population.<sup>53</sup> In short, as Crystal describes it, English is “the language on which the sun never sets”.<sup>54</sup> Today, as conceived by Kachru,<sup>55</sup> the world’s English-speaking community can be represented as three concentric circles as shown in Figure 1. The inner circle includes those countries that speak English as a native language (ENL), for example the UK and Australia. The outer circle represents countries that have experienced periods of colonization by English-speaking communities and in which the language has thus been institutionalized. Examples are India, Nigeria and Singapore, where people use English as a second language (ESL). The expanding circle, for its part, includes countries that use English as a foreign language (EFL) such as China, Russia, Israel, Turkey and Finland.



**Figure 1. The circles of English**

As seen in Figure 1, the majority of English users (the expanding circle) are non-native speakers who have learnt English as a foreign language. This leads to the discussion of the ownership of English and the issue of who the native speaker of English is. Widdowson, a leading educationalist and linguist in Britain, makes the following interesting comment:

The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language, particularly, one might add, to a nation disposed to dwell on the past, is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status. It is a matter of considerable pride and satisfaction for native speakers of English that their language is an international means of communication. But the point is that it is only

<sup>52</sup> British Council, *The English Effect: The impact of English, what it's worth to the UK and why it matters to the world* (2013), p.2. Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/english-effect-report-v2.pdf> (accessed 14 July 2016).

<sup>53</sup> D. Graddol, *English Next: Why global English may mean the end of “English as a Foreign Language”*, London: British Council (2006), p. 107. Available at: <http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/ec/files/books-english-next.pdf> (accessed 14 July 2016).

<sup>54</sup> Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> B. B. Kachru, “The sacred cows of English”, *English Today* 16 (1988), pp. 3–8, p. 5.

international to the extent that it is not their language. It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it.<sup>56</sup>

In parallel with the growth of English as an international language, there has also been a rapidly growing global phenomenon of English as a medium of instruction (EMI), spreading worldwide from nursery to HE, which, according to EMI Oxford,<sup>57</sup> is defined as ‘the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English’.<sup>58</sup> In HE, the British Council’s Director of English Language, Anna Searle, reports that “we see the move to using English as the lingua franca of higher education globally as the most significant current trend in *internationalising* higher education”.<sup>59</sup>

EMI thus has become the key factor in the internationalization of universities, involving:

- a desire to compete on a global education stage;
- attracting the best academic minds;
- the desire to publish in English-language journals;
- rising in university rankings;
- the need to attract students from abroad to ensure universities’ financial survival.

In EU countries (excluding the UK and Ireland), where there were 560 EMI postgraduate courses in 2002, this number went up to 6,800 in 2012.

**The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)**<sup>60</sup>: CEFR is an internationally adopted language education policy in many countries. Although initiated by the Council of Europe to provide a common basis for language education, its impact on curriculum design, development of syllabuses, teacher education, examinations, learner autonomy, and textbooks reaches beyond the borders of Europe to parts of Asia and Latin America. CEFR is not language specific, but rather an independent frame of reference for learners and users of any language, foreign or native, providing international common standards in language education. It is valuable for teaching/learning English as an international language (EIL) and as a mother tongue. It defines six global levels of communicative language competence (basic user levels A1 = Breakthrough, and A2 = Waystage; independent user levels B1 = Threshold, and B2 = Vantage; and proficient user levels C1 = Effective operational proficiency, and C2 = Mastery).

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<sup>56</sup> H. G. Widdowson, “The ownership of English”, *TESOL Quarterly* 28/2 (1994), pp. 377–389, p. 385.

<sup>57</sup> EMI Oxford is the Centre for Research and Development in English Medium Instruction, based at the University of Oxford’s Department of Education.

<sup>58</sup> J. Dearden, *English as a Medium of Instruction – a growing global phenomenon*, London: British Council (2014), p. 2. Available at: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484\\_emi\\_-\\_cover\\_option\\_3\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/e484_emi_-_cover_option_3_final_web.pdf) (accessed 14 July 2016).

<sup>59</sup> British Council, “Controversy as English becomes ‘Gallopig Global Phenomenon’”, Wednesday 30 April 2014. Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/press/controversy-english-becomes-gallopig-global-phenomenon> (accessed 14 July 2016). Emphasis added.

<sup>60</sup> Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf) (accessed 14 July 2016)



In Turkey, CEFR is currently much talked about but little understood. For example, according to a questionnaire conducted by Kır & Süslü<sup>61</sup> amongst 73 Turkish teacher trainers of English working in departments of foreign languages at 32 universities in Turkey, 57.8% have read the CEFR document but a still high number (42.2%) have not and only 33.3% say they take CEFR into consideration in their teaching. Furthermore, while 88.9% think that CEFR should have a place in teacher education, 82.2% reported that they need in-service training on it.

**The role of English in Turkey:** English in Turkey is part of the expanding circle in Kachru's concentric conceptualization (Fig.1) and is accorded a particularly important place in the country's plans for stronger links with Europe and other countries. Communication in English is of growing importance in surprisingly many aspects of national life:

- the expansion of Turkey's international trade;
- work at different levels in multinational companies, both Turkish and foreign;
- cooperation with international agencies within and outside Turkey;
- dealing with foreign tourists, with great potential for earning foreign currency;
- having ready access to computer databases, journals, and other information sources;
- using textbooks written in English in higher and further education;
- participating effectively in scientific and professional cooperation .

The urgent need for an increased knowledge of English is greatly appreciated by industry and commerce, by the organs of public opinion, and by parents and children as well as by the government. A knowledge of English facilitates employment in both the public and private sectors in posts that offer a higher salary scale and better prospects of promotion and has even become a prerequisite of many firms, universities, banks, armed forces, and different levels of the civil service. Professor Gatenby, who taught at Ankara University for a long period during and after World War II, characterized the demand in the 1940s as being "unlimited and insatiable".<sup>62</sup> That statement is still true today.

**Turkey's 'English deficit':** However, according to wide-scale research published in 2013 by the British Council and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) on the teaching of English in state schools,<sup>63</sup> Turkey is underperforming in the area of English language teaching and this deficiency could threaten its economic development:

**Turkey is yet to catch up** with competitor economies in its level of English language proficiency. Turkey consistently ranks very low on various measures of English language speaking. For example, the

<sup>61</sup> Kır, E. & Süslü, A. (2014) Language Teacher's Views on CEFR, *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, Vol.1, No5

<sup>62</sup> Gatenby, E.V. : "English Language Studies in Turkey", in *English Language Teaching Journal*, Vol. II. No.1.

<sup>63</sup> D. Vale et al., *Turkey National Needs Assessment of State School English Language Teaching*, Ankara: British Council and TEPAV (2013). Available at: [http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/sites/default/files/turkey\\_national\\_needs\\_assessment\\_of\\_state\\_school\\_english\\_language\\_teaching.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr/sites/default/files/turkey_national_needs_assessment_of_state_school_english_language_teaching.pdf) (accessed 14 July 2016).

2013 English Proficiency Index (EPI) developed by English First puts Turkey 41<sup>st</sup> out of 60 countries.<sup>64</sup>

In the 2014 Index, Turkey came 47<sup>th</sup> in the world and last among European countries. The report goes on to examine the reasons, and focuses on poor standards of ELT in state schools at primary and secondary schools. For example, according to Oxford EMI, it is

estimated that 20 per cent of state school teachers of English have only a CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) A2 language level and that although there is a standardised civil service exam which includes English, there is no separate test of teachers' English language ability. The assumption is that any graduate of an ELT or other English-related subject (e.g. English Literature) is proficient enough to teach. There is little Teacher Professional Development provision for teachers in state schools and higher education institutions although private schools and universities sometimes run their own professional development programmes.<sup>65</sup>

Such poor ELT standards reflect the causes of unsatisfactory results achieved at the HE level both in ELT and EMI, due to students' entry to universities with a low level of English, usually CEFR A2. This issue will be dealt with later in this study.

**To be continued in Part 2 (Review no 29)**



## **Kurdish and Turkish communities from Turkey: From 'economic immigrants' to 'political diasporas'?**

by **Ipek Demir**  
Department of Sociology,  
University of Leicester

Kurdish and Turkish communities have been in north London for decades. Turkish Cypriots were the first group to arrive in the 1950s and 1960s. Together with Turks and Kurds who arrived later (from 1980s onwards), they make up the Turkish-speaking communities in London. However, on the whole, Kurdish and Turkish communities have been 'invisible' in the UK in terms of the debates surrounding both ethnicity and migration. Below I sketch briefly the overall trajectory of those who

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 15. Original emphasis.

<sup>65</sup> Dearden, *English as a Medium of Instruction*, p. 14.

arrived from Turkey from the mid-1980s onward and then focus on one of these groups, the Kurds, who are not only the largest numerically but also increasingly politically assertive.

Kurds and Turks arriving from Turkey from mid-1980s make up a very diverse group in London – those who arrived predominantly for economic reasons or as students, *au pairs*, spouses of British citizens or as asylum seekers. Some of them are highly-skilled migrants and now work in leading British or international businesses, companies and banks in the UK. Others have joined the textile businesses of North London and then, following its demise in London, have moved to the flourishing catering businesses as ‘cheap’ labour, some succeeding, and others hoping, one day, to set up and run their own shops, cafés and off-licences. The majority live in the London boroughs of Enfield, Hackney and Haringey. North London is also home to many community organisations which help new arrivals to settle in the UK, solving problems associated with housing, and social and economic hardship. Community organisations in London played, and continue to play, a central role by providing a strong social and cultural network. In terms of socio-political ties and affiliations, however, this group shows remarkable similarities to social and political cleavages and polarisations in Turkey. I group them to this end as: (1) modern secularists, (2) Islamists/conservatives, (3) mobilised Kurds.

Firstly in London there are ‘modern secularists’ who are politically close to the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP; Republican People’s Party). Their political and social values are centred around a defence of secularism and Atatürkist principles in Turkey and in London. Some are grouped under the *Atatürkist Thought Association* (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği) and perceive their role as ‘ensuring that our [Turkish] youth in the UK learn and live their culture and history along ‘Atatürkist’ principles’<sup>66</sup>. Other organisations, for example *Contemporary Turks in England*, promote what they conceive as contemporary lifestyles and secular values. A similar group of modern secularists has been identified in Australia by Senay<sup>67</sup> who traced the promotion of *Kemalist ideology by Turks in Australia*. Even though they are secular, and to some extent show cosmopolitan leanings, the modern secularists are not necessarily liberal in their political and social world-views. For example, many are not critical of Turkish nationalism and its excesses.

Secondly there are those who are sometimes referred to as *Islamists* who are socially conservative (albeit economically liberal) and whose sympathies lie with either the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP: Justice and Development Party) or the Gülen movement. For this group their faith (Sunni Islam) and conservative values and lifestyles are paramount. The increasing cleavages between the AKP and the Gülen movement in Turkey have led to their previous allegiances also fracturing in London. The Gülen movement and its ‘Dialogue Society’ organisation, with regional branches across the UK, promote its values, vaguely presented around ‘peace’ and ‘dialogue’<sup>68</sup>. However, their Islamic ties, socially conservative values and their previous alliance with the AKP are well-known. There is also the Yunus Emre

<sup>66</sup>Londra Gazete (2013) Accessed 15 Jul,2016; <http://www.londragazete.com/2013/11/26/add-ingiltere-yeni-binasinda/>

<sup>67</sup> Senay, B. (2013) *Beyond Turkey's Borders: Long-distance Kemalism, State Politics and the Turkish Diaspora*, London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd.

<sup>68</sup> Dialogue Society (2016) Last accessed 15 July 2016; <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/about-us/faq.html>

Institute in London which was founded by the Turkish state 'to promote Turkey, Turkish language, its history and culture and art, make such related information and documents available for use in the world, provide services abroad to people who want to have education in the fields of Turkish language, culture and art, to improve the friendship between Turkey and other countries and increase the cultural exchange'<sup>69</sup>. The London branch is one of forty cultural centres in the world. It is intertwined with the official discourse and policy of the Turkish government and works with the Turkish consulate-general. It sponsors Turkish national celebrations, shapes and manages Turkish culture and Islam and promotes Turkish language and culture.

Thirdly there are those who are of Kurdish origin and who mainly come from central and eastern Anatolia, from towns and villages near Elbistan, Maraş, Malatya and Sivas. They are mostly Alevis, a minority religious sect<sup>70</sup>. The movement of Kurds to London has been brought about by economic deprivation as well as the multiple forms of exclusions and suppressions they have faced in Turkey<sup>71</sup>.

As Griffiths has identified, up until the late 1980s many Turks and Kurds in north London pursued leftist politics and established associations together. After all, some had fought on the same side of the political divide and had fled Turkey following the 1980 military coup. Following the arrival of ethno-politically mobilised Kurds from Turkey to London in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, and the increasing violence at the time in Turkey, the awareness and ethnic consciousness of Kurds in London began to increase and their connection to the Kurdish cause was strengthened. Consequently ethnic self-definition amongst many Kurds in London has been shifting since the 1990s as previously self-identified 'Turks' have become 'Kurdish diaspora' over time<sup>72</sup>.

Kurds from Turkey currently make up a sizeable proportion of London's ethnic minority population. In fact many who are regarded as 'Turks' in London are of Kurdish origin. Much work on *Kurds in Europe* focuses on the Kurds' antagonistic relationship with Turkey, examining Kurds' desire for the recognition of their ethnic identity and struggle, and their associated anti-Turkey mobilisation and activities. My

<sup>69</sup> Yunus Emre Institute (2016) Last accessed 15 July 2016; <http://londra.yee.org.tr/en/yunusemreinstitutel/>

<sup>70</sup> Demir, I. (2012) Battling with *memleket* in London: the Kurdish diaspora's engagement with Turkey. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(5), 815-831; Griffiths, D. J., (2002) *Somali and Kurdish Refugees in London: New Identities in the Diaspora*, Aldershot, Ashgate; Wahlbeck, Ö. (1999) *Kurdish Diasporas: A Comparative Study of Kurdish Refugee Communities*. London: Macmillan.

<sup>71</sup> (see for example, Bayir, D. (2013) *Minorities and nationalism in Turkish law*. Farnham, Ashgate; Houston, C. (2009) An anti-history of a non-people: Kurds, colonialism and nationalism in the history of anthropology. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 15(1), 19-35; Human Rights Watch Report (1993) Last accessed 15 July 2016

<https://www.hrw.org/report/1993/03/01/kurds-turkey/killings-disappearances-and-torture>; Saraçoğlu, C. (2010) The changing image of the Kurds in Turkish cities: Middle-class perceptions of Kurdish migrants in Izmir. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 44(3), 239-260; Zeydanlıoğlu, W. (2008) The white Turkish man's burden: Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey. In G. Rings and A. Ife (eds.), *Neo-colonial mentalities in contemporary Europe? Language and discourse in the construction of identities* (pp. 155-74). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

<sup>72</sup> Demir, I. (forthcoming 2016) Shedding an Ethnic Identity in Diaspora: De-Turkification and the Transnational Discursive Struggles of the Kurdish Diaspora. *Critical Discourse Studies*.

work goes beyond this by focusing on two themes, namely the Kurdish community's continuing *memleket* ties with Turkey, and their efforts towards de-Turkification.

What I call the *memleket* ties is a reflection of the close and intimate relationship Kurds continue to have towards Turkey:

*Memleket* can refer to the soil that a nation-state occupies, or to a particular region, or even to a small town or village. It is relational and positional; when uttered outside of Turkey, it can mean Turkey, when in Istanbul it can refer to the Kurdish region in Turkey, or to a particular city (e.g. Bingöl), while when expressed in Bingöl (in the form of 'I miss *memleket*' or 'I am off to *memleket* next week') it can refer to a small town or village that one's family originates from near Bingöl (e.g. Kığı). *Memleket* also evokes emotion. Whilst it is clearly expressed to refer to a piece of land, it denotes a warm attachment and bond, a close and intimate relationship, not purely a geographic location. One might compare it to the difference in meaning between 'home' and 'house' in English. *Memleket* is closer to 'home' in meaning than it is to 'house'<sup>73</sup>.

For Kurds (and for many non-nationalist Turks) Turkey is identified as *memleket*, a distinctly non-nationalist mode of expressing homeland and belonging. However, Kurds in London also engage in de-Turkification, that is correcting, interrupting and shedding the intense Turkification and assimilation which they see themselves as having been recipients of in Turkey. My research identified that Kurds in London engage in three types of critical discursive interruptions in order to 'de-Turkify': one of them posits language 'I speak Turkish but I am Kurdish', the other region 'We are not *doğulu*, we are Kurdish', and the third one religion 'We are not Alevis, but Alevi Kurds'.

My findings indicate two further central points: that distancing is with Turkishness, not with Turkey; and that Kurds in London are challenging the political and intellectual architecture of Turkish modernity at a distance. They are re-drawing the epistemological and ontological contours not only of Kurdishness, but also Turkishness, flattening differences and questioning the Turkish gaze as these previously self-identified 'Turkish economic migrants' over time become self-identified 'Kurdish diaspora'. I also argue that if Turkey continues to face further social and political turmoils, other existing communities from Turkey in London (e.g. the modern seculars; the Gülen movement) will also become further politicised and mobilised over time in the UK and elsewhere.



<sup>73</sup> Demir, I. (2012) Battling with *memleket* in London: the Kurdish diaspora's engagement with Turkey. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(5), 815-831.





## 'Growing Up Married' – Representing Child Brides on Screen

by Eylem Atakav  
Department of Film & Television Studies,  
University of East Anglia

As a scholar whose research focuses on gender politics, identity and cinema in Turkey, I have spent years writing up theories around what it means to be a woman in this particular cultural and political context. My research has tackled issues around 'honour' killings, violence against women and more recently child marriages and their representation in films within the Middle Eastern context. It was at the beginning of 2015, while I was typing up comments about women and Turkish cinema for an article, when I realised that something significant was missing from the work I was doing – that missing link was the *voice* of women. Women's experiences existed but they were not heard and certainly not integrated into my research as much as they should have been. That moment of realisation led me to reflect critically on the ways in which one could meaningfully make a link between theory around films and the practice of making films.

An overview of the representation of child brides – or as feminist scholars call it 'legitimised child rape' – within the context of Turkish media reveals that this topic's depiction is as problematic as the issue itself. Screen portrayals of married girls are presented as individualised stories of victims, and reinforce a focus on tradition, religion and the concept of 'honour' rather than gender inequality and issues around identity inherent in the law, politics and society. The experiences of girls are surrounded by sensationalist and marginalising discourses in the media. Indeed, as highlighted by existing research in the field, "It is ideological that girls who do not have any say on their life choices are represented in the news as if *they* are responsible for everything they do as brides... It is through this that a 'guilty child' discourse is legitimised"<sup>74</sup> [*italics my emphasis*]. These media representations result in the proliferation of gendered narratives of violence, silence and punishment. The media's representation of child marriages remains highly ideological in its tone while reinforcing dominant and historical discourses around the cultural obsession with women's honour and chastity.

While the depiction of girls is visible yet problematic, a focus on women's experiences in later life, as people who were married off at an early age, is missing in the media. It is for this reason that I decided to explore what happens *after* child marriage by focusing on the stories and experiences of women. At the heart of this attempt to create a dialogue between theory and practice is the urgent need to question this significant, complex and emotionally charged human rights issue which has often been discursively silenced.

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<sup>74</sup> Dursun, 2007, cited in Ova, Nalan, 'Türkiye'de Yazılı Basında "Çocuk Gelinler" in Temsili', *Selçuk İletişim*, 2014, 8(2), pp.238-262.

In July 2015 I went to Izmir, my hometown, to film an interview with a neighbour of my parents. One evening around 10 o'clock, there was a knock on the door. A group of women from the neighbourhood came to ask if I was making a film about child brides and said that they wanted to talk about their experiences, too. I was surprised to find out how invisible and silent – yet common – this experience was. It was a truly eye-opening moment that signalled the women's urgent desire to speak out and the importance of recording their experiences in some form. So, instead of talking with one person I had the opportunity to talk to many, even though some were off-camera. The conversations were powerful, meaningful and at times shocking.

Out of this came *Growing Up Married* – a 27-minute short film about four women, who were 'child brides', recollecting their memories as adults. It is a response to and a contribution towards debates around the alarming figures about child marriage. According to a UNICEF<sup>75</sup> report, there are 700 million women who were married as children, and 280 million girls are at risk of becoming child brides. Turkey has one of the highest rates of child marriages in Europe with an estimated 14% of girls married before the age of 18. However, as *Girls Not Brides* state<sup>76</sup>, statistical data available may not be representative of the scale of the issue. According to reports written by feminist organisations in Turkey, such as 'Flying Broom', the figures are much more alarming – in one in three marriages there is a child. Most child marriages are unregistered (just as so many girls are not officially registered by families for birth certificates) and they take place as unofficial religious marriages conducted by *imams*. This is something that was depicted in a documentary film about 'honour' killings in Turkey: 'Vendetta Song' (2005). When director Eylem Kaftan sets out on a journey to find out more about her own aunt's murder, she visits the local council office to find her details in the city records, but all she gets is this answer: "She died without a trace of a record". This idea of girls' lives not being valued is indeed common. The lack of specific research dedicated to this topic results in a lack of effective policies to tackle it. In addition, as Jennifer Hattam highlights, when it comes to child marriage, in Turkey, relevant laws and their implementation are inconsistent<sup>77</sup>. In 2002, Turkey raised the legal minimum age for girls to wed to 17 from 15, but marriages at age 16 are still possible if a court grants permission. Other laws define a 'child' as anyone under the age of 15. And though prosecutions are occasionally made under laws prohibiting the sexual abuse of children, the Turkish Penal Code does not address child marriage specifically<sup>78</sup>.

The idea of focusing on memories; interviewing women; 'documenting' gendered violence, and ultimately creating a cultural product – in this case, a film – presents a variety of challenges. Films represent aspects of reality. If we want to see a change in reality, we need a parallel change in the films and media that seek to represent it. How, then, can a filmmaker represent violence (at physical, emotional and verbal levels) that happened in the past but has effects in the present – while avoiding re-victimising or re-traumatising the participants? This has been a key question for me while thinking about the relationship between filmmaker and participant, which is "at

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<sup>75</sup> UNICEF Report, 'Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects', 2013; <http://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-child-marriage-progress-and-prospects.html> (last accessed 3 August, 2016).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/turkey/> (last accessed 3 August, 2016)

<sup>77</sup> Hattam, Jennifer, 'Oscar-Nominee 'Mustang' Puts Turkey in Unwanted Spotlight'; <http://womensenews.org/2016/02/133986/>, Feb.2016 (last accessed 3 Aug.2016).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

the root of the power relationships and ethical concerns in documentary production and representation”.<sup>79</sup> During the unstructured interviews for the film, I realised how powerful the women I was listening to were, and how much speaking out meant to them. One of them talked about the night of her wedding; another woman reflected on the sexual abuse she received from her husband; another shared intimate experiences of going through virginity inspections; the other talked about becoming a mother at the age of fourteen and the death of her children, which she could not look after as she simply “didn’t know how to”.

One of the women I talked to, Avniye, married off at 15, spoke about the night of her wedding for the first time ever:

“They put a wedding gown on me one night and took me to some place I had never seen before. I was sitting next to my aunt in the car. I asked her: ‘Auntie, where am I being taken to?’ She pinched my arm and said: ‘Stop talking! It is rude to talk!’ I’ve remained silent since.”

Silence and invisibility are key concepts to think about here. Stories similar to those women I interviewed are everywhere in Turkey and beyond. But they are not as visible as they should be or they are not loud enough to be heard. This violent practice continues and the numbers are increasing. The [www.care.org](http://www.care.org) statistics suggest that 39,000 girls around the world become child brides every single day<sup>80</sup>. What is shocking is that this number is about the registered people, and there are those who are not. This also, and importantly, demonstrates how violence against girls and women is not geographically specific.

Leyla, whom I interviewed for the film said: “I was 15. All I wanted to do was to go out and play hopscotch with my friends. I used to dread night-times... He used to drag me to the bedroom and took pleasure out of pulling my hair. I used to collect all my hair from the floor and pillows every morning. Then I started cutting my hair so that he couldn’t hurt me as much! I had short hair all my life...” A year after our interview, Leyla wrote a letter to me and attached a recent photo of herself with long hair: “Remember how I told you about my hair and how I’ve always kept it short, since the day I talked to you, I decided to let it grow. Look!” It is through films, and the process of making films and talking to women, that we may have the power to contribute to change.

The stories in *Growing up Married* represent aspects of what it means to be a woman, a man, and more importantly, a girl in a culture which is underpinned by a notion of ‘honour’ – a concept that is primarily linked to the policing of female desire and sexuality. The idea of regulating women’s lives and experiences together with the cultural obsession with chastity and so called honour are recurring themes in the four interviews that make up the film. As a Film Studies scholar, undertaking such a project and talking to women, rather than theorising about women in the comfort of my office, has added a new dimension to how I see research and it certainly showed me the importance of listening to women and the need to make women’s experiences visible and audible.

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<sup>79</sup> Cuklanz, Lisa and McIntosh, Heather (eds.) *Documenting Gendered Violence* Representations, Collaborations, and Movements, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015, p.6.

<sup>80</sup> Care.org <http://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/child-marriage>. (last accessed 3 August 2016).

# Noteworthy Events

by Ayşe Furlonger

## TALKS AND CONFERENCES

### Turkey's European Connection Through Football

John McManus

**Date and time:** 3 November 2016, 6.30 pm

**Venue:** Royal Anthropological Institute,

**Further information & booking:** [www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk](http://www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk)

### Turkey: From the Research Folder

Barbara Nadel

**Date and time:** 1 December 2016, 18.00-21.00

**Venue:** Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy Street, London

**Further Information & booking:** [www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk](http://www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk)

Barbara Nadel has been writing her Çetin İkmén crime fiction series set in Istanbul for over twenty years. During that time she has made numerous trips to Turkey to research her books and has had many adventures along the way. In the style of the storytellers of old, Barbara will present an evening of true tales about her travels, trials, tribulations and joys.



### The Levant & Europe: Shipping and Trade Networks of People and Knowledge

2nd International Conference

**Date:** 2–4 November 2016

**Venue:** Europe House, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London SW1P 3EU and The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, London

**Further information and tickets:** [www.levantineheritage.com](http://www.levantineheritage.com)

This, the second LHF conference, aims to building on the success of the first in 2014. It will emphasize the theme of trade as the central dynamic in the creation of a Levantine world. Confirmed Keynote Speakers include Elena Frangakis Syrett, (City University of New York); Sibel Zandi Sayek, (The College of William and Mary), and Emrah Safa Gürkan, (Istanbul 29 May University).

### 24th Levantine Heritage Foundation Dinner

**Date and time:** 19 January 2017, 6-9 pm

**Venue:** to be announced

**Further information:** [www.levantineheritage.com](http://www.levantineheritage.com)

With guest speakers author Jerry Brotton: 'This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World' and LHF trustee Zeynep Cebeci Suvári: 'Consular property records of the Italian community of Istanbul 1873-1910

### The Fifth World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES)

**Date:** 16 and 20 July, 2018.

**Venue:** Seville, Spain

**Further information:** contact: Prof. Guenter Meyer, Chairman of the International Advisory Council of WOCMES, g.meyer@geo.uni-mainz.de

The World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES) is a gathering of scholars, researchers, students and professionals drawn from a broad range of educational and other institutions from around the world brought together by a common interest in the study of the Middle East, North Africa and the Muslim states of Central Asia – and in other areas affected by developments in these regions. Call for Papers is December 2016.

## POETRY & MUSIC

### *Turkish Poetry Today* Launch

**Date and time:** 2 November, 2016; 6.00-8.30 pm

**Venue:** St Paul's Church and Community Centre in Marylebone, Rossmore Road, London NW1 6NJ

**Further information:** contact richard@redhandmedia.co.uk (see also this Review, pp )

### Talent Unlimited Christmas Concert 2016

**Date and time:** Thursday 17 November 2016, 7pm

**Venue:** St James's Church, Piccadilly, London

**Contact:** cananr@hotmail.com; www.talent-unlimited.org.uk



Snowman Rhapsody and Christmas Music  
World Premiere performance introduced by Howard Blake:

**Julian Traveyan**, piano

**Alison Langer**, Soprano

**Lawrence Thackeray**, Tenor

**Nicola Said**, Soprano; **Jacob Bettinelli**, Baritone

**Özlem Çelik**, clarinet.

### Talent Unlimited Free Lunchtime Recitals:

**Date and time:** Friday 25 November 2016, 1.00 pm & Friday 6 January 2017, 1.00 pm

**Venue:** St James's Church, Piccadilly, London.

**Nazan Fikret**, soprano (25 Nov 16)

Girls in Magnesium Dress Duo:

**Anna Quiroga**, harp and **Valentina Ciardelli**, double bass (6 Jan 17)

## ART

### Artists in Their Time

**Date:** Until 31 December 2016

**Venue:** Istanbul Modern

**Further information:** www.istanbulmodern.org

Those who plan to spend their holiday in the city can embark on an art-filled journey through Istanbul Modern's 'Artists in their Time' exhibition which unites art lovers with 109 artists and 193 works from different parts of the world. The exhibition focuses on how artists place their works and themselves as individuals around the concept of time. It suggests a conceptual field for examining, and reconciling, the links between



an artist's time and societal, cultural, natural and universal time. It unites artists from very different periods, geographies and disciplines around common themes.

## FILM

### Growing Up Married

**Date:** 30 October 2016, 2 pm

**Venue:** Phoenix Cinema, 52 High Rd, London N2 9PJ

**Further information:** <https://phoenixcinema.co.uk/PoenixCinema.dll/WhatsOn?Film=9130333j>

This documentary by Eylem Atakav (see *Review* pp 35) focuses on the stories of child brides in Turkey.



# The Gagauz between Russia and Turkey

by Celia Kerlake

Retired University Lecturer in Turkish,  
University of Oxford



The Gagauz are a small population, located nowadays mainly in Moldova and western Ukraine, whose native language (also called Gagauz) belongs to the southwestern (Oghuz) branch of the Turkic family and is closely related to Turkish.<sup>81</sup> The single characteristic that distinguishes the Gagauz most clearly from the vast majority of other Turkic language speakers is that their religious affiliation is to Orthodox Christianity, not Islam. (In recent years a small number have been converted to Protestantism through the influence of American missionaries.) The historical origins of the Gagauz and the etymology of their name are much disputed and will not be discussed here. Basically there are no certain facts before the late 18th century, when most of the Gagauz people, who were already Orthodox Christian, seem to have migrated from Ottoman Bulgaria to neighbouring Bessarabia (present-day Moldova), which had come under Russian rule. Today the majority of Gagauz (147,500 according to the 2004 census) live in the Republic of Moldova, where they have an autonomous region, Gagauzia or Gagauz Yeri, in the southern part of the country. The number of Gagauz in Ukraine was nearly 32,000 according

<sup>81</sup> For information on the Gagauz people and their language I have benefited greatly from the work of Astrid Menz, librarian of the German Orient-Institut in Istanbul, who is a world expert on the Gagauz language and its endangered status. One of her most recent articles is "Gagauz" in *Tehlikedeki Diller Dergisi/Journal of Endangered Languages*, Winter 2013, 56-69 ([www.tehlikedekidiller.com](http://www.tehlikedekidiller.com)).

to the census of 2001, most of them living in the Odessa region, which is adjacent to Moldovan Gagauzia.

In this article I shall focus on the Gagauz of Moldova, several of whom I have got to know personally in Turkey and who inspired a brief visit to Gagauzia, with BATAS member Kathleen Allanach, in October 2015. Moldova is the most poverty-stricken country in Europe, with a per capita GDP of just under \$5,000 in 2014 and 40% of the population earning less than five dollars a day.<sup>82</sup> One in four adults are obliged to work abroad.<sup>83</sup> In the case of the Gagauz, who constitute about 4% of Moldova's population, the main destinations are Russia and Turkey. I have observed at first hand the appearance in Turkish cities since the 1990s of women not only from Moldova but from other former republics of the Soviet Union (e.g. Georgia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), who readily find employment as live-in domestic carers, looking after elderly people or small children. The Gagauz have a linguistic advantage in this market, in that they are able to make the shift from their own language to Turkish quite easily. The completeness of the switch naturally varies from one individual to another, and in most cases some elements of Gagauz are retained, which can be initially mystifying to Turkish speakers. For example, the Turkish words *et* 'meat' and *ev* 'house' are pronounced with an initial 'y'. The word *köy* 'village' is pronounced 'kü' (with a long vowel) and the Gagauz form of *bahçe* 'garden' is *başça*. There are important syntactic differences as well, the result of prolonged contact with Slavic languages.

Gagauz is among the 60-80% of the world's languages that are considered 'endangered'.<sup>84</sup> It is losing out not to Romanian (the official language of Moldova), but to Russian, which is one of the three official languages of Gagauzia (the others being Romanian and Gagauz). The Gagauz are overwhelmingly pro-Russian in their political leanings, and look back with nostalgia to the Soviet period, which they see as a time of well-distributed prosperity, with ample work available in the state-run factories and both university education and health care provided free. Although the Gagauz language remains, theoretically and officially, a key symbol of Gagauz identity, we found it to be almost invisible on the streets of Gagauzia's two main towns, Comrat and Ceadir Lunga.<sup>85</sup> I do remember seeing a notice at the entrance to Comrat, the capital, describing it as 'Gagauz Yerin Baş Kasabası'. A very modest modern building in the main street bore the monolingual designation in large letters above the entrance: 'Gagauz Yerin Bakkanık Komiteti – Halk Topluşu' ('Council of Ministers and Parliament of Gagauzia'). But apart from a few such symbolic exceptions, all the street signs and advertisements were in Romanian and/or Russian. Finding any printed material in the language was all but impossible. Repeated enquiries as to whether there was a Gagauz newspaper eventually resulted in us being given two back numbers of the monthly *Ana Sözü* ('Mother Speech') in the museum in Ceadir Lunga and a further two in the public library there. The library, which was virtually deserted, had a few shelves of books in Gagauz, most of which appeared to be translations, although there were also a few books of poetry and short stories. The most revealing insight into the current status of the Gagauz language was provided by our visit to the Gagauz Language and Literature

<sup>82</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_sovereign\\_states\\_in\\_Europe\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)\\_per\\_capita\\_and\\_http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/overview](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_in_Europe_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita_and_http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/overview)

<sup>83</sup> Paul Mason, *PostCapitalism: A guide to our future*. Penguin Books, 2016, ix.

<sup>84</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_language)

<sup>85</sup> Ceadir is the Turkish/Gagauz *çadır* 'tent'.

department at Comrat State University. I had made strenuous efforts before the trip to establish contact with academics there, but had received no reply. The overwhelming impression I have retained of the conversation that took place (in Turkish/Gagauz) with the two members of staff we encountered on the day is one of resigned acceptance of a mission without much purpose. They seemed to have only a handful of students and to see their task mainly as supporting the teaching of Gagauz in primary schools. They showed us a number of textbooks they had produced, which looked attractive enough. But the medium of instruction throughout the education system in Gagauzia is Russian, just as it was in the Soviet period. Even more importantly, in urban families where the parents have acquired fluent Russian at school this is the language that they use to communicate with their children. Despite the devoted efforts of a handful of intellectuals, pious expressions of support from local politicians, and encouragement from Turkey and the wider Turkic world, the chances of Gagauz surviving beyond the next couple of generations seem poor.

The Gagauz generally have a negative attitude towards the Moldovan government in Chisinau and the Romanian language (which, like Gagauz, is an obligatory part of the school curriculum). This derives from a historical memory of oppression by the Romanians during the Second World War. The cultural identification of the Gagauz people with Russia is eloquently expressed by the fact that all have Russian first names, although their surnames may be Turkic, e.g. Stepan Topal, Irina Karakaş, Vladimir Keleş. The political aspect of this orientation was starkly demonstrated in a referendum held in Gagauzia in February 2014 in defiance of the Moldovan government. Over 97% of the participants in a poll with a 70% turnout expressed themselves in favour of closer relations with the Russian-led CIS customs union and against integration with the EU. (The Gagauz believe the Chisinau government's pro-EU stance conceals a desire to unite Moldova with Romania).<sup>86</sup> Considerable numbers of Gagauz families have emigrated permanently to Russia in recent years, where their fluency in the language and their membership of the Orthodox church makes their social integration and acquisition of citizenship quite straightforward. Permanent emigration to Turkey is not such a widespread phenomenon and seems to happen mainly where a Gagauz woman working in Turkey marries a Turk and settles there.

At the official level Turkey has shown support for Gagauz autonomy from the start, while also maintaining close relations with Moldova. Süleyman Demirel, who was prime minister of Turkey at the time of the USSR's collapse and became president in 1993, is credited with having brought the two sides to the table in 1994 after a brief armed stand-off.<sup>87</sup> His visit to Gagauzia in 1994, after the autonomy agreement had been signed, was only the first of several that he made during and after his presidency. To give readers a flavour of the Gagauz language, as well as a sense of the warmth of the relationship with Demirel, I will quote a couple of sentences from the Gagauz version of *Wikipedia* describing Gagauzia's 10th anniversary event in 2004:<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, February 03, 2014: <http://rferl.org/content/moldova-gagauz-referendum-counting/25251251.html>

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/how-gagauzia-tiny-corner-moldova-became-front-line-erdogan-putins-war-influence-1575063>

<sup>88</sup> [https://gag.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gagauzianın\\_10-cu\\_yıldönümü\\_yortusu](https://gag.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gagauzianın_10-cu_yıldönümü_yortusu)

Açan söz verildi Türkiyenin 9-cu Prezidentinä Süleyman DEMİRELä, zal ayaa kalktı, zerä zalda bulunannar hepsi saygı duyardılar bu büyük politik hem devlet adamına. Bilärdilär, ani Süleyman DEMİREL olmaydı, bekim Gagauziya avtonomiyası da olmayaceydı.

When Turkey's 9th president, Süleyman Demirel, was invited to speak, the hall rose to its feet, because all those present in the hall felt respect for this great politician and statesman. They knew that if it had not been for Süleyman Demirel, the autonomy of Gagauzia would perhaps not have been realised.

A recent article in the *International Business Times*<sup>89</sup> describes Gagauzia as being “on the front line of Erdoğan and Putin’s war for influence”. The reference is to competition in the realm of soft power, notably aid projects. In the case of Turkey such support has come not only from the central government (or its international aid agency TİKA) but also from the municipal authority of İzmit, which constructed within the park of Ceadir Lunga a football pitch and fitness equipment, opened with warm fraternal speeches on a rainy day in October 2011.<sup>90</sup> How the current rapprochement between Russia and Turkey will affect Turkey’s political relationship with Gagauzia remains to be seen. Hitherto AKP governments have been eager to impress on the Gagauz regime that the prosperity of their territory is inextricably linked to that of Moldova. Irina Vlach, the new president of Gagauzia, visited Ankara in June of this year, several weeks before Erdoğan’s meeting with Putin in Leningrad. The body language in the video clip of the Erdoğan-Vlach handshake suggests reluctance and tension on both sides...<sup>91</sup>

Folklore Festival in Pushkin Park, Chisinau, 2010.  
Photograph by courtesy of Fedor Kissa.



The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Astrid Menz, Süer Eker and Olga Radova-Karanastas in obtaining this photograph and permission to publish it.

<sup>89</sup> See note 7 above.

<sup>90</sup> <http://haberciniz.biz/izmit-belediyesi-gagauzda-park-acti-1169437h.htm>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.haberler.com/erdogan-gokoguz-yeri-baskani-irina-vlah-i-kabul-8548257-haberi/> See also <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/gagauzias-vlah-holds-talks-with-turkeys-leadership.aspx?pageID=238&nID=100756&NewsCatID=510>



The March of the Grand Vizier's Army  
across the Desert'



## THE BRITISH MILITARY MISSION TO TURKEY 1798-1802<sup>92</sup>

by Malcolm Wagstaff

### Part 1

News reached London on August 22 1798 that a French army had landed in Egypt some seven weeks earlier. Britain had been at war with revolutionary France for five years in a coalition that had fallen apart. All speculation on the destination of the large force of ships and soldiers being built up in Toulon, Marseille and Italian ports under French control came to an end. Various suggestions had been made – Naples, Sicily or Ireland, where revolt was fizzing. Egypt was unexpected, though it made strategic sense to the French. They could support the French *établissements* and *loges* in India which were beginning to stir up trouble for the British there and focus the attention of British ministers away from Europe. The vital post routes to British India could be threatened from Egypt and even cut. The valuable Red Sea trade would come under French control, while Egypt was an important source of revenue to the Sultan. Two months later, though, London knew the French army was stranded in Egypt as a result of the destruction of the supporting fleet in Aboukir (Abu Qir) Bay, some 23 kilometres north-east of Alexandria, by a British fleet commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson.

Although information was incomplete and confusing, British ministers decided to act. The first move was to instruct the Chargé d’Affaires in Istanbul, Spencer Smith, to

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#### <sup>92</sup> Principal Sources:

British National Archives:

Adm.52/2853: *Log of HMS Charon, 26 January 1799-16 January 1801*;

FO.78/25: Foreign Office. Brig. Gen. Koehler, 1 October 1798-1 December 1798; FO.78/26:

Foreign Office. Brig. Gen. Koehler, 1799;

FO.78/27: Foreign Office. Brig. Gen. Koehler, 1800.

G.F Koehler: *Notes and Sketches* (Mss.), Classics Faculty Library, University of Cambridge

W Martin Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor with Comparative Remarks on the Ancient and Modern Geography of that Country*, London: John Murray 1824, pp. 1-50.

W Wittman (1803), *Travels in Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and Across the Desert into Egypt During the Years 1799, 1800, and 1801 in Company with the Turkish Army and the British Military Mission*, London: Richard Philips 1803.



negotiate the treaty of alliance that the Ottoman authorities offered as soon as they heard of the French invasion. There was no ambassador at the time. A second step was to order Smith's elder brother, the naval officer, Sidney, to take over command of all British naval vessels in the eastern Mediterranean and deploy them to harass the French, but also to pressure the Turks into signing a treaty. The third step was to send a Military Mission to Turkey. Its objective was largely political. A small British force would be a gesture of support and demonstrate that an alliance with Britain against the French would be worthwhile. It would offer advice, but also provide useful guns and munitions.

### **The Military Mission and its Journey to Istanbul:**

Lt.-Col. George Frederick Koehler was given command of the Mission with the brevet rank of Brigadier General. He was a resourceful artillery officer who had served with distinction during the siege of Gibraltar of 1779-83 and at Toulon during the brief British occupation in 1793. Koehler collected three engineering officers and two from the artillery, a captain from the East India Company's army who acted as secretary, two draftsmen, a purser and his clerk, and a surgeon. In addition, Koehler had 35 artificers under his command, together with 28 gunners and two servants. Eighteen women, including Mrs. Koehler, and sixteen children completed the Mission's personnel.

In late December 1798 Koehler, his wife, the five senior officers and the senior draftsman left for Istanbul by land. The two junior officers, Captains Thomas Lacy/Lacey (38) and William Martin Leake (22), were left to complete loading the transport, *New Adventure*, and to get the men on board. Twenty-six guns of various types were loaded, together with 1,000 carbines and 1,000 pistols, 200 'whole barrels' of powder, and tools for the artificers. Surprisingly, six pontoons with carriages and harness were loaded, too. After many delays, the *New Adventure* and its escort HMS *Charon* left the Thames on 24 February 1799. They were held up in Spithead while a convoy gathered and again at Falmouth. The convoy was hit by a ferocious gale in the Bay of Biscay. The ships scattered, losing sails and spars to the wind. The *New Adventure* sprang a leak. Stores and pontoons were thrown overboard to lighten the ship. An artificer was swept from the deck and drowned. Repairs were carried out at Gibraltar where the convoy eventually collected. A strong gale hit the ships in the Aegean Sea, driving them back towards the Morea (Peloponnese). Supplies ran out on the transport. The calms prevented the *New Adventure* and the *Charon* entering the Dardanelles. Once in the Straits it took over a week for them to reach Istanbul, where they arrived in a deluge of rain on 14 June 1799.

Koehler's party had been in the city for about four months. They were frustrated from the lack of progress in their negotiations with the Ottoman authorities. Basically, the Turks did not know how the Mission could be useful. While Koehler pushed for an offensive role, his interlocutors were cautious. The very presence of the British Military Mission might jeopardize relations with France. For the Turks were reluctant to break their long-standing relationship with a powerful ally. They were also impressed by French propaganda emphasizing the Republic's military success in Europe. Invasion of the Balkan provinces from Italy and the Ionian Islands seemed a real possibility. To make the situation more difficult, the Ottoman authorities were divided by petty rivalries, as well as real disagreements on policy. Strict Ottoman protocol and the need for interpreters slowed down the negotiations. By the time the

*New Adventure* arrived, Koehler had been pressured into agreeing to deploy the Mission to strengthen the fortifications at the mouth of the Dardanelles. Three officers and the senior draftsmen set off on 17 June 1797 to make a reconnaissance.

The ships were unloaded and the men installed in the barracks at Levend Çiftlik recently built for Selim III's New Army (*Nizam-i Cedid*). While the senior officers found accommodation in the lovely seaside village of Büyükdere, Leake and Lacy/Lacey were quartered with the men. The gunners practiced constantly and gave at least one display before the Sultan on one of his periodic visits to Levend Çiftlik and another at a general review of Turkish troops. The officers enjoyed a lively social life. They met members of the expatriate community (including Spencer Smith), made excursions into the Belgrade Forest, crossed to Asia on a couple of occasions and enjoyed the courtesies of pipes and coffee with local residents. Allied ambassadors invited them to grand dinners in their summer palaces. The Russians welcomed them to a ball. Surprisingly, few expeditions were made to the city. One of these was when Leake and Lacy went with the Mission's surgeon, William Wittman, to visit the Sultan's surgeon at the beginning of Kurban Bayram (which fell on 14 August 1799). They watched Sultan Selim process from the Topkapı Saray to the nearby Sultan Ahmet's Mosque (the Blue Mosque). Afterwards, they were entertained to dinner in the Turkish manner. Wittman described how the guests sat round a large tinned copper tray set on a low table and laid with bread ('in the form of a flat pancake') and two spoons per person. The British gentlemen were a bit squeamish about eating with their hands as the separate dishes were brought in, but the excellence of the food soon converted them.

### The Dardanelles and Palestine:

All these delights came to an end when the Mission embarked on the *New Adventure* and sailed for the Dardanelles on 23 October 1799. Their illustrated report on the fortresses and a model of the Kali Sultaniye on the Asiatic side of the straits had impressed the Ottoman authorities. They decided that the British soldiers would be best employed improving the fortifications there. Work had scarcely begun on laying out the additional fortifications when the new British ambassador to the Porte

arrived on HMS *Phaeton*. Thomas Bruce, Earl of Elgin, ordered the soldiers to secure a famous bas-relief, probably from ancient Sigeum, which was lying at the front of a church at Gavur Köy (Yenişehir). France's famous antiquarian ambassador, Count Choiseul-Gouffier, had failed to obtain it. Armed with a firman from the Kapudan Paşa, who happened to be on station with the Ottoman fleet, and escorted by a *çavus*, the British officers overcame local opposition and removed the relief. A few days later the Kapudan Paşa gave his approval to the layout proposed for the new defensive works and work began. As the works progressed, the officers made excursions into the neighbouring countryside, in part searching for traces of Homer's Troy. The location of the celebrated town was being robustly debated at the time and several years later Leake was able to use observations made in 1799 in a seminal paper on the problem.



The Capitan Bachi in his Dress on Public Occasion

The members of the Mission were relieved when the *Phaeton* returned at the end of November with orders to return to Istanbul. Elgin had managed to persuade the Ottomans that the soldiers should be employed on active

service with the Ottoman army being collected in Palestine for an assault on the French in Egypt. Captured French dispatches that showed that French success in various skirmishes with Ottoman cavalry was due to their use of infantry squares helped his arguments. Turkish troops did not know how to break these. The British gunners did, and they had the means to do so in their field guns. Back in Istanbul, though, the Mission's frustrations grew again. The Grand Vizier, K r Yusuf Ziyauddin Pa a, had gone to command the army in Palestine and no other minister dared to authorise the Mission to follow without his expressed permission; they were too frightened to ask for it. While the officers resumed their pleasant social life, Elgin and Koehler tried to get a decision. Elgin's arrival had brought more company for the young men, including Joseph Dacre Carlyle (Professor of Arabic at Cambridge), Elgin's chaplain Philip Hunt and his private secretary John ('Jack') Morier, who was a distant cousin of Leake. Expeditions were organised into Istanbul and the surrounding area. A visit was paid to the Yedikule, where the French ambassador to the Porte was interned. The officers dined with the Elgins, played whist at the embassy and attended receptions given by other embassies. The high point was perhaps the grand ball given by the Elgins in the Queen's honour on 18 January 1800. Next day Koehler set out with a small party to meet the Grand Vizier. Elgin had secured the Sultan's personal permission for the visit.

Five men, including Leake, composed the core of Koehler's party. They adopted the colourful dress of *tatars* (couriers) so that they could travel as quickly as possible and avoid awkward questions. Nonetheless, the suite of fourteen assorted servants and ten baggage animals would have drawn attention. They left spring-like weather near the Sea of Marmara for the frost and cold of the plateau as they headed for Eski ehir and then through seemingly barren and empty countryside to Konya. Snow could be seen on the mountains to south and east. The bazaars and houses of Konya did not impress the travellers. The governor's palace was a 'low shabby wooden edifice with ruinous galleries and half broken window frames', a complete contrast to the Mevlevi Tekkesi, where the Persian mystic Mevlana Celal Ed-din Rumi is buried. Here, as elsewhere, the party had difficulty securing enough post horses. They pressed on to Karaman where they were joined by Captain Lacy. He brought copies for the Grand Vezir of captured French correspondence which revealed the desperate plight of the French forces in Egypt, now commanded by General Jean-Baptiste Kl ber. General Bonaparte had returned to France. Snow fell in the afternoon as the British caravan climbed southwards into the mountains. The guides wanted to find shelter in a nearby village, but Koehler insisted on going on. Three days later the party found spring well advanced – flowers out, butterflies flitting by and grasshoppers chirping – as they rode down to the Mediterranean coast at G lnar (Gilindire). They camped that night in a brick vault amidst the ruins of the ancient settlement of Celenderis. The exhausting journey had taken 21 days. On 9 February 1800 Koehler's party crossed to Kyrenia in Cyprus. The weather was clear and sunny.

(To be continued in TAS *Review* 29)



## Gülsin Onay

### Concert Pianist

Interviewed in her Cambridge home  
by Hande Eagle



### A Quiet Summer Afternoon with Gülsin Onay<sup>93</sup>

**Hande Eagle:**

*I'd like to start with your childhood and your mother's influence. She was your first teacher and I am sure she played a great role in how you were shaped as a person. And you seem to have a very soft and gentle side to you but when I watch you on the stage you're so powerful. So, let me ask you, what were your childhood inspirations?*

**Gülsin Onay:**

Well, you are right actually, I was also very soft as a child. I was very patient. Playing in the garden with ants and giving them some food. And seeing how they take it from one place all the way to their nest. I was watching them until they got all the way to their nest without getting bored. People were really very curious about what I was doing. I could do that for hours. I was very interested in animals and nature. I could also watch the sea for hours, look at the waves and so on. The funny thing is I could do that because I had always also something singing, I was hearing some music which doesn't exist. I was also imagining some other compositions which I always do actually. But they are not works for me to put on score as a composition. I don't want to pretend that I am a composer but I like to play sometimes as if I am composing.

My mother was very strong, incredibly hard with discipline and everything. She was obsessed with me. Every hour and minute of her day was built on me. If she wasn't watching me play she was doing something else for me.

**H.E:** *I read that your mother was also a pianist, she studied in Stuttgart.*

**G.O:** She went to Stuttgart; she was a very good player. She met my father.

**H.E:** *And then, she had you and I suppose that stopped her career...*

**G.O:** Yes, but it had stopped much before. She had a problem with memory and terrible stage fright. I suppose that was also why, she saw that I was very talented and she wanted to put everything into me so I could realise what she couldn't.

**H.E:** *How do you feel about that?*

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<sup>93</sup> Gülsin Onay is Artistic Advisor to the annual Gümüşlük International Classical Music Festival. She is the recipient of many prestigious awards.

**G.O:** You know I can't say anything because I don't know how the others feel without my mother. [Breaks into laughter] I suppose it was a success because possibly without her I wouldn't have done so much work as a child. If she had left me to myself I would have just played.

**H.E:** *With the ants?*

**G.O:** [Breaks into laughter] Yes, with the ants. I was very happy. Okay, she was very bossy but I thought that's the way life was. I had the feeling that when I achieved things it gave me great pleasure and the desire to do more. And, when I did, it naturally became a habit. I became disciplined myself.

**H.E:** *How was your relationship with other children? Did you observe their mothers being so disciplined with them?*

**G.O:** I didn't see it as a good thing that the other mothers weren't like my mother. I didn't envy them. I thought what I had was very nice. I was very happy with my achievements in piano and music. I was kind of thinking "what a shame my friend doesn't play anything". It felt like something was missing. I didn't wish that I would be like them but that they would be like me.

**H.E:** *One of the previous interviews I read was one you did with Ayşe Arman in 2008 in which there was a lot about your private life. How do you feel about that? Do you feel comfortable talking about your private life to journalists?*

**G.O:** Not at all. You know, Ayşe Arman is great at getting information out of you without you even noticing it. She would be the best detective in the world. I was quite unhappy after that interview. It was a bit damaging for my relationship with my ex-husband which was a shame. But once the interview was out, there was nothing I could do afterwards.

**H.E:** *How does your representation in the Turkish media compare with that in the foreign media? Do you think that Turkish journalists are more interested in your personality and private life rather than your concerts, recordings and the quality of your playing?*

**G.O:** Yes. They are maybe shy to write about the quality of the music because they probably don't think they are up to scratch. They leave that to the professional reviewers who are unfortunately not...

**H.E:** *Existent in Turkey? Why do you think that is? There are music faculties at universities, people graduate as musicologists...*

**G.O:** Absolutely, I know! Maybe now, Ankara Festival is promoting some people to become music writers. Many people are aware that we need young people who would do this job.

**H.E:** *Do you think there is a need for it? Do you think the world needs music critics?*

**G.O:** I don't think so. No, actually. I mean the reviews are read by people who are very much interested in music. But they have their own views anyway. The others don't understand and don't read the reviews anyway. So what is the need to have a music review? Maybe it's good to have music notes in programmes about the composer and compositions as it is informative for the audience. But about how the performance went, there is so much nonsense written about that... it's not necessary.



**H.E:** *In this day and age when we are more reliant on internet technologies to promote our work... If you are not marketing yourself, then you don't exist and, if you don't exist, you can't get more work. I think that applies to everyone. So at a time when we are doing our own marketing, the role of the reviewer becomes very redundant...*

**G.O:** So, for example, a young artist gets a review by a famous music writer from the *New York Times*, saying it was a fantastic performance he might get more concerts. In that way, maybe it is useful. But only if the writer is very knowledgeable and trustworthy. But there is no need for music writers in every village, town and city...

**H.E:** *What if the reviewer says it was the worst concert?*

**G.O:** Yes, that happened a lot for many composers. You remember... I think, Rachmaninoff was so hurt for two years that he couldn't compose. There was another composer – Max Reger who wrote a letter to Rudolf Louis, music critic – and said, "I am sitting in the smallest room of my house. I have your review before me. In a moment it will be behind me!" [Laughs] There are many stories like that. It can really hurt.

**H.E:** *Has that ever happened to you?*

**G.O:** No, thankfully not. I've had bad reviews, not ruiningly bad, but they didn't disturb me at all. I don't take it to heart. I know what I do, what I have to do, what I didn't do. There are sometimes less successful performances: you can't expect each performance to be the best of yourself. But you know it. If somebody else also realises that it wasn't good and I thought it wasn't, that's fine. It doesn't hurt me. I just say, "he is right". It's just that when it was really fantastic and he still criticises, it doesn't hurt me either at all because I see what a stupid man he is.

**H.E:** *Or a woman?*

**G.O:** Or a woman. [Laughs]

**H.E:** *You hold the title of State Artist in Turkey. How do you feel about carrying this title in a country where the ruling political party and the president make chauvinistic remarks about women and their role in society?*

**G.O:** You know I am absolutely touched, sad and shocked about many things. What they say about women, art or artworks, the future of the country, their vision is absolutely unacceptable to me. I am a child of the Republic, founded by Atatürk. I am doing my duty towards this philosophy – the country's future which should become free and productive. I can't, because of the things that are happening and which I am against, stop being part of my country. I feel I represent Turkey. I am Turkish and I am very proud of my country's good heritage and talented civilisation which can achieve so much when given the opportunity. I don't want to get the youths in a pessimistic mood by saying everything is bad in our country. What can we do? We have to do the best we can to continue. I am very proud to be a State Artist because I am not a government artist. It's different. It's like being in the national team. The government can change next year but I am in the national team of art.

**H.E:** *You also hold the title of Soloist for the Presidential Symphony Orchestra in Ankara. Have you ever played a concert for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan?*

**G.O:** No.

**H.E:** *Would you have liked to?*

**G.O:** I don't think he attended any of the concerts of the CSO (Presidential Symphony Orchestra).

**H.E:** *Why do you think that is?*

**G.O:** Because I think he wants to have the classical music, somehow, like a luxury, or something that is only attended by the elite, not something that belongs in our culture.

**H.E:** *He sees it as foreign.*

**G.O:** Yes, exactly. I think many of the arts, like painting and sculpture, for him are foreign. He only likes things that date back to the Ottoman Empire.

**H.E:** *But that's oddly strange, don't you think? Ottoman sultans themselves were very knowledgeable about the arts. They had their own compositions, they wrote poems, they were interested in arithmetic, mathematics and science.*

**G.O:** Yes, of course they had an enormous culture.

**H.E:** *All this reminds me of when you gave a concert during the Gezi Park protests. When you look back, do you think that Gezi Park protests had any effect?*

**G.O:** I am sure it has. People realise that you can't just build a shopping centre in Taksim Square or Gezi Park. There will be opposition; you can't do anything you want there. The atmosphere and the peaceful gathering was one of the most important and greatest experiences I had.

**H.E:** *2017 is the 110th birth anniversary of Ahmed Adnan Saygun and you have performances booked across the globe. You are also going to be recording his works for solo piano. Can you tell us a bit more about your plans for 2017?*

**G.O:** I have many concerts booked in Germany, Hong Kong and Turkey. In Turkey I will be performing in Izmir, Adana and Antalya. I am going to be recording Saygun's solo pieces. I'm also going to play with Sascha Goetzl and the Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra. He is an absolutely fantastic conductor for Saygun's work. I've already played with him Piano Concerto No.1 in Istanbul, in Finland and in France.

**H.E:** *Do you feel that Saygun's works are difficult for a European audience?*

**G.O:** Some of them yes, but not all. For example, his Piano Concerto No.1. People can enjoy it right away. At many of my concerts I get standing ovations for this composition. They find it familiar as they do Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff.

**H.E:** *Since you are a classical pianist I am sure you also listen to plenty of classical music.*

**G.O:** Not a lot because I do it so much that I don't have time to listen. Unless I am in the car and someone puts it on. In those occasions I find there are some that are very pleasant and some that are very disturbing. I can't even tell you the name of the one I find disturbing or pleasant because I am so ignorant when it comes to this. Sometimes I say, "This is not bad, who is that?"

**H.E:** *Such as who?*

**G.O:** Such as the big jazz pianists. I occasionally listen to them but not for long periods and find them very nice. I don't listen to rock or pop. I find some of it incredibly disturbing. Like sound pollution.

**H.E:** *We started with your childhood, your relationship with your mother and your inspirations. And I would like to end this interview with you as a mother and your relationship with your son, Erkin Onay who is a violinist, so that we can actually come full circle. How did you adopt the things you saw as good qualities in your mother when you became a mother yourself?*



**G.O:** Well, I think I had a very difficult time when I was a mother. When my son was seven or eight we got divorced. I was giving concerts. My parents took care of my son when I was away. It was always very complicated and I was feeling very guilty as I didn't have enough time for what I wished to give my son. My parents were very good though, especially my father. He was a very good pedagogue. I was so happy to be able to help my son get the musical journey. At first, he didn't want to be a professional musician. But later, when he was sixteen he decided to become a professional violinist. That was wonderful. He had a very unfortunate accident about eight or nine years ago when he cut his hand here (points at her wrist). He had a long operation, 5.5 hours. They said that was the end of his career and he wouldn't play again.

**H.E:** *How did that make you feel?*

**G.O:** I cried for two days non-stop. I was in Italy when they told me after my concert so that I don't get too upset. That was one of my saddest and most awful days. But thankfully, he has such an amazing personality. He won back his hand. Through his own technique, he can still play fantastically without feeling. We do a lot of concerts together.

**H.E:** *Are you a very motherly mother?*

**G.O:** No, I am not a very motherly mother. It's true that we have a fantastic relationship, partly through music. In music I can't be a mother. He is my colleague. Sometimes it's difficult. It can be frustrating sometimes. You have to be very careful, there is a very delicate line because he is my son and because we have a difference of age. Normally you play with musicians of your age. But we enjoy it incredibly. I feel so proud and so happy when I can play with him.

**H.E:** *Do your grandchildren play instruments?*

**G.O:** Yes, they do. Two of them play the piano, the oldest one plays percussion.

**H.E:** *Do you think they will become professional musicians?*

**G.O:** It is possible. I see potential in them. But I think their parents are not so sure about whether they should do it professionally.



## Poetry

**Gülşay Durdal Michaels**  
Poet and Translator

### Severus Sokağında. SW 11

Herkes kendini yazar  
Ya da parçacıklarını  
Gönül eğlercesine  
Orayı yaşarken burada  
Bulur benliğini saf sade şiirin.

Severus Sokağında ne var ne yok  
öyleyse  
Derken şiirin güvercinleri  
Mutlaka mutluluk aranıyor  
Umut için mutlaka  
Mutlaka tansıklar silsilesi için  
Yeryüzünde barış için mutlaka  
Dizgilerin şiddetten arınması için  
Mutlaka varlık için  
Yoksulluk yok olacak –  
Çünkü çevrem dolu dizgin mutsuz.

### Yunus Balıkları ve Balinalar

Doğum gününü hatırlamak istemiyor  
sevdicek  
Onca hayvan ve ağaç nasılsa meydan  
okurken zamana  
Kaçakçılar Zorkun'un Kel Tepesinde  
Ateş yakarlardı her gece  
Ve şimdi kalmadı yayla patlıcanları  
Ya da yaban kokulu çilekleri artık orada  
her nasılsa  
Beklentilerimiz bitmeden.  
En iyi sözcüğü dilimizin  
'Yarın' olmalı –  
Yârim yanımda olacak  
Yunus balıklarıyla balinaları  
Konuşacağız belki de  
Alışmayacağız kötülöklere  
Teke tek görüşerek  
Olumlamayacağız ölümü,

### On Severus Road. SW11

Everyone writes of themselves  
Or of their parts  
As if entertaining themselves  
While living here over there  
And finds the individuality of pure plain poetry.

What's up in Severus Road then  
So saying the pigeons of poetry  
Must be looking for happiness  
For hope absolutely  
Absolutely for the chain of miracles  
For peace absolutely on earth  
For arrangements to be cleansed of violence  
Absolutely for existence  
Poverty will not exist  
Because my environs are unhappy at full  
gallop.

### Dolphins and Whales

The beloved doesn't want to remember his  
birthday  
When all those animals and trees  
Somehow challenge time –  
Smugglers used to light bonfires every night  
On the Bald Hill in Zorkun  
And now egg-plants of the plateau  
Or the wild aromatic strawberries  
Are no more there somehow  
Before our expectations end.  
The best word in our tongue  
Must be 'tomorrow' –  
My love will be beside me  
We'll perhaps talk about  
Dolphins and whales  
We won't get used to malice  
Meeting one to one  
Disaffirming death

Cennetle cehennem  
Biriğin ne olduđunu bilmeden.

Without knowing unity  
Or heaven or hell.

Esin kaynađı, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı'nın Őiri  
'Ölümünden Sonra'dır

Based on Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's poem 'After Death'

Orhan Veli Kanık was born in 1914 and not in 1936 as appeared in *Review 27* (p.37). We regret our error.



## Train to Turkey, 1960: some recollections<sup>94</sup>

by Brian Beeley

Late in the afternoon of 26 May, 1960, my train journey from London Victoria ended at Sirkeci station's Platform 1 in Istanbul. Together with Richard, a New Zealander whom I had met on the train somewhere in Yugoslavia, I ran the gauntlet of earnest Laz porters and found a taxi to take us to the Alp Hotel in Beyođlu. For the first time I saw glimpses of the centre of the great city – the Golden Horn, the Galata Tower, the bustling crowds, the ships on the Bosphorus. The scene was both familiar – I had seen many pictures of it – and new to me as I was not prepared for the noise, or the colour and the activity.



I had been warned to argue about taxi charges and felt quite pleased to get the price down from 25 to about 16 Liras – and this in the very limited Turkish I had so far learned from Mr Simpson before my departure from Durham University to undertake post-doctoral research in villages near Antalya. As regards that taxi, an insensitive local resident confided in me later that I should have paid nearer 6 Liras.

Richard, who was en route slowly to his homeland, lacked a hotel reservation. So I had invited him to share my booked room which I knew to be twin bedded. We retired early that evening and slept the deep sleep of the traveller with long hours of hearing "Passport Control!" in crowded carriages. Richard took himself off very early the following morning, as he had said he would, to explore Istanbul.

I myself set out after breakfast past the nearby British Consulate General, in all its Victorian grandeur, to do my own exploring and to acquire some Turkish currency. As I walked it occurred to me that I was almost alone although a couple of tanks rumbled towards me down İstiklâl Caddesi and the commander of one of them waved his hat at me and shouted "Merhaba!" His friendliness seemed at odds with the fact that shops and offices – and banks – around me were closed. More tanks in Taksim Square but there were hardly any non-military people about. Although no-

<sup>94</sup> This is the second article on the theme of 'My first experience of Turkey'. The first was by Malcolm Wagstaff (*Review 27*). Further such articles are invited (maximum 1500 words) and we would be equally pleased to see accounts from Turks of first experiences of the UK.



one challenged me, I realised that things were not normal. Suddenly I was concerned and determined to seek sanctuary at the Hilton Hotel where, I thought, I might get some Liras and find out more about what was going on. On the way up from Taksim I came upon still more tanks and some soldiers whom I photographed entering the office of Olympic Airways.



As I entered the long driveway to the Hilton, a man with a note-book and a North American accent hailed me with “Where is it, man? Where’s the revolution?” By now, being more informed as to what seemed to be happening in central Istanbul, I directed him down towards Taksim and off he hurried, pen in hand and looking at me with some puzzlement, as I retreated to an armchair in the hotel foyer. I was glad to find a little food at the Hilton but no money and scant news, except that martial law was in operation. There proved to be no chance of telephoning home to the UK.<sup>95</sup>

Later on 27 May I returned to the Alp Hotel, following the partial lifting of restrictions, but became concerned about Richard when there was no sign of him at the start of the night curfew. After a couple of hours I telephoned the Consulate-General to report my worries, which were shared by the charming Armenians who ran the hotel. A calm consular voice explained that they were “unusually busy” but would “do something” if Richard were still unaccounted for after midnight. The streets of Beyoğlu were eerily quiet as the hotel manager and I listened on the doorstep. After what seemed a long time there was suddenly a noise in the street some distance away. It grew louder as it got closer to us and revealed several soldiers escorting a very inebriated New Zealander apparently unable to utter anything other than “Alp Hotel, Alp Hotel!” With great relief, the manager and I identified Richard and got him upstairs to his bed where we removed his shoes and tie. And I phoned the man at the Consulate to update him. The next morning I awoke to see Richard surprisingly sober and bright eyed. “How did you get on in the curfew?” I enquired. “Oh fine”, he said, adding “I hope I didn’t disturb you when I came in”. “No, not at all!” said I.

When it reopened I visited the University of Istanbul to meet the head of the Geography Department for whom I had a letter of introduction prepared for me to bring from Durham. The good professor received me courteously but was clearly constrained by the presence of a large soldier standing beside him. This left me thinking that it was time for me to continue on my way to Ankara and to consult him and his colleagues at a later date.

A ferry took me and my suitcase across the Bosphorus to the imposing Haydarpaşa Railway terminus for a night train to the capital. While I dozed off in my couchette I heard some excellent light music nearby as the train rolled into Anatolia. There were

<sup>95</sup> I am aware that people died as a result of the events of May, 1960. Since I wrote these recollections of those times we have recently seen death and political turmoil in Turkey on an altogether greater scale. All losses and suffering on both occasions are to be deeply regretted.

also Spanish-sounding voices. Apparently I was to share a short part of my journey with a popular combo of Jewish musicians from Istanbul.

Eventually our train pulled into the Ankara Gar from which a short taxi ride took me to the Carlton Hotel in Ulus. (I managed to get a more appropriate agreement on the taxi fare this time.) The hotel stood across from the Karpiç Restaurant, which had been recommended to me back in Durham, so I decided to treat myself to lunch there. An elderly waiter confirmed that Kemal Atatürk had eaten there on occasion and, he went on, “I sometimes served him at the seat where you are sitting!”

But my main aim in Ankara was to prepare myself as well as I could for my sojourn in Antalya and its villages. Staff at Ankara University’s History and Geography Faculty were predictably welcoming but uncertain about what they might be able to do for me. Very unforthcoming was an army major to whom I went with a letter regarding permission to stay in villages (such was not usually given to foreigners at that time). It soon became clear that my letter of introduction/explanation had lost its potential following the events of 27 May. A Plan B was called for. I toured institutes and offices, picking up information and making contacts – and learning Turkish all the time. At the US Agency for International Development (AID) I met Charlie, a hydrological engineer, who invited me to a party at his home where I met his wife Ruth, an anthropologist who had written about land reform in ‘my’ villages in the south. We became good friends and I stayed with them until, many days later, I took my suitcase to the bus station on the edge of the city and boarded a weathered Koç vehicle for a sometimes unnerving two-day journey to Antalya.

Eventually I arrived tired but excited at Antalya bus station and moved into the Park Hotel just next door. A basic establishment, it was probably the best hotel in town at that time. A visitor such as I, before mass tourism, was a matter of interest. “Why have you come?” asked the hotel manager. “To study and write about farming and life in some villages”, I replied. “Then you must meet American John!” he said, while picking up the telephone. Soon a Land Rover appeared and deposited John Kolars, then of the University of Chicago’s Department of Geography. He, with his wife Ann, was studying villages in the same local area identified for me. We combined our research efforts on the ground for many months until they gave me a lift back to the UK. John, later to become a substantial name in Turkish studies, and I remained in close touch, as academics and as friends, until his death in 2014.

Such is the way in which research work can happen...

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## Impressions of Ankara

by Jill Sindall

I had never visited Ankara before April 2016 and was excited and full of curiosity at the prospect of seeing the city which had been chosen as capital of the Republic of Turkey at its birth. It is often depicted as a dreary place: its architecture dull and harsh, its atmosphere austere and conservative, with the only site worth attention being the ancient Citadel. I set aside two days to explore as much as possible by foot, with an itinerary for each day.



As my flight was due to arrive late in the evening, and also because of the recent terrorist attack, I anticipated an airport empty of human life and problems finding transport. In fact, I emerged to a bustling throng, with airport employees helping to direct travellers to appropriate buses for their onward journey. In this way I found a bus which would take me to the stop near my hotel, and was impressed that the young bus guide would not accept a tip, even though he helped me with my bags. My bus stopped at a very dark, unlit and insalubrious place, under a motorway underpass. A fellow passenger descended to help me find a taxi whilst the bus driver waited without impatience. I arrived safely at my destination.

The next day was the first session of the conference<sup>96</sup> and my first experience of Ankara road maps. Four of us followed three maps: one provided by the conference organizers, one for tourists and the third Googlemap on an Iphone. None bore any relation whatsoever to the reality on the ground, and we seemed to walk in circles and in opposite directions before we somehow stumbled on the conference venue. This presaged many similar experiences as I trudged around the city, looking for 'famous' and historic sites that no Turk I stopped on the street had ever heard of. Nor could anyone make head nor tail of the Turkish tourist board map I was trying to follow, nor recognise any of the street names. My itineraries thus went by the board, as did most of the places I had hoped to see. But the upside of this failure was that I walked miles and miles around Ankara, discovering how extremely varied are its neighbourhoods, leisure and shopping areas. Although I was told that Ankara was very quiet after the recent terrorist bombing of the airport, it seemed to me that the streets were buzzing with activity: young people laughing and good-natured, women scarved and women wearing tight jeans with low-cut tops walking arm in arm; families enjoying themselves in the parks; working folk rushing to and from their places of business; people shopping in shops and malls and open-air markets; men drinking tea and coffee outside cafés in areas where there was not a woman in sight; restaurants full of happy eaters (even without the stimulus of alcohol). I found the atmosphere almost intoxicating with its vibrancy. The contrast with Istanbul was complete – but not negatively so. They are just two totally different places, representing two different faces of Turkey.

Many of the shops lining the winding streets of the ancient Citadel (*Kale*) cater for the tourist trade, and several boutique hotels have risen from the remains of old houses. It is here, I learned, that foreign tourists like to stay, and it would seem that accommodation is well booked. However, one area of the Citadel displays a darker side of Ankara: squatters are gradually being edged out of their miserable homes to make way for the creeping gentrification of their district.



Some find the Atatürk Mausoleum an unacceptable monument to the cult of personality. I disagree. I found it deeply moving: rather a monument to the bloody struggle to free Turks from oppressors and invaders, and an opportunity to display superb Turkish craftsmanship. The simplicity of the architecture

and surrounding park instils a sense of contemplative quiet. Even the lavatory in the park enclosed a small courtyard, a fountain and a seat to meditate! The museum contains many fascinating photographs of the pre- and early Republican era.

<sup>96</sup> 'Turkey and Britain 1914-1952; From Enemies to Allies': Workshop I, organised by BIAA and USAK, Ankara, 2-3 April, 2016 [see report, pp. 55]

However, a series of massive oil paintings depicting the War of Independence rather jarred, being somehow reminiscent of heroic Soviet art. I discovered later that Russian artists had been commissioned to paint them, deeply offending Turkish painters.

Fortunately, it was not too difficult to find the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. The building was a 15th century former covered market, renovated and extended over decades from the mid-20th century. It is a breathtaking and visionary example of good heritage conservancy combined with excellent and sympathetic architecture. And the contents are truly exceptional.



I left Ankara with a sense of affection for the place, and a sadness that it has an undeserved reputation for not being worthy of a visit. I also felt a strong identification with a city which was being subjected to random terrorist bombings, having myself lived in London during IRA attacks. The same resilience to threats of intimidation was as evident in Ankara as in London.

I would definitely return – partly in the hope of finding those places which had eluded me!



## Conferences, Workshops & Organisations



### Turkey and Britain 1914-1952

#### From Enemies to Allies<sup>97</sup>

by Jill Sindall

#### Workshop 1, held at USAK<sup>98</sup>, Ankara, on 2 and 3 April 2016<sup>99</sup>

This workshop launched what is hoped will be the first of a four-part programme organized by the British Institute at Ankara, in this instance in partnership with USAK. Contributions from a panel comprising 13 post-graduate and post-doctoral students together with established academics covered the period from the eve of World War I to the Turkish War of Independence (1914-1922).

Ambassador Özdem Sanberk, President of USAK and former Turkish Ambassador to the UK, opened the conference with a reflective speech. “Unnecessary mistakes” had been made in the course of conflict between the two countries, and the conference offered the opportunity to illustrate that present problems in the area have precedents. The UK, Turkey and other regional actors should unite to find a way forward.

The main issues which emerged sometimes gave rise to heated debate: why the Ottomans went to war with the Entente; the effect of three months’ procrastination

<sup>97</sup> A research programme organised by the British Institute at Ankara

<sup>98</sup> Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu (International Strategic Research Foundation)

<sup>99</sup> In addition to the speakers listed in Professor Stephen Mitchell’s article in *Review* No. 26, Ambassador Altay Cengizer, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for Policy Planning, gave a paper entitled ‘British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire from the Young Turk Revolution to the First World War’



by the Porte in declaring war; the role of trade and oil in policymaking, both Ottoman and British; how and why the British in particular underestimated the Ottoman military machine; the importance or otherwise of Pan-Islamism; the significance of the rise of humanitarianism in public opinion; the early signs of the first cracks in British imperial power in parallel with the US's rise to global power and the emergence of Japan as a major industrial force.

The question of the rationale behind the Ottomans' decision to declare war on the Entente, and the effect of their procrastination in doing so, engendered much discussion. In his presentation, Ambassador Altay Cenziger described the general assertion that the CUP<sup>100</sup> was 'pro-German' as 'rubbish', and claimed the assertion that the Ottomans had automatically decided to side with Germany was wrong. Britain and the Entente had had a great opportunity to avoid conflict with the Ottomans but had made no substantial attempt to do so, in spite of Britain's 'act of friendship' towards the Porte in as late as 1908 during the Bosnian crisis. This attitude sprang essentially from French and British ambitions to break up and divide the Empire. Furthermore, the relationship between the CUP and Britain was one of 'active hostility'. Britain's assumption that the Ottomans would enter the war on Germany's side made easy the decision to accede to Russia's request just before the outbreak of war to sequester two battleships built by the British for the Ottoman navy. Evidently the British government did not fear a domestic backlash at home over the incident, but the Ottoman public were outraged as the ships had been paid for by public subscription. In his view, there was no way that the Ottomans could have remained neutral.

Dr Warren Dockter said that Churchill<sup>101</sup>, long a supporter of the Ottoman Empire, had applauded the rise of the CUP and had met and admired Enver Pasha in Germany before WW1. Churchill had been keen to support Talat Bey's offer of an alliance with Britain after an Italian invasion of Libya in 1911, but Sir Edward Grey<sup>102</sup> demurred. Churchill tried to ensure that the Ottomans remained neutral in the looming conflict by writing to many leading figures to lobby support. After the seizure of the ships, he wrote to Enver Pasha that the Ottomans would be reimbursed, but he never received a reply. After the ignominious defeat of the British in the Dardanelles, Churchill resigned from politics to rejoin the army. His opposition to Britain's support of the Greek invasion of Anatolia in 1919 led him to consider volunteering to fight on the side of the Turkish Nationalists.

Professor William Hale strongly believed that it would have served the Ottomans better to remain neutral. Legally, since the war was being fought over Belgian neutrality, the Entente could not invade neutral Ottoman territory, giving the Porte a strong pretext to remain outside the conflict. Dr Sevtap Demirci considered that the Ottomans had no choice but go to war having spent three months in intensive discussions with Germany. He said that the Young Turks had asked for 'alignment' with the Entente but Britain would not agree to their conditions, one of which was neutrality in return for Britain helping to maintain the integrity of what remained of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans eventually sided with the Germans in the belief that Germany's strength would help the Ottomans recover territory lost in North Africa and the Balkans. Moreover, German officers effectively ran most of the Ottoman

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<sup>100</sup> Committee of Union and Progress, governing in the name of the Empire, with Sultan as head of state.

<sup>101</sup> First Lord of the Admiralty 1911-1915

<sup>102</sup> Liberal Foreign Secretary 1905-1916



military after heavy German investment in Ottoman infrastructure and military capability prior to the war.

A key factor in the formulation of British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was the strategic importance of Iraq and Egypt to British interests in India. Camille Cole demonstrated how Britain was virtually hostage to British navigation companies operating in Iraq since the Tigris and the Euphrates cargo routes were also used for key imperial communications to and from India. These companies frequently appealed to the imperial authorities in Delhi to intervene in disputes with the Ottomans, which infuriated the latter who considered the companies and the British Government to be 'identical', and a threat to Ottoman sovereignty. But, ironically, the companies themselves were cavalier in their treatment of HMG, and in fact prioritised opportunities to widen their own trading empire over their obligations to fulfil Government contracts. At the same time, Britain wanted to obtain hydraulic projects in Iraq and to entrench British trade in an area considered strategically important, seizing on the declared Ottoman government's policy of improving the *vilayet's* infrastructure. Ms Cole concluded that, because Iraq



was vital to British trade, communications and strategic interests, its invasion by Britain in 1915 after the Ottomans declared war was inevitable. To their own amazement, the Ottomans defeated the Entente army at Kut and the latter were relieved to surrender after horrific experiences of starvation and high rates of attrition. This victory, coming after the enemy's defeat at Gallipoli, galvanized the Ottoman army. Dr Demirci denied that Ottoman military successes were attributable to Entente 'mistakes'. He and Professor Eugene Rogan agreed that, although they correctly assumed that the Ottoman army was exhausted and traumatised by the long Balkan wars, and many young men had run away to escape conscription, the Entente fatally underestimated the enemy at both battles. Fighting an enemy on a foreign front was quite a different matter to resisting invasion of the motherland: the latter had given a strong impetus to morale and motivation to Ottoman soldiers.

Dr Demirci concluded that the outcome of these two failed battles meant that thousands of lost Entente troops could have been more usefully sent to the Western front, perhaps shortening the war. Furthermore, the Russian Revolution was probably advanced since Russia became cut off from her allies. And – importantly – their victories restored the Ottoman military's confidence, shattered in the Balkan Wars. Politically, General Mustafa Kemal's outstanding leadership raised his profile enormously, nationally and internationally, paving the way to his spearheading the Nationalist movement. Ultimately, the competence and capacity of the British Empire was brought under critical scrutiny.

Dr Talha Çiçek said that Djemal Pasha's<sup>103</sup> failure to rout the British from Egypt in 1915 frustrated the Ottomans' objectives of cutting them off from India and tying down their troops, and of encouraging the Egyptians to rise up against their British rulers. The Ottoman call for *jihad* in the name of pan-Islamism was a further attempt

<sup>103</sup> Head of the Ottoman Army in Egypt during WW1

to undermine the British in India<sup>104</sup> and the Italians in North Africa. Dr Piro Rezhepi said that recent research had revealed that this initiative had been either a totally German or a joint German-Ottoman project.

Charlie Laderman (by Skype) described how reports of Armenian massacres began to appear in 1915 in Anatolia and Istanbul, provoking outcries of compassion from the American and British public. The British Foreign Office was quick to play on these sentiments, whipping up popular feeling against the Central Powers by feeding the press with graphic and grisly details of atrocities committed by the Ottomans. There was pressure at home and abroad on President Wilson to take on the Ottomans but, although an idealist, he was also a pragmatist and judged that there was no popular support for going to war. He commented that the massacres were emblematic of 'Old Power' problems, and his preferred action was diplomatic negotiation. Ottoman leaders were encouraged by Wilson's refusal to go to war, hoping it would undermine relations between the US and Britain, and thwart British imperialist ambitions on Ottoman territory. However, the President's hand was forced by the German U-boat attack on an American convoy in the Atlantic in 1917 into declaring war on Germany. But the US never declared war on the Ottomans, and the US described itself as an *associate* rather than an *ally* of the Entente.

A most intriguing paper was given by Professor Selçuk Esenbel on the subject of Japan's role in the war. When war broke out she was a political ally of Britain, and technically part of the Entente alliance. Although Japan and the Ottomans had never signed a trade treaty, they enjoyed friendly relations via rather unorthodox channels of communication. The Japanese armaments industry (established by the UK) became very wealthy by supplying the British with artillery during the war. In addition, although she never actually declared war on Germany, Japan helped to quell a Hindu/Muslim uprising in Singapore. In a similar spirit of cooperation, Britain made a secret agreement with Japan that she could take over German territory in Asia in the event of the Entente's success (an agreement later honoured in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919).

After the Mudros Armistice in 1918, the Japanese fleet entered the Bosphorus, and in 1920 Japan joined the International Straits Commission. The Japanese High Commissioner, Sadatsuchi Uchida, was already acquainted with his British counterpart, Sir Horace Rumbold, who had served in Tokyo. Uchida was a proactive diplomat, keen to mediate, and quickly contacted the Turkish Nationalists Tevfik Pasha and Bekir Pasha who were attending the London Conference to offer Japanese encouragement. Then, in 1921, during the Turkish War of Independence, Uchida reported to his Foreign Minister on the POW exchange taking place in Malta between Britain and Turkey. He suggested that the British would benefit from compromise with Ankara<sup>105</sup> as it would probably bring an end to the Khilafat Movement in India and said as much to Rumbold. The latter then sent a message to the Turkish Nationalists in Ankara through Uchida's good offices that, although it might prove difficult to retrieve Thrace from the Greek invaders, the British government could probably persuade them to leave western Anatolia. The reply came that Britain *must* accept the National Pact<sup>106</sup> if there were to be any hope of restoration of good relations between Britain and a Turkish Republic. However, Rumbold did not have the authority to take matters further, and the British expressed

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<sup>104</sup> In India the Khilafat Movement – a pan-Islamic, political protest campaign by Muslims – was already of concern to the Raj.

<sup>105</sup> Britain was supportive of the Greek advance in Anatolia

<sup>106</sup> Manifesto of Turkish Nationalists declared in 1920

displeasure with Uchida's initiatives. Meanwhile, a new generation of Japanese policymakers had come to power who no longer considered the Anglo-Japanese alliance to be advantageous to Japan, and Uchida was told that he should no longer attempt to mediate because "the situation in Europe is very delicate". Japan should act as an onlooker: the Balkans and the Middle East was the problem of the Europeans. In 1924, Japan became the second country after France to recognise the new Turkish Republic, to which Uchida became the first Japanese ambassador. The subject of historiography was touched upon, with Dr Demirci asserting that the history of European armies in non-European theatres is viewed overwhelmingly from the European perspective. He also complained about sloppy terminology, such as the employment of the term Turks when referring to Ottomans, and also of Turkey when describing the Ottoman Empire.

The powerful potential of propaganda arose in an amusing but nevertheless salutary anecdote related rather like a detective story by Professor Ayhan Aktar in connection with the sinking of the French battleship Bouvet in the Dardanelles. Following a loud explosion, the ship sank in one and a half minutes. The British claimed that Ottoman mines were responsible – the Ottomans that it was their artillery, a claim supported by Mustafa Kemal who allegedly had watched the episode through binoculars. However, later accounts by an Ottoman and a German officer respectively contradicted this account, both men saying that mines had sunk the ship. But in 1967 a salvage diver discovered that the explosion responsible had occurred **within** the ship – possibly a boiler which then set off the magazine. This discovery was confirmed in 2012 by Turkish divers who employed underwater robots to take images of the Bouvet's wreck. In fact, Ottoman artillery at the time was inadequate, and officers knew it. But, by employing a little fiction, the reputation of the Ottomans' armaments was usefully embellished.

The British Ambassador to Turkey, Richard Moore, addressing the workshop, described the British Institute at Ankara as a "jewel in the crown of British soft power". He suggested that the events of WW1 and the struggle for independence still shape the Turkish view of Britain, even among the young. For many, the sequestration of Turkish ships and her major role in the Sykes-Picot agreement remain examples of how perfidious Britain can be. When British and Anzac veterans visit Gallipoli to commemorate that infamous battle and to honour the thousands of comrades who died, he believed that many in Turkey feel that they do not consider nor understand the significance of Çanakkale to the Turks who themselves lost so many soldiers there.

This research project is an excellent initiative by BIAA, who are to be congratulated on organizing this first and impressive workshop under the excellent chairmanship of Dr Daniel MacArthur-Seal. I am indebted to the BIAA and to Professor Stephen Mitchell for facilitating my participation as an observer.

Unfortunately, USAK was closed by the Turkish government four days after the July 2016 attempted coup. It is hoped that BIAA will find an alternative partner for the next workshop entitled ***Britain and Turkey in the 1920s*** which is projected to take place at Churchill College, Cambridge, from 30 March to 2 April 2017.





The Association of British Turkish Academics was established in London in 2010 as a non-profit and non-political organisation with the aim of developing academic links between Britain and Turkey. Meetings are organised in London to bring together academics from both countries, while Britons are helped with their research interests in Turkey. Another major strand is the publication of research-related news and information. Earlier this year ABTA offered grants to assist doctoral students in the UK. For further information about the Association visit their website.

Brian Beeley



## ***Turkish Poetry Today*** **Launch**

Red Hand Books and the new editors of *Turkish Poetry Today* cordially invite those interested to a launch of their remodelled journal of modern and contemporary Turkish poetry.

New features introduced in the autumn 2016 issue include a Featured Poet section, with an extensive selection of the work of Behçet Necatigil (1916–1979), and a section devoted to essays and reviews, including a translation of the famous Garip Manifesto, written by Orhan Veli Kanık in 1941, accompanied by a selection of poems by Garip poets Veli, Oktay Rifat and Melih Cevdet Anday. The large, central part of the magazine presents translations of poems spanning the modern era of Turkish poetry, from the work of Ahmet Haşım and Nazım Hikmet to that of the generation of poets writing now, including Lale Müldür, Asuman Susam, and Gökçenur Ç.

The celebration will be held at St Paul's Church and Community Centre in Marylebone, Rossmore Road, London NW1 6NJ, from 6.00 – 8:30 PM on Wednesday, November 2, 2016, and will include talks, readings, drinks and nibbles. Copies of the autumn 2016 *Turkish Poetry Today* will be available, of course, along with other Red Hand Books publications. For more information about *TPT* and the launch event (and RSVP) contact [richard@redhandmedia.co.uk](mailto:richard@redhandmedia.co.uk).

Mel Kenne

Brian Beeley



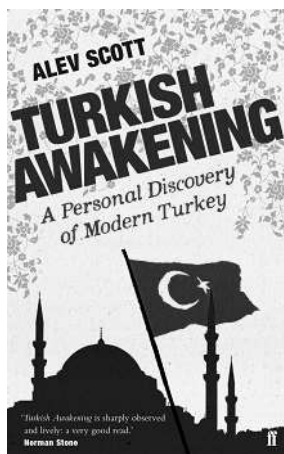
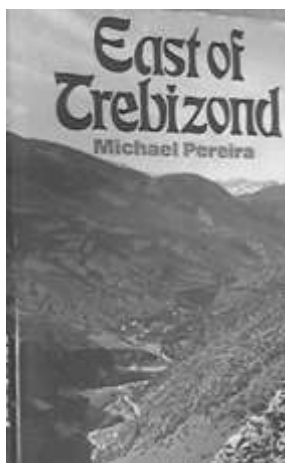
BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

## BRISMES 2016

Two hundred academics, publishers, diplomats and others assembled for this year's conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) at the University of Wales, Lampeter, from 13-15 July. Only six of the 158 presentations listed focused on Turkey- most of them on religious themes – and all but one of these were by speakers from Turkish universities. However, it appears that some 30 per cent of the papers submitted for consideration to the Society's highly regarded *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (BJMES) are currently on Turkey-related topics! As a result of this BRISMES is looking to appoint an associate editor who specialises in the Turkish area. News of the coup attempt in Turkey broke hours after the Conference participants had left Lampeter...

### Book Reviews & Publications



### A TALE OF TWO TURKEYS: East of Trebizond (1971)<sup>107</sup> and Turkish Awakening (2014)<sup>108</sup>

My first visit to Turkey was in 1971, my most recent in 2014; and at the time of writing in summer 2016, just after the failed coup attempt, I am contemplating going ahead with an already vaguely planned trip to the north-east Black Sea region and perhaps on into Georgia. The desire to see at least part of the Black Sea region for

<sup>107</sup> Geoffrey Bles Ltd, London, 1971; special 1972 edition published by Readers Union Ltd, Newton Abbot, Devon, 256 pp hbk: available on Amazon.

<sup>108</sup> Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 2014, 345 pp pbk. ISBN: 978-0-571-29658-3



the first time has been with me for some time but this year my interest has been rekindled by the act of finally reading a book that I acquired several years ago. This is *East of Trebizond* by Michael Pereira, a soldier who learned Turkish and wrote this and two other travel books on Turkey (as well as works of fiction) around half a century ago. The portrait of Turkey he presents in this book provides both an interesting contrast to — and also a range of insights in common with — the more wide-ranging and up-to-date one offered by the half-Turkish journalist Alev Scott in her *Turkish Awakening*, which ends with a discussion of the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests and of President Erdoğan's 'New Turkey' project.

*East of Trebizond* is, particularly in its structure, an unusual sort of travel book. In the early summer of a year not mentioned Michael Pereira and a companion, Tim Smart, decided to set out from Trabzon and explore — sharing the burden of a single rucksack — part of the far north-east corner of Turkey, in the triangle bounded by Trabzon, Erzurum and Sarp (now the frontier with Georgia). This is an area containing not only such formidable geographical features as the plateau of Erzurum, the Pontic Alps, the valley of the River Çoruh and the Black sea coastline but also a rich and varied history, having been the arena of conflicts involving Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Seljuks, Georgians, Armenians, Ottoman Turks and Russians. The author begins by describing the physical and historical setting, and then after the initial chapters interleaves his narrative of the journey with chapters devoted to accounts of the relevant historical background (for example, 'The Kingdom of Georgia', 'Russia Looks South' etc.). This is what makes the book's format unusual but at the same time highly informative, especially when we are regaled with information on the region's role as the 'forgotten front' of the Crimean War and of the terrible tragedy (for the Turks) of the battle of Sarikamış against the Russians in the winter of 1914/15, so little known compared with Gallipoli. At the same time those readers who may not share the author's obvious soldierly interest in the details of such past conflicts can freely skim over or simply ignore these historical chapters and instead enjoy the very engaging narrative chapters.

Engaging they certainly are, not only for the descriptions of places and landscapes but also for the author's evident interest above all else in his human encounters and for the liberal, unapologetic sprinkling of Turkish dialogue throughout. The pair's itinerary took them first from Rize through villages across the Pontic Alps to the Çoruh valley and on to Erzurum; then north-east through the Gorge of Tortum to Artvin and Hopa, and finally back along the coast to Trabzon and the Sumela monastery. As for the journeying itself, this was done mostly either on foot (for the pleasure of it) or by bus, and the former mode of travel quickly provoked astonishment on the part of many men whom Pereira and Smart encountered. It was a recurring case of "sober-minded Turk confronted and bewildered by two mad Englishmen bent on self-destruction"; for in that world walking up those hills and in that heat was surely something that only animals and women were supposed to do. There are fascinating and often amusing stories of encounters with the local people throughout (supplemented by black and white photographs concentrating as much upon children and adults as upon buildings and landscapes), but the reader's interest is captured easily just in the early chapters. These travellers were in a world, familiar to those who have ever visited the poorer, remoter parts of Turkey, where so many people's "kindness and hospitality to strangers was in inverse proportion to the hardness of their own lives". Several characters express hopes of work or training beyond the confines of that world — a world that was seeing optimistic development

in the form of roads and bridges without the environmental complications and disputes of today. Many of the scenes and situations recounted took me back to my own experiences in eastern and central Anatolia at about the same time, in the summer of 1971: the large groups of people gathering to inspect, assist and listen to a foreigner speaking Turkish; the accompanying bands of (mostly helpful and friendly) young boys; the long, hard stares; the endless, awkward questions about military service, Britain compared with Turkey, the House of Lords, the problem of Ireland, etc. Pereira pays tribute both to the toughness, industry and stoicism of the Turkish peasant women he observes, and to the courtesy, patience, good conversation and dry humour of the older men in particular. The Turks, he writes, have in fact not only an extremely good sense of humour, but the best kind: “restrained, but shrewd and pungent”. On top of all this there are entertaining and telling vignettes of a simple but thoughtful world with only basic accommodation and facilities to offer, such as the description of “the lavatory” with its fine, panoramic view at the inn in Güneyce: a jagged hole near the edge of a flat concrete roof, for which “one needed a good head for heights”.

*Turkish Awakening: Behind the Scenes of Modern Turkey* is an excellent survey of contemporary Turkey from which both seasoned observers and intending travellers or tourists can benefit. The young author has a British father and a Turkish Cypriot mother, and states that her book is about her own personal awakening to the complex realities of Turkish identity as well as about the “awakening of the Turkish people”, who are at the present time “working out what they want from the present and more importantly the future”. Having moved to live in Istanbul only in January 2011 and travelled within the country, she had effectively just finished writing her survey when the Gezi Park protests and the harsh reaction to them happened in 2013; and this new and updated edition closes with a survey of the overall political situation in Turkey as it was in the late summer of 2014 following Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s elevation to the Presidency. No book, of course, can be totally ‘up-to-date’, but anyone wanting some better understanding of the tumultuous events of the past two years and of the background to the recent failed coup attempt would, I believe, gain a lot by reading this book. It is, I feel, a recent and very worthy addition to a list of most useful books on Turkey published in the past two decades such as James Pettifer’s *The Turkish Labyrinth* (1997) and Chris Morris’s *The New Turkey* (2005).

‘Wide-ranging’ would seem rather an understatement of the breadth of the canvas on which Alev Scott paints her portrait of Turkey and the Turks. Her investigations, encounters and conversations cover a diverse range of characters and topics, everything from the “Byzantine practices” governing the taxi trade in Istanbul to homosexuality and transvestitism in a part of that same city, and from the deficiencies of the education system to soap operas, to urbanization, environmental activism and the question of minorities. All this is achieved in a spirit of balance, humour, and sympathy - and occasional acerbic commentary, as when in a reference to contemporary Turkey’s “so-called developers” she writes that the Turkish landscape beloved by local environmentalists as well as foreigners now “serves as a playground for greedy, Lego-wielding toddlers”.

Scott’s contribution is obviously a broader and harder-edged look at Turkey and the Turks than Michael Pereira’s of nearly half a century ago. But with my own personal experience of this fascinating and often perplexing country over the time period that

divides them, I have found both these books a wonderful read and would unhesitatingly recommend them to the like-minded.

John Moreton  
University of Leeds

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**Compiled by Arın Bayraktarođlu**



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