

# **Turkish Area Studies Review**

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# BATAS

## The 2022 John Martin Lecture

Friday 11 November 2022 at 6.30 pm

### Professor Ersin Kalaycıoğlu

Political Scientist, Sabancı University, Istanbul,  
Member of The Science Academy, Turkey

on

### Neo-patrimonial Sultanism's Ordeal with Popular Elections

in

The Tuke Common Room, Regent's University,  
Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS

**Registration and Refreshments from 6.00 pm**

Free entry for BATAS members, Regent's University staff and full-time students  
For others entry is £5.00 (cash payments only) or free if you register as a new member on the day.

To be sure of getting a seat, you may reserve a place by emailing [events@batas.org.uk](mailto:events@batas.org.uk)

For directions to the venue see  
<https://www.regents.ac.uk/about/contact-us/how-to-find-us>  
10 minutes' walk from Baker Street: nearest tube

**This event has been generously sponsored by Regent's University, London**



## Spring Symposium 2023

at Emmanuel College, Cambridge

This is taking place on Saturday 22 April 2023

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



# CONTENTS

A. Bayraktaroğlu & S-B Martin 2 Editorial

## From the BATAS Symposium (May 2022)

John O'Connell 3 Style and Taste in Turkish Classical Music under Atatürk  
Nick Baird 8 Turkey's Place in the Geopolitics of Energy

## Politics & Economics

Andrew Finkel 11 A Tale of Three Elephants - and a Türkiye  
Mina Toksöz 18 Turkish Economy: Running out of Supporting Factors  
Peter Millett 23 Cyprus: Something Completely Different  
Erkan Saka 27 The State of Turkish Journalism  
Tony Osborne 31 The Rise and Rise of Turkey's Bayraktar Drones

## History, Society & Culture

Arın Bayraktaroğlu 33 Turkey's Place in the Struggle for Polish Independence **Part 1**  
Nicholas de Lange 36 Mapping the Jewish Communities of Late Medieval Anatolia  
Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa 41 The influence of Islam in Turkish Politics **Part 1**  
Semra Eren-Nijhar 48 Three Poems on 'Women'

## Conferences, Book Reviews & Publications

John Moreton 49 BRISMES 2022  
Çiğdem Balım 50 ed.Jeroen Van den Bosch et alia, *The European Handbook of Central Asian Studies*  
James Pettifer 54 Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern World*  
Andrew Finkel 56 Andrew Finkel, *The Adventure of the Second Wife*  
Erdal Atrek 60 Multi-Lingual E-Library on Turkey (Türkiye)  
Arın Bayraktaroğlu 61 Recent & Forthcoming Publications

## Reminiscence

Kathleen Allanach 63 Some Memories of the English High School for Girls

## In Memoriam

Celia Kerslake 67 Dr Richard Repp

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

# Editorial

In the six months since the publication of the Spring issue of TAS Review, many noteworthy events have taken place not only in Turkey but also in the world. Our regular coverage of two popular areas in the study of Turkey, that is, the politics and the economy, are again handled by our two experts. Mina Toksöz expects that the volatile Turkish economy with its soaring inflation might be stabilized with extraordinary measures as the country counts the months now towards general elections due to take place in June next year. Andrew Finkel also focuses on the effects of this desperate economic situation on the foreign and domestic politics, also covering their social ramifications. Still in the political genre, Erkan Saka deals with media censorship in Turkey and Peter Millett with a new approach to the Cyprus saga.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia features in contributions by Tony Osborne on the success of Turkish-made drones which have been used effectively by Ukraine in the war, and by Nick Baird, BATAS' President and also one of the speakers at the Spring Symposium, held in Cambridge last May, evaluating the short-term and long-term effects of the Ukraine-Russia war on Turkey's geopolitical balance in the region. Another Spring Symposium speaker, John O'Connell, summarizes his fascinating talk looking at the specialties of an early republican period singer of great fame, Münir Nurettin Selçuk.

Moving on to articles with historical flavour, one article recounts the 19th Century relations between the Ottomans and Ukraine's neighbour Poland; another looks at the rise of political Islam in Turkey from 1950s to date; and 'Jews in Anatolia' informs us about the medieval Jewish settlements in the region, with an amazing mapping technique.

Poetry and Reminiscence are catered for again and you will enjoy a very substantial books and conference section. An E-Library on Turkey is introduced, and a list of Recent and Forthcoming Publications is provided.

Finally, in the 'In Memoriam' section Celia Kerslake remembers Dr Richard Repp, an Oxford University Lecturer in Turkish history, who passed away in 2021.

The co-editors wish to thank all contributors, and also, of course, to recognise the careful work of our proof-readers who very often under great pressure keep to deadlines. With the completion of this issue of TAS Review Arın Bayraktaroğlu regrettably bows out, while thanking her Co-editor, Sigrid Martin, for being an ideal colleague to work with. SBM was equally happy to work with AB, and we both thank Mina Toksöz for generously stepping in for Arın; in her capable hands this publication will certainly go from strength to strength.

Arın Bayraktaroğlu  
Co-Editor

Sigrid-B Martin  
Co-Editor

## From the BATAS Symposium (May 2022)



### ‘Şık bir gazel oldu’:

#### Style and Taste in Turkish Classical Music under Atatürk.

by John O’Connell

Professor of Ethnomusicology,  
School of Music, University of Cardiff

#### Introduction:

‘Şık bir gazel oldu’ ([That] was a chic *gazel*) was an expression employed to represent a new style of vocal improvisation that was created by the renowned Turkish artist, Münir Nurettin Selçuk (1899-1981). I first came across the phrase when I interviewed Selçuk’s daughter, Meral Selçuk (b. 1930),<sup>1</sup> at her home in Nişantaşı (Istanbul) when conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on the musical reforms that transformed Turkish classical music during the early-Republican period (1923-1938).<sup>2</sup> For Meral, a ‘chic’ *gazel* was a tasteful rendition. ‘It had to create a certain mood with an intimate voice and a personal mark’. To describe this, she used words like ‘heart sound’ (tr. ‘*kalb sesi*’) and ‘heartfelt voice’ (‘*kalben sesi*’). Asked to clarify, she replied: ‘It was something soft, a mood of the moment’. She compared this new style of vocal improvisation with a religious style of vocal performance generally called the ‘hâfız style’ (‘*hâfız üslubu*’). For her, this traditional style of *gazel* performance was ‘tasteless’ (‘*tatsız*’).<sup>3</sup>



Münir Nurettin Selçuk: Publicity photograph taken in Cairo (1939). © John M. O’Connell.

<sup>1</sup> Interview by John M. O’Connell with Meral Selçuk in Nişantaşı (Istanbul) on 27 February 1994.

<sup>2</sup> The doctoral research is featured in my monograph: John M. O’Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music* (London: Routledge, 2015). A translation of this publication recently appeared in Turkish as: John M. O’Connell, *Alaturka: Türk Müziğinde bir Üslup* (Istanbul: Albaraka Yayınları, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the various styles of Turkish vocal improvisation see: John M. O’Connell, ‘Song Cycle: The Life and Death of the Turkish *Gazel*’. *Ethnomusicology* 51, no. 3 (2003), pp. 399-414.

Style and taste in Turkish classical music were indelibly bound to the revolutionary reforms that attended the foundation of the Turkish Republic (1923). In keeping with republican orthodoxy, commonly referred to as 'Kemalism' ('*Kemalizm*'),<sup>4</sup> Turkish classical music had to be westernised and modernised to keep up with contemporary reforms that embraced many aspects of Turkish culture. In particular, 'to sing a *gazel*' ('*gazel okumak*') represented the antithesis of the sentiments envisaged by these reforms. Named after a poetic genre in Persian literature, the musical style embodied the heterogeneous character of Ottoman culture, a hybrid synthesis of different languages and distinctive musics. The fact that *gazeller* were typically performed by religious singers of different ethnicities and employed a vocal style (called '*tekke ağzı*') intimately associated with Sufi practice was especially repugnant to the nationalist sensibilities and the secularist inclinations of contemporary commentators. The fact, too, that *gazel* practitioners (*gazelhanlar*) were prone to sob (*hıçkırmak*) and to cry (*ağlamak*) provided further ammunition for polemicists to condemn a discredited style.<sup>5</sup>

It was precisely this style of vocal performance which Meral Selçuk referred to as 'tasteless'. Indeed, her father was more specific in his condemnation. He employed the learned and colloquial terms respectively for 'theolog[ical]' ('*ilâhiyat*') and 'simpletons' ('*huffâz*') to validate his own prejudicial attitude. Implicit in this criticism was the association between *gazel* performance and popular culture, especially the position accorded to *gazeller* in the vocal repertoire of music taverns (*çalgılı meyhaneler*). Such venues, where alcohol was readily available, were frequented by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. And in these venues, many of the musical practitioners were Armenian and Greek. Combining inebriation with cosmopolitanism, the traditional *gazel* became emblematic of an Ottoman past, a degenerate style that had no place in the sobering ether and the nationalist ethos of the republican present. Interestingly, it was not only contemporary ideologues who were vitriolic in their criticism, respected artists, such as Mesut Cemil Tel (1902-1963), were also circumspect. For them, the *gazel* had no place in Turkish classical music.

Yet, at the time, Turkish classical music (*Türk klâsik musikisi*) had yet to be defined either as Turkish or classical. Although the musical tradition was called by other names such as 'Ottoman music' ('*Osmanlı Musikisi*'), it was generally referred to as 'eastern music' ('*şark musikisi*') to distinguish it from 'western music' ('*garp musikisi*'). It was also known more colloquially as '[in] a Turkish style' ('*alaturka*') to differentiate it from '[in] a Frankish [or European] style' ('*alafiranga*'). The bifurcation of musical discourse into eastern and western categories had a long history dating back to the abolition of the traditional Janissary band (*mehterhane*) in 1826 and the establishment of the modern military ensemble (*mızıka*) soon afterwards. Yet, throughout the late-Ottoman Empire, Turkish classical music as 'eastern music' represented a hybrid style that encompassed the secular and sacred domains and that was performed in popular and the élite contexts. Like the *gazel*, 'eastern music' embraced Turkish and non-Turkish languages and was performed by Muslim and non-Muslim musicians.

It was precisely this hybrid character of 'eastern music' that was singled out for censure. Even the Turkish president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), when

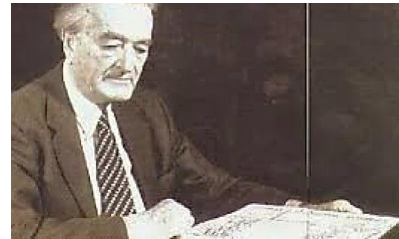
<sup>4</sup> For a representative overview of the six ideologies that constituted Kemalism (*Kemalizm*) see: Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 375-395.

<sup>5</sup> A comparative analysis of *gazel* performances by different *gazelhanlar* during the early-Republican period can be found in: Ali R. Sağman, *Meşhur Hâfız Sami* (İstanbul: Ahmet Sait Matbaası, 1947).



speaking after a concert in Sarayburnu Gazinosu (İstanbul) to mark language reform (10 August 1928), described ‘eastern music’ as ‘an unsophisticated music ... that was not sufficient to satisfy the natural feelings of the Turkish people’.<sup>6</sup> When comparing an eastern ensemble with a western orchestra at the event, he noted the sorrowful disposition of the former and the vivacious character of the latter. For Atatürk, ‘sorrow (*hüzün*) is the result of calamitous events’. It was not in keeping with the true character of the Turkish people, which was essentially happy (*şen*) and gay (*şatır*). Noting that ‘the Turkish state is concerned about this problem’, the president initiated a polemical debate about the national credentials of ‘eastern music’ that eventually resulted in negative legislation against and partial suppression of the musical style.

For Atatürk, Turkish music had to change radically. By way of a musical revolution (called ‘*Türk musiki inkılâbı*’), he proposed,<sup>7</sup> along with an influential coterie of Turkish composers that included Adnan Saygun (1907-1991),<sup>8</sup> a ‘polyphonic music composed using the pristine strains of folk music’ to create a ‘national music’ (*millî musiki*). This new music would be both classical by way of composition and national in terms of identity. However, this hybrid fusion of the classical and the Turkish was never called ‘Turkish classical music’. Rather, Atatürk believed that such a national music could take its rightful place in the world of music. Like other national musics (which emerged in eastern Europe during the nineteenth century), it had to be both national and international. In this way, Atatürk aimed to modernise and westernize Turkish music, to create a musical tradition that was fit ‘for the youth of our nation’ and that ‘forces the world to listen’.



Of significance, ‘eastern music’ had no place in Atatürk’s vision of cultural transformation in the young republic. It was too non-national and non-western. Of course, *gazel* performance was an integral part of that musical tradition. Indeed, the melancholic character of vocal improvisation was a sonic reminder of the calamitous events to which Atatürk referred. Indeed, its sorrowful character was not in keeping with the joyous spirit of the Turkish people as noted by Atatürk. If ‘eastern music’ was to survive the maelstrom of the musical revolution, *gazeller* had to be excluded from musical performance. This was just one change. Exponents of ‘eastern music’ invoked the spirit of Atatürk’s rhetoric to classicize (by adopting western conventions) and to nationalise (by choosing Turkish repertoire) to develop their own version of a national music, a Turkish classical music that is still to be heard in the concert halls and the radio stations of the Turkish Republic.

Why then did Münir Nurettin Selçuk continue to perform *gazeller* in Turkish classical music? For Selçuk, the vocal *gazel* was like an operatic aria, a medium through which

<sup>6</sup> The official version of this speech by Atatürk was published in *Ayin Tarihi*, 53 (August 1928), pp. 1-4. However, different versions of the original address (which was probably delivered ad libitum) are also extant. See: John M. O’Connell, *Atatürk: Style in Turkish Music* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 58-64.

<sup>7</sup> Address by Atatürk on Turkish music to the National Assembly (Millet Meclisi) on 1 November (1934). Although contemporary media outlets published abridged versions of this speech, the official account can be found in: Mustafa K. Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, vol. III (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 1961), p. 378. According to some sources, the speech resulted in the banning of ‘eastern music’ from Turkish broadcasts.

<sup>8</sup> For a partisan account of this encounter between Atatürk and Saygun see: Adnan Saygun, *Atatürk ve Musiki* (Ankara: Ajans-Türk Matbaacılık Sanayii, 1965).

vocal dexterity could be showcased either in terms of virtuosic display or emotive intensity. To achieve maximum effect, Selçuk had to demonstrate a profound knowledge of musical exegesis (especially with respect to modal convention) and poetic rendition (especially with regards to prosodic structure). Added to this, he had to exhibit a delicate sensibility in the realms of tuning and timing, articulation and ornamentation. Indeed, these were precisely the musical attributes that attracted the attention of Atatürk. During the 1920s, the president regularly invited the artist to his residence in Çankaya (Ankara) to perform in soirées (which were known somewhat euphemistically as '*rakı âlemleri*'). According to his friend and accompanist, Refik Fersan (1893-1965),<sup>9</sup> Selçuk would regularly perform vocal improvisations for Atatürk, the president sometimes even interrupting the artist to provide advice and criticism.<sup>10</sup>

However, these audiences with Atatürk occurred well before the aforementioned presidential decrees on 'eastern music'. To survive, Selçuk had to address the musical challenge of Kemalist ideology; namely, to advance the classical attributes and the national credentials of Turkish classical music. Accordingly, he aimed to adapt western principles in Turkish vocal performance. These included adopting a range of singing practices derived from '*bel canto*' ('beautiful singing') that covered techniques related to voice production and projection, vocal register and resonance. Although there were distinctive traditions of vocal pedagogy in the European tradition, the central concerns for textual articulation (especially the correct realisation of prosodic structure) and musical embellishment (such as the careful application of ornamental flourishes) were equally applicable to sung arias in western opera as they were to vocal improvisations in 'eastern music'. By choosing exemplary Turkish texts composed by recognised Turkish authors, Selçuk through vocal improvisation was able to find his own unique solution for advocating for the national in Turkish classical music.

In retrospect, Selçuk provided the following explanation of his unique juxtaposition of the west and the east. In an interview published in 1964,<sup>11</sup> he reminisced: 'Starting with the *gazel* in [the *makam*] *Acemaşiran* entitled "*Bahar Olsa, Çemenzâr Olsa*" ("If it be Spring, If there be Meadows") [by Süleyman Nazif (1870-1927)], the vocal improvisations that I recorded thirty-five years ago are a good example [of this transformation]'. He continued by explaining his strategic use of vocal register: 'Having taken voice lessons at the Paris Conservatory [Paris Konservatuvarı], I was able to use all the sounds available to the 'head voice' ('*kafa sesi*') [that are to be found in western music] in addition to the sounds available to the chest register (*göğüs sesi*) and to the larynx (*hançere*) ... which are characteristic of eastern music'. Here, Selçuk confirmed that he had studied the principles of *bel canto*, ostensibly at the Conservatoire de Paris, while resident in the French capital (1928).

Timur Selçuk (1946-2020), the son of Münir Nurettin Selçuk, confirmed to me that his father's sojourn in Paris was instrumental in the development of a new classical style of Turkish vocal improvisation.<sup>12</sup> That is, his version of a '*şık gazel*'. He also confirmed

<sup>9</sup> For an edited compilation of Fersan's memoirs, where Selçuk is frequently mentioned, see: Murat Bardakçı Ed., *Refik Bey: Refik Fersan'ın Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Pan Yayınları, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> For an amusing account of Atatürk teaching Selçuk how to sing a *gazel* correctly, see: Halil E. Cengiz Ed., *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik: Riyâset-i Cumhûr İnce Saz Hey'eti Şefi Binbaşı Hâfız Yaşar Okur'un Anıları (1924–1938)* (Ankara: Müzik Ansiklopedisi Yayınları, 1993), pp. 97-99.

<sup>11</sup> Interview by Salih Harun with Münir Nurettin Selçuk, *Yeni Sabah*, 10 January 1964.

<sup>12</sup> Interview by John M. O'Connell with Timur Selçuk in Taksim (İstanbul) on 30 March 1994.



that his father had attended western concerts in established venues throughout the city. He noted that his father was particularly impressed by the classical conventions that were employed at these events, especially by the concert attire worn and the ritual practice enacted. As I found out later, Münir Nurettin Selçuk retained an inventory of these performances (as concert programmes) and a collection of representative artists (as sound recordings) at his home in Nişantaşı. Of importance, he emulated this style of musical presentation at his première (22 February 1930) in the French Theatre (Fransız Tiyatrosu) (İstanbul) by performing Turkish classical music for the first time in the form of a recital. Unusual for a Turkish artist, Selçuk stood alone on stage in front of a packed audience wearing ‘tails’ (‘frak’).

In other words, there was more to a *şık gazel* than simply technical expertise and interpretative skill. Clearly, the visible was as important as the audible. And, Selçuk had the looks to suit. In Plate 1, the artist is photographed in European formal attire (a suit) playing a Turkish classical lute (a *tanbur*), he symbolically framing an eastern tradition in a western mantle. The image, taken in Cairo (1939) when Selçuk had a budding career as a film star, speaks to a contemporary construction of class and taste. That is, the refined artist is seen forging a new identity for Turkish classical music, one that was respectable and respected. The fact that Selçuk could trace his ancestry to the Selçuk Turks (thereby explaining his choice of surname), further underscored the privileged status accorded to him and to his tradition. Such a connection between class and taste was not lost on his sponsors in the recording industry who profited substantially from his elegant style and tasteful disposition.

It is easy to succumb to the established narrative that Selçuk concocted about the *şık gazel*. He regularly repeated this narrative in publicity notices and on concert programmes. As I argue elsewhere,<sup>13</sup> Selçuk probably did not study at the Conservatoire de Paris. However, he did attend western classical concerts while in Paris. And, he enjoyed listening to western classical music throughout his life.<sup>14</sup> When I asked his friend and colleague, Fahire Fersan (1900-1997),<sup>15</sup> about the stylistic changes made by Selçuk after his trip to Paris, she emphatically stated that his performance style had not altered at all. She even used the word ‘hiç’ (‘not in the least’). Further, she suggested that a conservative group of musical connoisseurs would not have allowed such a stylistic transformation. Indeed, Fahire Fersan believed that Selçuk’s visit to Paris was a publicity stunt organised by his commercial sponsors in His Master’s Voice (*Sahibinin Sesi*), to increase record sales. After the trip, the company accorded the artist an exclusive and expensive artistic label (the FF series).

What then was ‘chic’ about the *şık gazel*. It represented a new style of vocal improvisation by Münir Nurettin Selçuk that accommodated the tasteful aspirations and the ideological inclinations of his bourgeois audience. The fact that the new style was ‘chic’ played into the francophone affectations of his social class, since in Turkey at the time French had superseded Italian as the language of music theory and musical practice. And, of course, French had been widely spoken at court. Concerning Selçuk’s ‘aristocratic’ pedigree, Fahire Fersan made a revealing comment. Switching from Turkish to French, she emphasised, without prompting, that Selçuk belonged to

<sup>13</sup> See John M. O’Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 105-106.

<sup>14</sup> In conversation with Meral Selçuk, Ayşe Kulin makes this interesting observation, see:

Ayşe Kulin, *Bir Tatlı Huzur: Fotoğraflarla Münir Nureddin Selçuk’un Yaşam Öyküsü ...* (Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 1996), p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> Interview by John M. O’Connell with Fahire Fersan in Bostancı (İstanbul) on 27 March 1994.

a 'grande famille'. For her, this was as important as his stylistic innovations in Turkish classical music, be they in the realms of performance practice or performance presentation. As Bourdieu might proffer,<sup>16</sup> style and taste here were indelibly bound to social distinction, a musical display of class difference that was both sonically intoned and visibly displayed.



## Turkey's Place in the Geopolitics of Energy after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

by Nick Baird CMG CVO

Diplomatic postings in Kuwait, Brussels, and Muscat  
2006-2009 Ambassador in Ankara  
The President of BATAS



I want to start today with a story, possibly slightly elaborated, from Pera House, our Consulate General building in Istanbul, once Her Majesty's Embassy to the Ottoman Empire. In the ballroom, we have two magnificent chandeliers, weighing 400 kilos each. These set off from London in the early 1850s, a gift from Queen Victoria to Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, but they had only reached Istanbul when the Crimean War started. The Ambassador took the executive decision to hold them there for safekeeping and there they stayed. Two were also gifted to the Sultan and now hang in the Dolmabahçe Palace, the price for the originally intended safe passage.

This hints at how Turkey sits geographically between Western and Eastern powers, and that has defined how it engages with those powers politically and economically. The context for this talk has been completely changed by Russia's appalling invasion of Ukraine and it will certainly have an impact on Turkey's place in the geopolitics of energy in the short term. Whether this will continue into the longer term is less certain.

One of my first visits as Ambassador was to the then newly opened Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, hosted by the Head of BP in country. Stretching for over 1000 miles, this great feat of engineering was and is, as part of the wider network of oil and gas pipelines starting in Central Asia - a potent symbol of Turkey's position as a bridge between East and West. It is also a reminder that it is an alternative supply route of energy to Russia, from countries that used to form part of the USSR and therefore a physical reminder that Russia is smaller and less powerful than in the past. It is also worth remembering that it flows through a country - Georgia - invaded by the Russians just over a decade earlier than the invasion of Ukraine and with two areas of it still occupied by them. Turkey's historic position as partner to Russia in some things and competitor in others has been put under unprecedented strain by the invasion, although it is not necessarily without opportunity. While its role as bridge to the West, which has become less idealistic and more transactional since the headily

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1979).

optimistic late noughties, could perhaps see a renaissance through NATO ties, but also through its potential role in helping Europe wean itself off Russian fossil fuels.

## Short Term

In the short term, Turkey's principal potential role is in helping Europe with its gas gap as it seeks to import less, and then none, from Russia. It has less of a potential role in oil.

Europe imports 45% of its gas from Russia – 140 billion cubic metres a year – with Germany and Italy particularly dependent. European imports have actually been increasing in recent years as our own domestic production dries up. Europe's REPowerEU plan, published in May this year, sets out the measures required to remove completely its reliance on Russian fossil fuels well before 2030, which is way more ambitious than before. The UK is much less reliant on Russia and is in a position to do so much more quickly.

There is, of course, a heavy emphasis on addressing this through acceleration of energy efficiency measures and the faster roll-out of renewable energy sources. The pre-existing Fit for 55 EU package was already designed to reduce EU natural gas demand by 30% by 2030 through the development of solar and wind, faster roll-out of heat pumps and electric vehicles, the generation of green hydrogen and biomethane, and greater insulation and energy-saving technology in homes and businesses.

But replacing Russian fossil fuels in the timescales intended cannot be achieved without relying on alternative sources of natural gas from elsewhere. In the International Energy Agency's plan for removing Europe's reliance on Russia, they allocate 30 bcm to alternative energy sources. Part of this can be delivered by Liquefied Natural Gas. The global supply of LNG is expected to increase by 43 bcm this year as previous suppliers gear back up fully, the US increases production and Mozambique comes on stream. But global demand is also rising as we emerge from the pandemic and Europe's LNG terminal, regasification and storage infrastructure is insufficient and will take some time to expand. The non-Russian pipeline options are in principle Norway, North Africa, the Black Sea region and Central Asia via Turkey. The IEA estimates that an extra 10 bcm could come from these sources, but Norway appears to be at near capacity with its pipelines and the North Africa options also appear limited.

So Central Asia via Turkey could potentially provide one, not insignificant, option for Europe in reducing its reliance on Russian gas. There are challenges. This assumes that Turkey's own domestic needs remain covered by current flows, including those from Russia. It also assumes Central Asian countries resist any pressure from Russia not to step into help, although this is perhaps unlikely given Russia's other preoccupations at present. But, as the EU and Turkey's uncomfortable embrace gets warily tighter, as interests align more around security, energy could be a significant factor in shifting the geopolitical balance in this part of the world.

## Longer Term

Whether energy remains a major factor in the relationship between Turkey, the EU and the rest of Europe in the longer term depends on two things in particular: firstly, whether Turkey unlocks its potential to be not just a renewable energy producer to satisfy its domestic needs but also to generate a surplus and become a green energy exporter; and secondly, where Turkey positions itself in the new world order that emerges from the war in Ukraine.

The IEA in its 2021 Turkey Energy Policy Review says that Turkey has achieved impressive growth in renewable electricity generation with a tripling in the past decade. And, of course, its first nuclear power facility due to come into operation at the end of 2023 will further diversify the country's fuel mix, with two others planned although their development at present is heavily dependent on Russian technology. Leading players



in its private sector, such as the huge refinery company, Tüpraş, are targeting an ambitious green transition. Their CEO, Ibrahim Yelmenoğlu, has said they will focus on sustainable refining, biofuels, zero carbon electricity and green hydrogen in the near future.

But the IEA also note that fossil fuels continue to drive Turkey's economy, with a heavy dependence on imports. Their relative lack of domestic gas and oil production, exacerbated by the current uncertainties with Russia, could drive a greater determination to reduce external dependence and increase their renewables output to achieve energy security. And, in the view of the IEA, they could aim for yet more ambitious renewable energy targets given their considerable natural resource endowment.

Whether this, over time, produces a surplus, remains to be seen. And whether any surplus would head in the direction of Europe is also open to question. To Turkey's east are countries who could become customers for renewable energy, either – like Georgia – those who lack substantial fossil fuel alternatives; or those who, precisely because they have a surfeit of fossil fuels are slower to adapt and find they need to. That would be an interesting turning of the tables, and the technology for pipes and wires eastwards may prove more economically efficient than westwards. In any case, it would give Turkey options.

Secondly, whether or not Turkey develops a stronger energy relationship with Europe will depend on its geopolitical positioning, going forward. Historically, Turkey may have shifted its emphasis from time to time, but essentially it has sought to avoid having to choose. Although there has been some evidence of an Eastward shift with the stagnation of its EU application, and an easing of problems with China, the starkly different stances Russia and Turkey took on Syria are a reminder if one is needed that their interests do not always align. And, although it is not participating in Western sanctions, Turkey's NATO membership and its positioning, for example in UN voting on the invasion, has placed it fairly firmly in the Western camp. It is of course possible that once the war is over and, if a stronger energy alliance emerges between China, Russia and others to the East, Turkey will see its interests lying more in this space than in the West, but I doubt it. I think Turkey would most likely want to remain a bridge between the two, for as long as that is possible.

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## A Tale of three Elephants - and a Türkiye

**Andrew Finkel**

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Déjà vu all over again? For the last six months, there have been three elephants in the room, crowding out Turkish social and political life – the same ones that were there six months previously and the same ones likely to be there for the foreseeable future. In short order, they are a deteriorating economy; the Russian invasion of Ukraine which is forcing a rethink of Turkey’s place in the world; and (most unruly of all) pending Turkish parliamentary and presidential elections.

Elephant number one – the economy – is dealt with elsewhere in this bulletin but is obviously important for its effect on the other two. Difficulties have been exacerbated by external factors including a strong dollar and the spike in gas and commodity prices that followed the Russian invasion. But further undermining recovery are the government’s bizarrely unorthodox policies to push for growth through low interest rates regardless of the effect on the currency and inflation. One of the foundation myths of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been its ability to deliver the population from the bad old days of the 1990s when the average annual rate of inflation was some 70 percent, public expenditure out of control, and reckless borrowing that led to an implosion of the banking system in 2001. The current rate of inflation in Turkey is over 80 percent.

If the government had hoped for a plateau of economic stability on which to take the country to an early poll, commentators now openly speculate on a “currency event” similar to the crash of 2001 in the coming months. Last August, the Turkish central bank (CBTR) caught the markets by genuine surprise by cutting its benchmark interest rate from 14 to 13 percent. With analysts were still rubbing their eyes in disbelief, the rate went down to 12 percent at the end of September. The Turkish president who controls central bank policy explained this contrarian move, as bank governors elsewhere were raising rates, by declaring “economics theories aren’t valid everywhere, unlike physics or mathematics” but “vary according to the conditions and strength of a country.”<sup>17</sup> The International rating agencies, have been reluctant to sign on to this display monetary exceptionalism and have placed Turkish sovereign risk at well below investment grade (S&P- four notches, Fitch- five, and Moody’s- six) with all outlooks negative. The dollar to lira conversion rate was at 14.6 mid-April and stood at 18.4 by the end of September.

The fallout of these policies is sadly predictable, in terms of the further immiseration of the worst off (despite a 30 percent rise in the minimum wage at the beginning of July to TL 5,500 – i.e. US\$ 330 per month) and the erosion of the new middle class. The point was put anecdotally to this author by the head of a research group that does focus interviews. Respondents complain of only being able to eat meat once every two months and of postponing decisions to buy household cleaning materials. An odious side effect of popular frustration has been a rise in resentment against the (official tally of) 3.8 million

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-22/turkey-doesn-t-need-interest-rate-hikes-president-erdogan-says?leadSource=verify%20wall>



Syrian immigrants.<sup>18</sup> Ultra-nationalist politician Ümit Özdağ puts the number of foreigners at 8 million which his new, single-issue Victory (*Zafer*) Party calls a threat to national survival.<sup>19</sup> Corruption scandals have aggravated a sense of social injustice. This includes another whistle blow by the exiled mafia boss Sedat Peker, alleging a huge bribery ring centred on the Capital Market Board (SPK) controlling public offerings and capital increases.<sup>20</sup> Whether this undermining of public trust is enough to shatter the cognitive dissonance of core AKP supporters – who simply cannot envisage anything other than an Erdoğan government – will be tested at a future poll. The president’s own opinion on the matter is the confident smile he gave at a recent interview on PBS television. There was no alternative to himself, he said.<sup>21</sup>

Even so, the proliferation of a popular sense of economic grievance obviously makes it more difficult for the government to feel confident about winning a freely fought election. All too predictably it has reached into the tool bag of repressive measures to contain dissent and to implement policies and administrative dictates that polarise society and solidify its grass roots. For example, Pride marches were prohibited last June<sup>22</sup> (hundreds were arrested for defying the ban) whereas the “Big Family Gathering” – a September rally in Istanbul against LBGT+ was permitted<sup>23</sup> despite obvious displays of hate speech (some protestors called for the death penalty for homosexual “offenders”) with the normally censorious Radio and Television Supreme Council allowing advertisements promoting the protest on the grounds of “public interest”. The ad called for those wanting to fight “global and imperialist lobbies who want to abolish gender, reduce the human generation, and destroy the family unit,” to join the rally.<sup>24</sup> Impressively enough, the minister for family and social services, Derya Yanık condemned the march as an example of hate speech but added that her party had values incompatible with “the luxury of normalising homosexuality.”<sup>25</sup>

While it might seem over-ingenious to see every narrowing of the public realm as a calculated distraction from the country’s economic woes, there have been a variety of similar incidents over the summer including the banning by the governor’s office of a long-



running rock festival in Zeytinli and two other festivals in opposition-held municipalities.<sup>26</sup> One concert that did go ahead last April resulted in the star attraction, Gülşen Bayraktar-Çolakoğlu (known as Gülşen for short), being charged with “inciting or insulting the public to hatred and enmity,” an offence carrying a potential three year sentence. The popular singer<sup>27</sup>, already criticised in conservative circles for her skimpy dress and for support for LBGT+ causes, had joked on stage that a member of her band had been to an imam-hatip (a religious parochial school) which explained why he was a bit of a “perv”. A much belated hostile social media campaign ended with her detention in August. This, in turn, prompted a reaction from women’s

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/turkeys-potential-xenophobia-goes-beyond-syrian-refugees>

<sup>19</sup> <https://zaferpartisi.org.tr/sam-ile-gorusemelerden-once-disisleri-bakanligina-gidildi/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.paturkey.com/news/mafia-boss-peker-claims-capital-markets-regulator-seeped-in-bribery/2022/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/turkey-president-erdogan-on-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-the-future-of-nato>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkish-police-prevent-istanbul-pride-going-ahead-2022-06-26/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-lgbtq-anti-rally-istanbul>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkish-regulator-criticized-over-public-service-video/6751362.html>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-family-minister-condemns-anti-lgbti-hate-march-news-61327>

<sup>26</sup> <https://m.bianet.org/english/life/266201-another-music-festival-banned-in-turkiye>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjaRWXYtmwb6AqnHXoBF7Aw>

groups urging the authorities to show less concern for flippant remarks and more for violence against women. The US State Department, too, expressed concern over widespread efforts in Turkey to restrict expression via censorship and judicial harassment.<sup>28</sup> In an interview for the Turkish news site T24, Nobel-laureate Orhan Pamuk also condemned the arrest which he cited as part of a pattern of cruelty that included the detention (since 2016) of Aysel Tuğluk, the former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputy co-chair, despite her worsening dementia.<sup>29</sup> He cited himself as one of those often too intimidated to speak out. Gülşen, was, however, released into house arrest after four days in detention and then freed on remand two weeks later.

The Constitutional Court published its ruling that four opposition newspapers be compensated for lost revenue after the Press Advertising Agency (BİK) forbade them from carrying public advertisements as punishment for “ethical violations.”<sup>30</sup> It also called upon parliament to amend the law under which the two-month bans were made as a violation of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of press and expression. This did not prevent the agency, which provides an important source of revenue for what remains of Turkey's heritage print media, from permanently revoking the right of one of the newspapers, Evrensel, to receive public ads (backdated to 17 July 2022) on grounds that it had exaggerated its circulation figures. This decision was the subject of a protest letter signed by many national PEN organisations and freedom of expression NGOs.<sup>31</sup> Despite occasional decisions by the higher courts holding up the right to free expression, commentators speak of little improvement in what has become a “revolving door” of arrests and prosecutions. New convictions meant that the number of journalists in prison, which had been gradually declining, rebounded from 52 in May 2022 to 69 in September 2022 according to Expression Interrupted, a project run by P24, an Istanbul-based NGO). The government has not yet, however, enacted the (further) restrictions on social media and internet sites discussed in the last issue of this bulletin.

As for the second elephant: One of the key questions now being asked is whether the government can spin events in Ukraine to its advantage. It could do so, firstly by increasing its standing with the electorate by being seen to be playing an influential role either in resolving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine or negating its worst effects. Turkey, which of course controls the Bosphorus Straits and naval access to the Black Sea, was instrumental in brokering a lifting of the de facto embargo on the 20 million tons of grain stuck in Ukrainian ports, affecting food security in many poorer countries in Africa and the Middle East. Ukraine supplies some ten percent of the world's wheat. The deal was announced at an Istanbul signing ceremony in July, presided over by UN General Secretary, António Guterres and the Turkish president who called the negotiations “intense and arduous.”<sup>32</sup>

The agreement, valid in the first instance for 120 days, seemed to validate Turkey's ambivalent position between the two warring nations. Just before it was signed Ukraine had summoned the Turkish ambassador to protest that a seized Russian-flagged ship carrying what it said was thousands of tonnes of stolen Ukrainian grain had been allowed

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-concerned-about-judicial-harassment-curb-expression-turkey-after-pop-star-2022-08-27>

<sup>29</sup> <https://t24.com.tr/video/orhan-pamuk-yeni-kitabi-uzak-daglar-ve-hatiralar-i-ilk-kez-t-24-e-anlatti-sevilmeme-korkusu-var-dir-bende-baglanma-ih-tiyacinda-olan-biriyim,49998>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/constitutional-court-bik-decisions-have-become-a-tool-for-punishment/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/rights-groups-call-to-restore-evrensel-s-right-to-receive-public-ads/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/22/ukraine-grain-deal-turkey-russia/>

to leave the Black Sea port of Karasu in early July.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, President Zelensky awarded the Order of Merit to Haluk Bayraktar, the brother of the Turkish president's son-in-law, (who together head the Baykar UAV industry) after an agreement to build a drone factory in Ukraine.<sup>34</sup> Turkey has condemned the Russian invasion yet criticises its Western allies over the strict imposition of sanctions – including the cap on Russian gas prices which President Erdoğan described as “provocative” and “incorrect.”<sup>35</sup> Turkey is not itself implementing a sanctions regime and continues to welcome Russian tourists who can travel without visa restrictions to Turkey.

The Turkish point of view, that it is keeping its head when all around others are losing theirs, is succinctly put in this blurb advertising a discussion in Washington DC organised by the pro-government thinktank, SETA:

“Türkiye [stet] has pursued a policy of support for Ukraine while maintaining relations with Russia since the outbreak of the war more than six months ago. The Russian invasion has met unprecedented Western sanctions while Türkiye focused on bringing Ukrainian and Russian sides to the table for negotiations to end the conflict. Even though the initial attempts at a ceasefire ultimately failed, Türkiye continued to push for a diplomatic breakthrough. The most recent Ukrainian grain exports deal has been hailed as a major accomplishment to alleviate the global food crises. Turkish President Erdoğan recently paid a visit to Ukraine and signed agreements for reconstruction after meeting Ukrainian President Zelensky. As the West is focused on a sanctions policy and is increasingly threatened by exploding energy prices, Türkiye remains focused on a policy of balancing its support for Ukraine with continued relations with Russia”.

This balancing act may prove difficult to sustain. President Erdoğan posed with Vladimir Putin and Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on 19 July in a tripartite meeting focused on Syria – a photo opportunity<sup>36</sup> described as “incomprehensible” by German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. “Not a good look,” concurred Tim Ash, emerging markets strategist at BlueBay Asset Management in London. The meeting was remarkable for the Turkish president making his Russian counterpart wait uneasily, briefly fidgeting from foot to foot in for a minute or so in front of reporters, in apparent payback for a similar discourtesy in Moscow in 2020.<sup>37</sup>

Former EU ambassador to Ankara Marc Pierini writes that “Putin’s goal remains anchoring Erdoğan more and more to Russia through a vast mesh of mutually beneficial operations in the fields of defence, energy, trade, and finance. By doing this, Putin is comforting an embattled incumbent president and is openly bolstering Erdoğan’s position in the upcoming elections. More than the Turkish president abandoning his traditional Western partners, the world is witnessing the Russian president using Turkey for his own benefits.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/07/ukraine-summons-turkish-ambassador-over-stolen-grain-ship>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/zelenskiy-says-turkish-drone-maker-build-ukraine-factory-2022-09-09/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/turkeys-erdogan-says-wests-provocative-policies-towards-russia-not-correct-2022-09-07/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220719-putin-to-meet-turkey-s-erdogan-and-iranian-president-raisi-in-tehran>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/20/vladimir-putin-waiting-erdogan-turkey-russia?utm\\_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu&utm\\_medium&utm\\_source=Twitter](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/20/vladimir-putin-waiting-erdogan-turkey-russia?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter)

<sup>38</sup> <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/87777>

The pair met again in Sochi on 5 August for what were described as marathon talks – again preceded by a call from the Kremlin for Turkey not to destabilise Syria with a military offensive.<sup>39</sup> Putin and Erdoğan met a further time mid-September, more unusually, in the side-lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Samarkand (of which China and India are also members<sup>40</sup>) – a body where Turkey has partnership status but where it said it would seek full membership, a move seemingly at odds with its membership of NATO and its, albeit waning, commitments to the European Union.<sup>41</sup>

While Turkey and Russia have well-rehearsed strategic differences – in Libya, in the Armenia and Azerbaijan dispute, and in Syria, there is common ground as a result of the war in Ukraine. Cash-rich Russia is eager to circumvent its economic isolation and sanctions while the Erdoğan government is looking for a foreign currency financing rope to avoid a balance of payments crisis before the election season next year. Rumours of mutual backscratching were fuelled by a mysterious increase late July of US\$ 9 billion in Turkish central bank reserves – best explained as Russian funds being parked in Turkey ahead of sanctions by the Russian firm Rosatom to defray construction costs in the Akkuyu nuclear power plant – although much of the money would be invested in Eurobonds and used elsewhere. This has led to further speculation that there was an Erdoğan-Putin agreement in Sochi for a wider set of sanction evasion measures which would be win-win for cash-strapped Turkey and pariah Russia.<sup>42</sup> This has led, as well, to a wider frame of calculation whether Russia has both the will and the means to bail out Turkey's \$800 billion economy. Such assistance would leave the Turkish banking system vulnerable to even a whiff of US punitive measures leading to the very run on banking assets the government has been so keen to avoid. Two private Turkish banks, İş and Deniz, suspended participation in the Russian Mir payment system (the alternative to the SWIFT system from which many Russian banks have been excluded) after a warning from the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.<sup>43</sup> This sparked a nine percent fall in Turkish bank shares. Turkish state-lenders Vakıf, Halk and Ziraat as of writing had yet to follow suit.

To step back for a moment to put these events in perspective: The war in Ukraine has presented challenges and opportunities to Turkey to further its role as a regional power but has also called into sharp focus the entire direction (and wisdom) of the government's sustained push for a more assertive foreign policy. If Russia would appear to have become an extreme of a hydrocarbon-rich nation vulnerable to the "curse of petroleum," – an ability to afford bad habits and even worse governance, hydrocarbon-poor Turkey, on the other hand, often seems afflicted by an equally powerful jinx, the "curse of strategic significance".

Buoyed by its pivotal role in a Western alliance, Ankara has at past historical moments managed to avoid having to face up to chronic problems – the perilous state of public finances, a legacy of human rights abuse, a failure to come to terms with the aspirations of its Kurdish population. The classic example of this "old Turkey" – not too big but too strategically important to fail – goes back to the economic crisis of 2001. Kemal Derviş, the former World Bank vice president who was parachuted into the Turkish treasury to bring the economy back from the abyss, made no secret that his job of extracting a \$16

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/17/questions-and-answers-turkeys-threatened-incursion-northern-syria>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/09/why-erdogans-shanghai-ambitions-are-risky-business>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/09/why-erdogans-shanghai-ambitions-are-risky-business>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/05/russia-turkey-war-sanctions-trade/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/possible-sanction-risk-forces-turkish-banks-to-act-on-russian-payment-system-/6759025.html>



billion rescue package from the IMF was made all the easier because the United States was eager to shore up its Turkish ally on the eve of its invasion of Iraq. The irony, of course, was that the Turkish parliament voted two years later to deny US troops access through Turkish territory to open up a northern front against Saddam Hussein – the equivalent of Atlas setting down his load. To confuse things further, the following year Turkey finally was deemed to have satisfied the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the European Union and in 2005 began what has turned into an abortive process of sharing its sovereignty with others by negotiating entry with a road map to reform designed in Brussels.

“The new Turkey” has to a great extent disowned its role as the handservant of others to pursue a far more independent foreign policy, the seeds of which were sown by a doctrine of “strategic depth” -- the notion that Turkey could chart its own path based on the size of its economy and regional cultural influence. The suspicion that Western powers, notably the US, home to Fetullah Gülen, was more than a passive bystander to the 2016 abortive coup re-enforced the AK Party’s sense of splendid isolationism or what the presidential foreign policy advisor İbrahim Kalın once referred to as “precious loneliness.”

Today’s more confident Turkey feels freer to pursue its own interests (although pundits speculate whether the government has an accurate perception of what those best interests are). Soft power has on occasions turned into hard power (in supporting Azerbaijan over Armenia) – and more recently in open threats to Greece. “Your occupation of the islands does not bind us, when the time comes, we will do what’s necessary. As we say, one night we can come suddenly,” a phrase normally reserved to threaten military operations in Syria but which referred to Ankara accusations that Greek air defences locked S-300 missiles onto Turkish fighter jets during a NATO mission.<sup>44</sup>

Ankara’s more stunning role as “disrupter”, almost on a par with the refusal to allow the Americans to open a northern front in the Second Gulf War, was its threat to block Sweden and Finland’s landmark decision to enter NATO. It did so on the condition these countries took action to extradite PKK and Gülenist sympathisers residing in their countries and lift an embargo on arms sales. According to Akif Çağatay Kılıç, head of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee:

“This is a matter of vital national interest, and we are prepared to prevent their membership for as long as a year if necessary. Turkey is the second largest army in NATO and has been providing the drones that help Ukraine defend itself. We deserve greater respect. What are [Sweden and Finland] going to do? They have been harbouring terrorist organisations that kill my people, disrespect my borders, pose an existential threat to my country. The only thing we demand is that there are no distinctions. A terrorist organisation is a terrorist organisation.”<sup>45</sup>

The de facto reply to this was delivered by Turkey rapporteur Nacho Sánchez Amor, in his presentation to the European parliament of the annual progress report on membership. “Turkey does not have a problem with Sweden and Finland. Turkey has a problem with any democracy,” he said.<sup>46</sup>

While there was apparent progress in overcoming Turkish objectives over the summer, the issue remains unresolved with neither the Finnish or Swedish courts unlikely to agree to repatriate dissidents against their will. One deadline – the 28-30 June NATO

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/sedat-ergin/president-erdogans-new-rhetoric-towards-greece-176756>

<sup>45</sup> <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/06/14/Turkey-prepared-to-stall-Sweden-and-Finland-s-NATO-membership-for-year-MP>

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gGzE6\\_jJZ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gGzE6_jJZ0)



summit in Madrid came and went. The assumption is that Turkey is unlikely to hold out against the other 29 current members of the defence pact past the New Year but this is a hypothesis still to be tested. The government and President Erdoğan could maintain their defiance as raw meat for an electorate highly critical of NATO in any case.

The perverse logic is that by acting with greater independence, Turkey has surrendered some of more of strategic significance and becomes more vulnerable to outside pressures – particularly at a time of economic instability. The period covered by this report finds a schizophrenic Turkey, not just playing the role of international interlocutor between Russia and Ukraine but trying to end that “loneliness” by patching up its own ideological motivated quarrels. Following the Israeli president, Isaac Herzog’s visit to Ankara in March, relations were restored to ambassadorial level in August – ending a four-year hiatus. Turkey has dramatically restored relations with the UAE and is negotiating a major deal involving the Baykar drones worth an estimated \$US 2 billion.<sup>47</sup> In April, Mr Erdoğan in an apparent meal of humble pie, visited Jeddah meeting with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and arch nemesis Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), a visit interpreted as prioritising investment over outrage concerning the brutal murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018.



The final elephant are calculations over upcoming elections. The 3 November marks the twentieth anniversary of the AKP’s coming to power in 2002 with an overwhelming parliamentary majority and the key question is whether the upcoming election will be the one they lose power. “Existential” is the word bandied about the significance of the poll for the AKP – the assumption is that the party mired in machine politics, and which has bent the rule of law to near breaking point would find it hard to survive exile from office.

Most expect the current parliament will go just short of its full term in June, to May 2023 (and thus technically qualify as an early poll), if only to avoid possible legal challenges to Mr Erdoğan’s ability to run for a third time if he were to have served two complete terms of office. But more interesting than the “when” is the “who” and “what” he will be running against.

The relatively unified opposition – which calls itself the Table of Six, after the photo ops of the six constituent parties’ leaders huddled together thrashing out policy – is reported to be confidently recruiting the large team of top bureaucrats it will need to wield the new brush that sweeps clean. Another more worrying sign of their confidence is that they are feeling easier about bickering among themselves. The principal disagreement is what to do about the seventh and missing member of the table, the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party or HDP whose natural leader Selahattin Demirtaş still lingers behind bars despite European Court of Human Rights’ demands for his release.

The opposition continues to be coy about naming their candidate in part to avoid giving a target to the government’s huge propaganda machine and partly to avoid discontent in their own ranks. However, it now seems increasingly likely that the ToS’s presidential candidate will be Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the main Republican People’s Party – despite doing less well in some opinion polls than two other likely contenders for the job, the mayors of Istanbul and Ankara. The leader of largest ally, Meral Akşener of İyi Party has ruled herself out of the presidential contest, hoping to become prime minister in a refurbished parliamentary system in which the president does not enjoy today’s wide-sweeping powers.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/bayraktar-tb2-uae-turkey-talks-buy-large-number-drones>

The AKP appears to have arrested its decline in the polls, at least temporarily, but it is still unclear whether in coalition with their right-wing nationalist allies, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), the AKP can win a parliamentary majority or whether, in the presidential contest, Mr Erdoğan can get the necessary 50 percent +1 share of the vote. The known unknown in all this is the large number of undecideds – in some opinion polls a quarter of the electorate. The other imponderable is how Turkey's large ethnic Kurdish population will vote – their support was instrumental in the CHP winning large municipalities. The pro-Kurdish HDP is in open conflict with the nationalist İyi Party and in private warn that their support for an opposition presidential candidate cannot be taken for granted. In that regard, Mr Kılıçdaroğlu who is on sympathetic terms with the HDP's former leader, Selahattin Demirtaş may, at the end of the day, prove the safer choice.

A final word for Turkey specialists. You have now become "Türkiye" specialists after Ankara made an official request to the UN and other international bodies for the name of their country to be changed. Years ago, President Özal toyed with a similar request after being lobbied by ex-patriots in America, tired of being teased for coming from a country whose name is synonymous with "dud" or the bird you ate at Thanksgiving. The move fell off the cliff – I like to think I gave it a push with an article in *The Economist* which mocked the sense of insecurity a name change would project. There is a long and honourable tradition of referring in English to Turkey – one of the first examples is in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* and spelled Turkye. Türkiye, is of course, the Turkish language name for the country; but we refer to Germany not Deutschland, Japan not Nihon or Nippon. There is now a promotional film in which a variety of people tour the wonders of the country and recite with a smile "Hello Türkiye." We may get used to the idea but it still feels like a greeting from Wonderland.



## Turkish Economy: running out of supporting factors

by Mina Toksöz  
University of Manchester Business School.

These days, more than ever given its fragility (but also a certain resilience) in view of the global shocks and domestic policy gyrations, it has become increasingly difficult to report on the outlook for the Turkish economy. Over the past 12-months, there has been the abrupt sacking of the Central Bank governor and a U-turn towards a super-loose monetary policy, followed by a run on the lira; then came the acceleration of inflation to Argentine levels that was given further impetus by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In 2023, adding to the current fragility will be the increased uncertainty around the upcoming general election and the twin-risks of rising international interest rates and recession in the EU. This uncertain outlook was already reflected by mid-September in the Istanbul stock exchange., which saw a sharp decline triggering a market-wide circuit breaker to halt trading on 19 September.

Supporting the economy through the volatility of the past-12 months have been a number of diverse factors combined with a series of government measures -- mostly to deal with the impact of previous government measures. The collapse of the currency and the acceleration of inflation in 2021 came with the introduction of AKP's New Economic Model of negative real interest rates to support growth, while relying on a weak currency to encourage exports, discourage imports and 'solve' the current account deficit problem. A stabilisation of the currency was achieved at the end of 2021 by new measures (KKM, Kur Korumali Mevduat) that incentivised domestic savers to exchange their foreign currency deposits into Turkish Lira. But inflation continued to accelerate and the current account deficit to widen.

By March, a semblance of currency stabilisation was undermined by the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on energy prices that gave a further impetus to Turkish inflation. The wide-ranging economic sanctions on Russia disrupted trade and increased geo-strategic risks for Turkey. Despite this, over the summer, Turkish Lira managed to limp along at TL17-18/US\$. This time, supporting the currency were new requirements that exporters repatriate 20% (raised later to 40%) of their export revenues, a better-than-expected tourism season, unannounced interventions by the central bank, and a reported capital injection from Russia for the ongoing construction of the Akkuyu nuclear plant.



But, with the ending of the summer tourism season, the war in Ukraine continuing, and foreign payments pressures increasing, the currency started to weaken again. Given the negative underlying economic trends, it is not clear what supporting factor will emerge next. Nor is it clear if the avalanche of autumn measures launched by the government to try to generate a soft landing for the economy can be sufficient to prevent further deterioration.

### **Ad-hoc measures lead to more ad-hoc measures**

Desisting from the use of powerful anti-inflation policy tools of interest rates since last autumn and replacing them with a series of administrative measures has not prevented the consumer price inflation (CPI) rising to 80% by August from an already high 36% at the end of 2021. Despite this, the CBT persisted with interest rate cuts in August and September, justified as a pre-emptive move in anticipation of peaking of inflation due to base effects and in response to slowing economic growth. But this was accompanied with 50% tariff increases to gas and electricity used by industry that will maintain the pressure on producer price inflation -- already at 143% in August. Given the loss of credibility of government policy, there has been a severe breakdown of pricing discipline by business despite punitive measures and government threats against 'speculative stock-building'.

Economic policy has taken the form of frequent introduction of new legislation mostly to cope with the unforeseen public response to the previously introduced measures. As an example of the perverse incentives the government measures have created, this year firms took to borrowing in Turkish Lira -- at the deeply negative real interest rates, to convert it to foreign currency to repay their foreign currency debt. To discourage this wide-spread practice, the government introduced new measures that would also slow the rate of credit growth which stood at 63% at mid-year. There were

also changes to commercial bank reserve requirements that aimed to prevent the unravelling of the KKM in the autumn.<sup>48</sup> However, despite all the effort at 'lira-isation', Turkish Lira deposits in the banking sector were still less than half – at 45.4% of total at the end of August; not counting KKM deposits, lira deposits were less than a third.

In addition, several macro-prudential and other measures are being used to try to slow credit growth. In place of raising interest rates to do this, the government is increasingly intervening in the financial sector, to direct and limit bank lending. Latest measures require the holding of Turkish treasury bonds as collateral by banks on loans extended to firms in non-priority sectors, or on that portion of the lending portfolio that exceeds the credit growth limit set by the government. This has increased the demand for treasury bonds and resulted in the unusual convergence of interest rates between local currency and foreign currency bonds: in early September, interest rates on 10-year TL benchmark bonds had fallen from over 28% in March to 11.37% approaching the 9.96% on 10-year government Euro-bonds. This of course helps fund government spending and reduces interest payments on the public debt. The government's interventionism seems to have no limits with new measures that monitor citizens' social media accounts in an attempt to spot and reduce tax evasion in the informal economy and boost budget revenues.

### **Trying to sustain pre-election growth while avoiding secondary sanctions**

With a crucial election scheduled to take place by mid-2023, the government is expected to continue this increasingly complex interventionist policy mix to maintain some control over the foreign payments and the currency and to prevent a major crisis. In 2021, a credit and export led economic recovery from the 2020 Covid-lockdown slump had resulted in a 11.4% GDP growth. Although slower, some of this momentum carried into the first half of 2022 with a 7.5% GDP growth. The main driver continued to be private consumption, growing by 13.6% on a year ago. In contrast, investment only managed 1.2% growth reflecting the ongoing contraction in construction while investment in machinery and equipment maintained double digit growth. Supported by generous government investment incentives for priority exporting sectors, this investment is seen as one of the few bright spots for government policy. Meanwhile, the distribution of national income continued to deteriorate with total compensation of employees, i.e., wages and salaries, down from its high of 32% of GDP in 2016 to 25% at mid-2022.

The impact of the Ukraine war – that is painfully evident in the foreign payments – was yet to be reflected in the GDP data for April-June 2022. However, seasonally adjusted second-quarter data over the first quarter showed a contraction in investment of 1.3% suggesting a slowing growth dynamic. This seemed to be confirmed by July industrial production which fell month-on-month by 6.2%, having grown strongly in the first half of 2022. Industrial production had been supported in the first half of the year by strong domestic demand and exports. For example, defence sector exports were up 48% year-on-year in June and could reach \$4bn for 2022 as a whole compared with \$3.2bn in 2021. Also in services exports, the logistics sector has grown on the back of diversion of trade from the northern trans-Russian routes to Anatolia.

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<sup>48</sup> Şebnem Turhan, "Bankacılık sektörünün başını liralasma stratejisi döndürdü", *Dünya*, 2 September, 2022



On the other hand, Turkey's role as a transit route to Russia has attracted the attention of the US Treasury, which has warned the Turkish government and sent an unprecedented letter to the Turkish businessmen's association, TUSIAD, about possible secondary sanctions. These pressures seem to have been widened to include the use of Russian Mir credit cards used by Russian tourists, prompting hotels in tourist centres, such as Antalya, to stop accepting them. Turkey's biggest private commercial bank, İş Bank, also suspended their use in September. However, state banks – Vakıf, Ziraat, and Halkbank, continued to process transactions through the Mir system declaring they only deal with Russian banks which are not sanctioned. Pressure on the Turkish economy regarding secondary sanctions are expected to increase as the US strategy seems set on tightening their implementation – with major disruptive impact on all the regional economies.<sup>49</sup>

### **Too much reliance on weak currency for the reduction of import dependence**

Despite these problems, news reports show some notable investments continuing in infrastructure, energy, and pharmaceuticals. A 'green finance' deal – one of the first in Turkey – was agreed for an Euro2.4bn loan backed by Danish and Swedish export credit agencies to build a 200km rail network to connect the Bandırma port on the Marmara Sea and the automotive sector cluster around Bursa to the high-speed Ankara-Istanbul line. Not-so-green is the \$2.2bn, 1,320MW Hunutlu coal-powered electricity plant being built by China as part of its Belt and Road scheme near Iskenderun (that is reported to rely on Russian coal imports).

More interesting was in June the US-based biotechnology and pharmaceuticals firm Gilead Sciences announcing the start of domestic production. This was in response to pressure from the government for the 'localisation' of medicines production since the onset of Covid. However, the government's use of public procurement in favour of domestically produced medicine was met with a predictable challenge at the WTO by the EU and the US, that is now mired in the WTO Dispute Settlement Process. On the other hand, in May, the WTO ruled in favour of Turkey's complaint against protectionist measures by the US and EU on Turkish iron and steel exports.

These international trade tussles show, to some extent, the growth of Turkish exports over the past decade. Industrial policies adopted after the global financial crisis aimed for a tech-upgrade to boost exports and reduce the import dependence of Turkish industry so as to reduce the vulnerability of the economy to external shocks. There was early progress in this objective, such as the completion of Star Refinery that reduced imports of refined products. But more recently, this objective has come to rely mostly on the 'shock-therapy' of aggressive currency depreciation. The 'core' (non-energy and non-gold) trade deficit has fallen from a high of around \$40bn in 2013 to under \$10bn in mid-2022. But it has been on gains made in the net exports of mostly medium technology exports of intermediate and consumer goods while targets for increased high-tech exports remain elusive. Meanwhile, such achievements as have

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<sup>49</sup> Although the US focus has been on Turkey, links with Russia are even more significant for the smaller regional economies. This includes overwhelming dependence in the energy sector, for example, in Bulgaria which is wholly depended on Russian imports for nuclear, oil and gas-based energy. In terms of finance, there is the role of Cyprus. Although its banking sector has been tightly regulated since the Eurozone crisis, the IMF was still warning about the fiscal impact on Cyprus of a reduction in Russian investment in-flows (into special purpose vehicles that amounted to 625% of GDP!) if Russian firms had to reduce their activities due to sanctions. IMF, *Article IV Review: Cyprus*, June 1, 2022.



been made in export growth have been at the cost of one of the highest rates of inflation in the world.

### More difficult 2023

The second half of 2022 is expected to see a slowdown in growth, not least due to base effects from the same period in 2021 when the post-Covid-lock down recovery had begun. Factors dampening growth include a tightening of credit conditions and the slower exports due to the expected recession in Turkey's major export markets. For the year as a whole, most forecasts put real GDP growth at around 4-5% in 2022.

As usual, it is the foreign payments that reveal the main weak points. The latest data to January-June 2022, shows the current account deficit more than doubled to \$32bn vs \$13bn in the first half of 2021. This was driven by the trade deficit that reached \$40bn. The strong US dollar/weak Euro combination is also a problem with imports mostly priced in US dollars and exports in Euros. Even assuming that energy prices remain at current levels (oil prices at around \$90-100 per barrel) into the rest of 2022, the current account deficit is likely to continue to widen.

Helping to fund the current account so far this year have been large unexplained inflows in the 'errors and omissions' item of the balance of payments that could have arisen from the selling of gold, mis-recording of services such as tourism and transport, some unidentified transfers (from Russia?), or smuggling.<sup>50</sup> The last-named is likely to reflect the informal trade through Turkey's southern and eastern frontiers bordering countries in various states of collapse and with a shrinking formal economy such as Iraq, Syria, or Lebanon, or with sanctioned economies such as Iran and Russia. Meanwhile the debt repayment bill that peaks in the fourth quarter of this year for the \$450bn or so of foreign debt will rise further going into 2023 due to increased interest payments. The private sector has been a net-repayer of foreign debt in the past few years to reduce exposure to rising interest rates and the depreciating Lira. But lower borrowing by the Turkish private sector also reduces the capital inflows to fund the external payments gap.

These problems are increasing the pressure, and generating periodic rumours, of a shift in policy towards an orthodox anti-inflation stance. This may, of course, happen and is one of the factors making the outlook very uncertain for the Turkish economy. However, it is also the case that the government has little political option to raise interest rates in the lead-up to the general election, given the high debt burden built-up in recent years by households and corporates. Low interest rates also help support those sections of business without significant reliance on imports and therefore little exposure to the Lira depreciation. These are mostly small enterprises that are the core-voters of the AKP. Low real interest rates also reduce government borrowing costs, providing room for pre-election spending. In addition to the support on energy bills for low-income households, a major omnibus-bill is currently making its way in the Meclis offering debt relief to students, farmers, and business and the extension of the KKM for another year. There is also another KGF (Credit Guarantee Fund) initiative reportedly of TL50bn, to maintain credit growth. This contradicts the CBT measures to

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<sup>50</sup> "Who's stuffing Turkey", *Financial Times*, 16 September 2022.

contain credit growth – but is consistent with the general incoherence of government policy.<sup>51</sup>

There seems to be no obvious answer to the question posed at the beginning of this review as to what supporting factors could emerge to see the government through the next 6-9 months to the election. Policies seem set to muddle through using various macro-prudential measures to try to direct the economy while still leaving it very exposed to shocks, given the low levels of official foreign currency reserves. In the event of a payments crunch, an additional mish-mash of measures is likely to follow, including some version of capital controls, while seeking emergency funding from the IMF is still a low probability.<sup>52</sup> An agreement in early September for 25% of payments for Russian gas to be made in roubles along with other swap agreements with countries like China will help somewhat. Additional foreign currency could be generated from sales to international investors of shares in prize Turkish public assets held in the Sovereign Wealth Fund.

An official visit to the Gulf regimes is yet to yield much FDI or other support, although some 56% of net FDI was in property and real estate in the first quarter of the year, largely from Gulf and Russian investors. Further bi-lateral financial support could come from Russia, but no doubt with a high political price. A ceasefire of some kind in the war in Ukraine or a new US agreement with Iran that lifted sanctions on its oil exports could reduce energy prices, easing foreign payments pressures. But these outcomes remain impossible to predict, as does the outlook for the Turkish economy.



## Cyprus:

### Something Completely Different

by **Peter Millett**

**High Commissioner to Cyprus (2005 to 2010)**

British Ambassador to Jordan (2011 to 2015)

British Ambassador to Libya (2015 to 2018)

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 and numerous efforts to reunite the island have failed. Now a new initiative is attempting to raise public awareness of the risks of continuing to live with division.

### Why?

Recent decades have seen a number of unsuccessful attempts for addressing “the Cyprus Problem”, most recently, the Annan Plan in 2004 and the effort that culminated

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<sup>51</sup> Although Turkey is an extreme case, this policy incoherence seems to be a sign of the times as we have recently seen in the latest ‘mini-budget’ proposals in the UK.

<sup>52</sup> “Turkey capital controls seen likelier than IMF deal: S&P Global”, [Bloomberg](#), June 8, 2022.

at Crans Montana in 2017. With elections in the Republic of Cyprus and in Turkey next year, there is currently no political process. With the focus of the world on Ukraine, climate change, China and many other pressing issues, Cyprus has dropped off the list of international priorities.

But the division of the island should not be neglected. Cyprus is too small to remain divided and the political, economic and social benefits of a settlement for the citizens of Cyprus would be huge. At regional level, hydrocarbons resources in the eastern Mediterranean put additional emphasis on the need to resolve the issues around maritime boundaries.

But there are significant obstacles to compromise: conflict fatigue is on the rise, new generations have little contact and no mutual understanding or trust. Moreover, polarisation is widening as the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community has abandoned the framework of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and insists on a two-state solution.

Transformational change, based on a new set of narratives about the future, is needed to address these challenges and create renewed movement and commitment towards resolution of the Cyprus issue.

## **What?**

A Transformative Scenarios Process (TSP) is now being implemented to lift the gaze above the current polarised conversations to a longer time horizon and ask “what if?” A TSP is a process by which diverse stakeholders come together to create a shared framework and language for strategic conversations about the situation they are facing and how to address it. This process is being led by Reos Partners in partnership with Result Mediation Foundation and The Peace Research Institute Oslo, and with funding support from the governments of the Netherlands, Finland, and Norway. It is being convened via a diverse Cypriot convening alliance and has the full support of UNFICYP. The unique contributions of this process include:

- **Broadening the conversation about Cyprus beyond negotiated political solutions;**
- **Tracing the current dynamics into the future and looking to the future rather than the past;**
- **Engaging a wider set of stakeholders and actors in an inclusive space that allows for difference and acknowledges the transformative potential of conflict;**
- **Employing creative and strategic communication to convey key messages and create citizen engagement and ownership of their future stories.**

The Transformative Scenarios approach was born out of the transition from apartheid in South Africa three decades ago. Since then it has been successfully applied by Reos Partners at national and regional level in Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Thailand, the Netherlands, and elsewhere.

## **How?**

The implementers have selected 36 participants, divided equally between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and between men and women. They are not ‘the usual

suspects': the aim has been to convene a group of Cypriots from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of views.

The actual outputs and activities of this phase are expected to include the following:

- **A set of collectively constructed scenarios offering a new, shared language about the future of Cyprus. Each narrative will be about 4-5 pages long tracing a storyline from 2022 towards 2035. The scenarios will be relevant to the key concerns of today, challenging towards existing assumptions, plausible to key audiences, and clear both in their internal consistency and in the distinction between them. The scenarios will be available in Greek, Turkish, and English and will be presented in a visibly appealing and professionally written, downloadable and printed report as well as with accompanying communication materials including a website, video, and slide presentation.**
- **A “how-to” guide for using the scenarios will be produced to help people wishing to use the scenarios for the purposes of education, community dialogue, or strategic planning and informed decision-making.**
- **A communication and dissemination strategy will be developed with the Scenario Team, identifying key audiences, messages, and activities for generating dialogue and awareness on the basis of the scenarios. This strategy will also include a media strategy and a risk assessment in relation to misinformation about the process.**

The participants met three times, first in the buffer zone in Nicosia and subsequently for two residential workshops in Illmitz, Austria. Comments from participants included:

*“The most important insight was the impact of having four scenarios in front of my eyes. Apart from their character (good or bad in my opinion) their presence kind of erased a familiar feeling going on for decades. Ambiguity, uncertainty, limbo was gone. That made me think these scenarios might have a similar impact for the society. When the image/photo of a possible future is visible/concrete, this also can start a change, movement, will to change it.”*

*“It awakened in me a determination to spend more time with people whose views and opinions are different than mine.”*

*“Seeing the realities, acceptance brought something new. We were fed up with such issues which is an emotional response to our experiences, now we have a realistic ground and that helps dealing with emotions.”*

*“No matter how much uncertainty our predicament presents, this gave me (perhaps not hope) but a will to try my best for the future.”*

*“We have taken an initiative to create a better future for our children and our island.”*

The group has co-developed a set of scenarios that will be shared with the public in October 2022. The scenarios are being iterated through multiple rounds of feedback to ensure the inclusion of all voices. The scenarios are not exhaustive, and they do not represent predictions or policy proposals. They are also not reflective of the desires of the group members – there are elements in all scenarios that some members of the group disagree with. However the group has together developed these scenarios as “stories that need to be told” about the possible directions Cyprus may be headed in.

It is impossible to develop scenarios for the future of Cyprus without taking into account the uncertainty of what will happen with the peace process. The peace process is also central in these scenarios, but rather than providing technical details of solutions (which is not the role of this group), they focus on the levers and drivers that may lead the peace process in one direction or another, as well as on the implications that this may have for ordinary Cypriots. They also explore connected concerns such as the prospects for young people on the island as well as the impact on the environment, business, and education. In this way, they aim to engage a much wider audience beyond the political and intellectual elite.

## Next Steps:

In advance of the launch of the scenarios themselves, the scenario approach will be presented at a key conference (the Cyprus Forum) at the end of September. Nobel Peace Prize winner and Former President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, will speak at this event as someone who has previously worked successfully with this approach, and will share lessons from Colombia for Cyprus. This will be followed by launch events on both sides of the island where the scenarios will be introduced. Subsequently, there will be high-level private briefings of key leaders and the diplomatic community as well as community level engagement. In addition, a delegation of the Scenario Team may travel to Brussels and Geneva for awareness raising with international community actors beyond those present in Cyprus. The aim is for the scenarios to be used to generate discussion points for the televised debates between the Presidential candidates and there will also be a series of dialogues to promote learning and insight around the scenarios at local and national level.



## Conclusion

This process is a vital step to change the debate about the continuing division of Cyprus. It is a unique project that has not been tried before in Cyprus. The scenarios agreed by 36 independent Cypriots are not part of a political, legal or technical negotiation; nor are they proposals, recommendations or predictions. They are plausible stories about the future of Cyprus from a multi-dimensional perspective.

This is an opportunity to build public awareness, mutual understanding, and shared language about the future of Cyprus. I hope that the scenarios will be used in a constructive way to inform sustainable decisions and collaborative actions.





# The State of Turkish Journalism

## A brief outline

by Dr Erkan Saka  
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The view is bleak without exaggeration when one refers to several internationally reputable reports on the state of journalism in particular and media in general in Turkey: Turkey has been classified as a not-free country according to Freedom House annual reports at least since 2017 in terms of political and civil liberties.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, internet freedoms are also classified as not free. Turkey was labelled one of the four worst journalist jailers in the world in 2020.<sup>54</sup> 'Reporters Beyond Borders' also scores Turkey as one of the lowest in terms of media freedoms.<sup>55</sup> The process that led to these outcomes has been well documented in scholarly sources. The authoritarian turn is particularly underlined in the works of Yeşil (2016 and 2018).

Turkish journalism and government relations were always thorny, and it is hard to find a long time period in which journalists could exercise their freedom of expression. However, the ruling party's (AKP – Justice and Development Party) influence since 2002 may have led to one of the most repressive periods. It is not only the government pressure on the journalists who are critical of the government, but the confiscation of media outlets has occurred to unprecedented degrees. Through financial and legal tactics, most major Turkish media outlets are explicitly owned by pro-government business circles. Farmanfarmanian et al. (2018) and Akser and Baybars-Hawks (2012) have tracked these seizures and ownership changes effectively. Islamist and neo-liberal convergence of the current media ownership during this period is well described in Sözeri (2019).

As of 2022, nearly all print media is owned by pro-government businesses.<sup>56</sup> However, some independent or anti-government outlets do exist. After the pandemic, the print media business model may have collapsed. Traditional ad revenues are gone, and anti-government outlets cannot receive ads due to threats to the ad-givers. Government subsidies are one of the remaining funding sources, especially for the local printed media, but the allocation of these subsidies is highly politicized.<sup>57</sup> Regarding digital ad revenues, pro-government news outlets' sites such as *Milliyet* have good web traffic and get most of the digital ad revenues. Pro-government, but

<sup>53</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2022>

<sup>54</sup> <https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CPJ-2020-prison.jpg>

<sup>55</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/country/turkey>

<sup>56</sup> This needs to be updated, but it still provides clues about the ownership patterns:

<https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/tr/> There is an update here: <https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/en/media/>

<sup>57</sup> As an example: <https://m.bianet.org/english/print/237466-financial-censorship-public-ad-ban-on-evrensel-newspaper-in-place-for-483-days>

started by independent businessmen such as *Ensonhaber.com*, is a native web-based news outlet, and it gets organically good traffic. The same is true with *gzt.com*.<sup>58</sup> There are some competing anti-government news outlets on the internet. (However, their digital ad revenues alone are not enough to sustain these outlets.) *T24* and *Gazeteduvar*, as independent sites, have relatively good traffic. Most independent ones get better social media performance than receiving traffic to their sites (i.e., *Birgün daily*). As a native web outlet, *Medyascope* is another independent news source.

The pandemic may have increased TV ratings as citizens stay at home<sup>59</sup>. Pro-government citizens seem to favour TV news and political discussion shows. Anti-government citizens take clips of these shows and highlighted moments to social media in order to criticize them. Fox News Turkey is a notable anti-government<sup>60</sup> outlet. Its news programs have good ratings even though some well-known news personalities, such as Fatih Portakal, had to leave due to government pressure. *Halk TV*, closer to the main opposition party, is also significant and serves more secularist and Kemalist citizens. Overall, the TV industry relies on the entertainment industry, and TV soap operas and reality TV shows occupy most citizens' time; thus, TV is relatively less politicized. Still, *A Haber*, a staunch pro-government news channel, is where much disinformation and conspiratorial arguments are hosted and circulated.

It should be noted that international media outlets have become significant news sources: *BBC Turkish*, *Sputnik*<sup>61</sup>, and *DW* are notable here. Both their news sites and social media accounts are receiving good traffic. However, as of writing this essay *Sputnik* is blocked due to the war in Ukraine and *DW Turkish* is blocked (along with *Voice of America*)<sup>62</sup> for some made-up reasons.

## Hope in the digital media

I would argue that despite the multi-layered problems Turkish media is exposed to, there is hope for a new generation of media in Turkey. A few promising internet-based outlets are proving that they might politically and financially survive these days.

Multiple sources can verify that social media usage in Turkey may be beyond the global averages (see Kocer and Bozdağ, 2020 for more information). Pressure on media companies made social media the primary source of information. *Twitter* has a significant role, unrivalled role in public debates. Influences may change gradually due to political or personal reasons, but it is not hard to see new influences pop up frequently.<sup>63</sup> Instagram usage is very active but primarily for entertainment purposes. Still, users are quick to politicize major events. *TikTok*, in addition to entertainment

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.gzt.com/>

<sup>59</sup> This site seems to be reliable in ratings: <http://tiak.com.tr/tablolalar>

<sup>60</sup> I use anti-government as an umbrella term. Some government criticism may be related to ideological reasons- this might be due to nationalist or leftist politics. However, in most cases like Fox TV, any mainstream critique of the government will lead the outlet to be classified as anti-government because of the polarized nature of media ownership and government attitudes towards the critical voices.

<sup>61</sup> After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russia-based Sputnik and all its related outlets are now blocked in Turkey.

<sup>62</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/07/02/media/turkey-dw-voice-of-america-blocked-intl/index.html>

<sup>63</sup> Against the alcoholic beverages ban during the current lockdown, a new critic rose to fame: <https://twitter.com/AybasOzgur> A more data-based one is "State's Alcohol Policy Monitoring Platform" <https://alkolpolitikalari.org/>

purposes, penetrated different social segments, and lower class and rural citizens may use it for social critics. Private groups from *WhatsApp* to *Facebook* and *Telegram* are also heavily used. In recent years, some *Twitch* users began to have political commentary sessions. A *Twitch* session with Mansur Yavaş, Ankara mayor from CHP, got a record audience.<sup>64</sup> A citizen journalist, Metin Cihan, on *Twitter*,<sup>65</sup> single-handedly uncovers corruption by a cabinet minister<sup>66</sup> among many other examples of investigative reporting.

In the last couple of years, Internet-based independent media such as *Medyascope*, *T24*, *Diken*<sup>67</sup>, *Gazete Duvar*,<sup>68</sup> *Daktilo1984*<sup>69</sup> and *Bianet*<sup>70</sup> consolidated their audiences and financial stability. These are all pro-Western and relatively democratic media outlets. Some media NGOs such as *NewsLabTurkey*<sup>71</sup> and *Teyit*<sup>72</sup> became successfully institutionalized and they are training or incubating a new generation of young journalists or independent media outlets. *NewsLabTurkey* has an incubation program that focuses on local journalism<sup>73</sup>. Similarly, *Dokuz8Haber*<sup>74</sup> aims at creating local journalism networks. These have not led to substantive local journalism networks yet, but I believe there is potential. In the meantime, a few veteran journalists are now using *Youtube* through their channels to reach the masses. From the exiled journalist Can Dündar<sup>75</sup> to Cüneyt Özdemir, Nevşin Mengü and Ünsal Ünlü independent internet channels reach masses beyond the traditional outlets.

As expected, the authoritarian government is active in limiting freedom of expression in digital communications. The emergence of independent media succeeds, despite restrictive measures from blocking websites to prosecuting social media users, from using political trolls to repressive legislation (Yeşil, et al, 2017). Heavy usage of the internet and social media may have various consequences. On the one hand, Turkish users are ranked first in exposure to fake news,<sup>76</sup> on the other hand, they are aware of this, and Turkey again ranks among the top countries in terms of distrust in the news media (Yanatma, 2018). The abovementioned *Teyit.org* has become one of the most successful fact-checking organizations. Without romanticizing and expecting a radical turn of events, I would argue that ordinary users have a relatively high level of digital literacy in understanding the news and circumventing repressive measures. That gives hope.

## Concerns in the near future

Turkey and the EU relations in the last decade have worsened. However, the Erdoğan-led government seems to send more positive signals as Turkey's economic instability deepens. Still, the relations are not balanced. The Russian invasion of Ukraine complicated Erdoğan's tactics. He attempts to play a balancing role between the

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2021/gundem/mansur-yavas-in-twitch-yayini-rekor-kirdi-6320104/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://twitter.com/metcihan>

<sup>66</sup> <https://twitter.com/metcihan/status/1535619598044778496>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.diken.com.tr/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr>

<sup>69</sup> <https://daktilo1984.com/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://bianet.org/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.newslabturkey.org/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://teyit.org/>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.newslabturkey.org/yerel-kulucka/>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.dokuz8haber.net/>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd1zyr90qdl6WqGbl40Ef4g>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1407716/media>

NATO alliance and Russia. Even here, Erdoğan did not miss further strategizing, strongly resisting Sweden and Norway's entrance into NATO. These two countries were framed as harbourers of terrorists. Turkey insists on arguing that Syrian Kurdish fighters are part of PKK and thus are terrorists.

In any case, the imprisonment of Osman Kavala<sup>77</sup> and his friends is a definite blow to pro-EU and pro-Western civil society members in Turkey. A possible outcome of this process is the government's pressure on Western-funded independent media outlets. There is a nationalist and Islamist alliance on this issue. Critical media outlets are seen as foreign agents sponsored by the West or directly by the EU.<sup>78</sup> "Foncu" [funded] has become a pejorative and critical term used against independent journalists<sup>79</sup>. *Teyit.org* is continuously targeted for its fact-checking activities with the label "funded".<sup>80</sup>

Anti-immigrant rhetoric is firmly established, and nearly all opposition parties attempt to exploit the refugee crisis. As the government loses its control over public opinion, an indirect outcome would be the anger levelled at the independent journalists who criticize the extremist discourses against the refugees.

Despite the future concerns and existing problems, I believe that Turkish civil society is more robust than it may seem. A new generation of journalists will be the basis of the future of media in Turkey.

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-rights-activist-osman-kavala-sentenced-to-life-in-prison/a-61578255>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/muslugu-actilar-fonu-6-kat-artirdilar-iste-abd-ab-parasiyla-yayin-yapanlar-224590>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/nevsin-mengu-agzini-fena-bozdu-canli-yayinda-skandal-kufur-1584326.html>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.gzt.com/gercek-hayat/parayi-veren-teyitiotturuyor-3599344>



# The Rise and Rise of Turkey's Bayraktar Drones

by Tony Osborne

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Five years ago, few outside Turkey would have heard of the Bayraktar TB2 drone or indeed its manufacturer, Baykar Makina.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has changed all of that. The little piston-engine aircraft has become a byword for a perceived revolution in remote control warfare, and an export success that has firmly positioned both the manufacturer and Turkey on the map of international defence exporters. Today, the Bayraktar TB2's success in Ukraine is the subject of a patriotic song, there are cuddly toys modelled on the drone's distinctive design and several European countries have crowdfunded millions of euros so that additional drones can be donated to Ukraine's armed forces.

In Ukraine, the TB2 has been credited with destroying convoys of Russian vehicles and even decoying a naval cruiser allowing it to be successfully attacked and sunk by Ukrainian missiles.

But to understand why the TB2 has become an international success, one must first understand the military use of such systems. Drones or – to give them their correct nomenclature – remotely piloted air systems (RPAS), are not the flying autonomous death-dealing cyborgs that many perceive them to be. They are in fact little different from remote controlled aircraft flown by hobbyists, only far more complex. These aircraft are often operated by pilots and sensor operators from a ground control station usually in a room or road-transportable container. Two-way line-of-sight radio links control both the air vehicle and sensor payloads, usually an electro-optical camera. Drones can stay in the air for hours on end, and unlike piloted aircraft, they are smaller, make less noise and are significantly cheaper and perhaps most crucially keep the human operator out of harm's way, in fact some RPAS are flown using beyond visual line of sight using satellite communications which means pilot and aircraft can be separated by oceans and continents. This ability for remote operation means that such systems are perfect for performing "dull, dirty and dangerous" tasks.

Turkey was an early adopter of RPAS, buying systems from Israel and the United States in the early 2000s. Soon, Turkish commanders began to recognise the potential of arming such platforms with bombs and missiles as a means of seeking out and eliminating fleeting targets such as terrorists, having seen how the United States had used such systems in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. However, repeated requests made by Ankara to Washington to buy armed RPAS were turned down, and so Ankara turned to the country's burgeoning drone industry to find a solution.

In May 2016, Ismail Demir, the head of the Turkish Defence Industry Agency told a think tank in Washington: "I don't mean to be sarcastic, but I would like to thank [the U.S. government] for the projects that were not approved because it forced us to develop our own systems." Small lightweight weapons were developed by Roketsan and Baykar's TB2 was one of several Turkish-developed RPAS to be adapted to carry them.

After a series of tests and trials during late 2015/early 2016, the first Turkish strikes using indigenous armed drones took place in September 2016 targeting Kurdistan Workers Party militiamen in the southeast of the country. Since then, Turkey's use of drones has risen dramatically. The TB2 has been adopted for use by the Army, Jandarma and the Navy, and



the RPAS of other Turkish manufacturers have also been added to the inventory including the Turkish Aerospace Industries Anka and Aksungur systems.

Turkish confidence in the capabilities of these drones has also grown as more operational experience is gained. A March 2020 operation in Syria combined with electronic warfare jamming of the radar and communications systems of Syrian forces, saw TB2 and Anka drones swarming over the border to destroy dozens of Syrian government armoured vehicles, with virtually no drone losses. Following the Syrian operation, British defence secretary, Ben Wallace, said the implications of Turkey's drone use were "game changing."



Operations in Libya saw TB2 drones operating from austere conditions in support of the internationally recognized Government of National Accord destroy Russian-made advanced ground-based air defence systems operated by mercenaries employed by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army. Turkey's experience in using the drones against Russian air defence systems in Syria proved to be crucial when TB2s were used extensively by Azerbaijan in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict where they destroyed hundreds of Armenian Soviet-era armoured vehicles and minimised Azerbaijani casualties on the front-line. Azeri president Ilham Aliyev told Turkey's TRT television channel: "Our army could have been harmed very much if we did not have such equipment."

These successes have helped to position Turkish drones and the TB2 in particular for export success. Today, the TB2 has been exported to around a dozen countries in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa and more orders are in the offing including to NATO countries such as Poland. Turkish drones are attractive, in part because of their proven operational success, but also because of their low price – often a fraction of the cost of a U.S. or Israeli system. Like Turkey, many countries have struggled to get permission to acquire U.S. technology, find it too expensive or find exporting from China or Israel politically unpalatable.

Countries which had advanced drone technology early on such as the United States and Israel have been reluctant to export armed systems over concerns about the proliferation of drone technology, regulated by the Missile Technology Control Regime, a set of voluntary rules which prohibits the export of technologies that could be used to develop delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, after all, many of the technologies that enable RPAS systems could potentially be used to develop cruise missiles. Turkey too, is a partner to the MTCR, but continues to export the drones anyway, and appears to have taken over from China as a major exporter of armed drone systems. It is unclear if Ankara is being guided by policy around drone sales, but the national effort around the development of armed drones has raised global awareness of Turkish capabilities in indigenous arms development.

The Turkish arms industry is advancing the development of missiles, tanks, armoured vehicles, helicopters, and combat aircraft and is aiming to become a global player in defence exports. Baykar's efforts have also been elevated in part because the company's chief technology officer, Selçuk Bayraktar is the son-in-law of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Rarely a day goes by in Turkey when Bayraktar does not feature on the national news, encouraging young people to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, opening science fairs like Technofest.

For his part, Erdoğan appears to be Baykar's top salesman, when he undertakes an international tour, drone sales quickly follow. When "unmanned combat aerial vehicles" are mentioned, Turkey is the first country to come to mind, Erdoğan told an event in Kocaeli on 6 August.

Today, Baykar is producing a new larger, more advanced aerial drone, the twin-engine Akıncı and it is already working on a jet-powered RPAS called Kızılelma, which is envisioned to be one of the world's first truly uncrewed jet-powered combat aircraft. Even with one of the largest

standing armies in the world, Turkey is taking a lead in remote control warfare. Drone aircraft were just the beginning and industry is now experimenting with uncrewed armed boats and small tracked vehicles to work with sailors and soldiers.

## TURKEY'S PLACE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POLISH INDEPENDENCE

by Arin Bayraktaroğlu

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### Part 1

A Ukrainian Pole, Michal Czajkowski observed a century and a half ago that “Ukrainians are destined to cooperate with Poland, based on a common historical heritage and the existence of the same enemy, Russia, which wants to subjugate both nations.” In his book, *Wrnyhora* (1838)<sup>81</sup> the human slaughter is presented by Czajkowski as the result of Russian manipulation. Using a Cossack bard, Wrnyhora, as a backdrop, Czajkowski refers to Polish-Ukrainian solidarity against bloody Russian oppression. Events in the past and present have shown that when one or both are under threat, they need sympathetic outsiders to sustain them. One such occurrence was in the 19th century when Turkey (Ottoman Empire at the time) assisted Poland and Ukraine in their struggle for independence.

### Adam Jerzy Czartoryski



In the course of the 18th Century, the lands in the Poland/Lithuania Commonwealth were continuously partitioned between the Russian Empire, the German Kingdom of Prussia, and the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy until Poland completely disappeared from the map by 1795. One of the three aristocratic families struggling to prevent partition, to establish Poland as an independent state, and to oppose Prussian as well as Russian rule during and after these turbulent years was the Czartoryski Family (the others were the Potockis and Radziwils). Their palace in Pulawy was a hub for politicians and artists and the home of many treasures of art including Leonardo's *Lady with an Ermine* and Rembrandt's *Good Samaritan*. The Czartoryskis were so wealthy and powerful that they were referred to as `The Family` in Polish political documents of the time. Many family members, and especially Prens Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861), took part in the failed November 1830 uprising in Warsaw against the Russians. Continuing their

<sup>81</sup> Wernyhora is a legendary Cossack poet who prophesized that Poland will be destroyed but will in time be resurrected again.

revolutionary work was possible only by taking refuge somewhere out of the danger zone. Paris seemed to be an ideal spot for regaining strength and also having political negotiations with the governments of France and England for their support for Poland's independence. Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and his brother Konstanty Adam, as the leaders of the refugees and other idealists, bought a grand mansion townhouse near Paris, by the name of Hotel Lambert, which they used as a safe harbour where Polish emigrés would gather for discussions, exhibitions, concerts, and other cultural activities. In time it turned into a headquarters of the exiled Polish government and Adam Jerzy Czartoryski was considered to be the 'uncrowned king of Poland'.

Hotel Lambert welcomed not only Polish politicians, great artists and intellectuals, but also mostly French visitors including Alphonse de Lamartine, George Sand, Honoré de Balzac, Hector Berlioz, and Eugene Delacroix. Franz Liszt gave concerts there, and Frederic Chopin, a constant visitor, composed *La Polonaise* for the Polish ball in 1842 at Hotel Lambert.<sup>82</sup>

Polish insurgence kept on boiling throughout the 1830s paving the way to the Great Polish Uprising in March to May 1848 and the Poles, displaced by the Germans on the one side and the Russians on the other, kept on coming to Paris to seek the protection of Hotel Lambert. Realizing that his mansion house was not suitable to accommodate the constant flow of emigrés, Adam Jerzy Czartoryski decided to look for another haven for the newcomers who needed help. This haven was going to be somewhere in the Ottoman Empire, for which he had developed a liking after the November uprising. On the Polish State website it is currently reported that Adam Jerzy wrote in 1834, "Only the Turks understand the importance of our Polish identity... For this reason it is important to go to Turkey, to cooperate with them, and to find out who among them is our true friend".<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, because the Ottomans had sided with the Poles in several partitions of Poland in the 18th century and were in close contact with England through the services of Lord Palmerston, Constantinople (Istanbul) was the most secure place for a Polish colony.

Czartoryski had never been to Turkey himself but sent his representative there to find a venue for the Polish refugees and also to liaise with the Sublime Porte for their welfare. In fact, this representative was the same Michal Czajkowski who did much more than his leader had asked of him.



**Michal Czajkowski** Michal was a Ukrainian Pole, born in Ukraine in the region of Zytomierz which was considered to be a part of the Polish territory at the time. His father was Stanislaw Czajkowski and the family roots went back to the Czaykovski tribe living in the village of Czakhir. He had his education at a school in Berdyczow and then studied law at Royal Warsaw University in 1828. He was among the Polish fighters during the November 1830 uprising and, when the insurgence was suppressed by the Russians, he had to leave his home just like others running away from oppression.

At a time when he was in Hotel Lambert as a disciple of Prince Czartoryski he wrote poems and romantic books about the Cossacks, with whom he

<sup>82</sup> Also see Bayraktaroğlu, Arın (forthcoming). *Frederic Chopin ve 101 Seçme Mektup*. (Kırmızı Kedi Yayınları, İstanbul).

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/turkiye/prens-adam-jerzy-czertoryski>

was fascinated. In his poetry, Czajkowski praised the elements that govern the soul of the Cossack, the love of freedom, passionate temperament and a distinct ethnic culture. In comparison, his historical novels in exile reflected the signs of Polish Romanticism.

Laden with a serious task to be carried out in an unknown country with different social, religious, and administrative laws, he had to forget about his romantic ideals. When in Constantinople he stood on more realistic grounds. He established links with important Ottoman dignitaries and befriended the Grand Vizier, Reşit Mustafa Paşa. He stationed himself in an address in Ortaköy and, on the directives of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, established the Polish Oriental Agency in Istanbul. He ran it until 1850.<sup>84</sup>

In 1842 he bought some land within the boundaries of the Beykoz district, with the money sent from Hotel Lambert. At the time this area belonged to the Lazarists who had chosen to settle in a place 15 kilometres outside of Istanbul.<sup>85</sup> Initially the village was given the name `Adampol` in honour of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, but later it was changed to *Polonezköy*.

In 1850, Czajkowski was a key figure in securing the transfer of Polish refugees to Istanbul from the camp at Shumla in Bulgaria. He used his rented house in Cihangir as a centre welcoming the new emigrés, and also acting as a go-between for them and the Sublime Porte.

Those refugees who preferred staying in the city centre instead of leading a secluded life in Adampol, as described by Fatih Yeşil, congregated

“in the Pera district (now *Beyoğlu*) in an area that became known as *Leh Mahallesi* (Polish neighbourhood) which formed around the side street, *Leh Sokağı* (Polish Street or Rue de Pologne, now called Nur-i-Ziya). This was just off the Grand Rue de Pera (now *İstiklal Caddesi*) and used to house the Polish politicians coming to visit the Sublime Porte and later to recruit Poles signing up for the Ottoman-Russian War in 1877. None of these buildings survives today but the street is still there.”<sup>86</sup>

Refugees who made their home in Constantinople became a part of the modern elite in the city and offered fresh perspectives on home and family life. Angela Fry<sup>87</sup> describes the situation in the following words:

“they exemplified the European lifestyle and the associated political ideas. Not only offering a European model to middle-class Istanbulites (who were now more open to change than they had been in the past), Polish refugees also functioned as de facto translators and representatives of the new

<sup>84</sup> Badem, Candan, (2011). “Sadyk Pasha in the Light of the Ottoman Archives (1848-1871)” *The Crimean War 1853–1856. Colonial Skirmish or Rehearsal for World War? Empires, Nations, and Individuals*. Ed. by Jerzy W. Borejsza. Instytut Historii Pan: Warsaw, 2011, 79-90.

<sup>85</sup> An off-shoot of the Roman Catholic faith the congregation of Vincent de Paul was founded in the priory of St Lazarus, hence the name of the followers. In the 18th and 19th centuries they had spread their activities to many countries in the world and by 1874 they had 16 congregations in the Ottoman Empire alone. The Austrian Lazarists opened St George’s Austrian High School in Karaköy, Beyoğlu in 1882 apart from other establishments elsewhere in the country.

<sup>86</sup> Yeşil, Fatih. “European Revolutionaries and Istanbul”. *History of Istanbul*, 417-437.

<sup>87</sup> Fry, Angela. “Polish exiles in Istanbul: Living with the Levantines”. (<https://lancstolevant.wordpress.com/2018/02/09/polish-exiles-in-istanbul-living-with-the-levantines/> accessed 27/03/2022).



worldview that was taking shape in the 19th century. These refugees, who were instrumental in changes to Istanbul's sociological and ideological fabric, also played an important role in the emergence of new understandings of the concept of free peoples within a nation-state – that is, the idea that all were equal – in Istanbul's political circles.”

On the eve of the Crimean War in 1853 Michal organised the Cossack Cavalry Regiment of Slavic volunteers to fight on the Turkish side. Candan Badem reports that he signed his letters to the Sublime Porte during this period as `Mehmet Sadyk, commandant superieur de Kosaks Ottomanes`.<sup>88</sup> Towards the end of the Crimean War, however, some differences between Michal Czajkowski and Adam Jerzy Czartoryski started surfacing and this contributed to his depressive period just before 1870 when he retired from active service. Although the Sublime Porte never granted him a deed for the ownership of a house, and made him stay in rented accommodation, he received a retirement allowance from the Ottoman palace for many years. When he turned down the request to join the armed forces again to fight in the Ottoman-Russian War in 1877-1878 his royal allowance was cut off, causing him great distress in his old age.

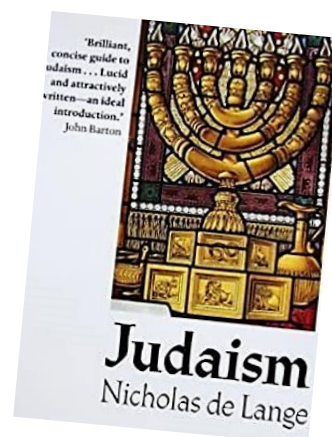
**To be continued: Part 2 will focus on the significance of Michal Czajkowski's soul mate and wife in Istanbul, Ludwika Sniadecka, the work in the city of the national poet Adam Mickiewicz for the protection of Crimea from Russian invasion, and the past and present of Polonezköy.**



## Mapping the Jewish Communities of Late Medieval Anatolia

by Nicholas de Lange

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Very little has been written about the history of the Jewish communities in Anatolia in the late Byzantine, Seljuk and early Ottoman periods. This stands in contrast to the ancient and late antique periods. The territories under Byzantine rule are mentioned in the general surveys of Byzantine Jewish history, but with very little detail and generally avoiding the complex local changes in Byzantine and Turkish rule. More specialised studies have also tended to focus on Byzantine rule. Very few publications trace the destiny of minorities across the political changes that took place during this period.

<sup>88</sup> See footnote 84.



The historical data underlying historical research on this subject are very varied and often difficult to access. They take many forms (being drawn from official documents, literary narratives, tombstones, notes on manuscripts, and other types of source), and they are couched in a wide range of languages (including Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Turkish). The data are also very sparse: we have very little information for large geographical areas and chronological periods. These factors have also encouraged inaccuracy, vagueness and speculation.

In addition to the complicated pattern of change in political rule, the geography of this large region is not well understood by non-specialists. This, too, tends to encourage vagueness and inaccuracy. The maps that sometimes accompany published studies are sketch maps showing only the coastline and location of towns, often inaccurately placed and named (with a random mixture of Latin, Greek and Turkish names from different periods). These maps, omitting natural features such as mountains and rivers, which are essential for the understanding of activities such as trade and migration, are not very useful and in my experience are largely ignored by readers.

Against this background in research and publication I thought it would be of interest to mention a project which aims to set the study of the subject on a new footing and to present the data in a way that can make them easier to visualise and interpret. Given the nature of the subject this project is inevitably limited in scope, but the hope is that it will stimulate more historians to present their subjects in analogous ways.

## A novel project<sup>89</sup>

The project, entitled 'Mapping the Jewish Communities of the Byzantine Empire' enables specialists, general scholars and indeed the public at large to browse on-line maps of the Jewish presence in the empire according to their own specifications, using GIS (Geographic Information Systems). The project was funded for three years (2010–2013) by the European Research Council and based in the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, with technical collaboration with a specialised institute in Sweden (Humlab, Umeå University). This mapping project covered the entire territory of the Byzantine Empire. In the remarks that follow I shall focus particularly on the section of the project dealing with Anatolia.

The main aim of the project is to provide a solidly-based infrastructure which will enable the Jewish minority to be studied in its own right as well as to be integrated within the wider historical context. This aim is achieved by

1. Assembling all the firm data relating to the presence of Jewish communities in the region
2. Using the data to map the communities and their history
3. Using GIS technology to generate, visualize and interpret the resulting maps.

The project uses Geographical Information Systems to disseminate data over the Internet. The resulting maps are freely available, together with the evidence on which they are based, at [www.byzantinejewry.net](http://www.byzantinejewry.net). This resource is aimed primarily at

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<sup>89</sup> Detailed information about and a colorful illustration of this mapping project are available on website URL: [www.byzantinejewry.net](http://www.byzantinejewry.net)

mediaeval historians but is also accessible to the general public. In creating an online resource using GIS, the project also had two broader goals in mind. The first is to provide historians with little experience of GIS an opportunity to become familiar with the technology and its potential. The second is to examine theoretical and methodological issues that are significant to the study of mediaeval history generally. The subject chosen is attractive for this purpose because it has a finite and very limited body of evidence. From the outset the project was conceived in these terms. I hope that the methods used can be applied to other historical projects. I also hope that the maps can in the future interact or interlace with other historical maps conceived in the same or similar terms.

The web maps are *dynamic* and interactive. A time bar allows users to examine the distribution of Jewish communities in different periods. Time and space primarily structure how the data are displayed. Point data are visualised against background satellite imagery provided by Google Maps. The maps and tables are downloadable. Side by side with the maps the website presents the totality of the evidence in the form of a database, arranged under various headings and linked to a comprehensive bibliography. Besides the straightforward task of locating places mentioned in sources or historical studies, visualising the database in time and space allows patterns in data to be understood by non-specialists. A spatial perspective can help research to develop in new directions. For example, the project's GIS can generate and test new research questions regarding the involvement of Jews in trade, the effect of political change on their distribution and lives, and the factors that influenced the development of separate Jewish residential quarters. Other uses of the website might be harder to predict. End-users might be interested, for example, in the involvement of women in specific activities, in questions of wealth and poverty, or cultural matters such as the level of education, the availability of specific written texts, or the travels of a particular manuscript or scribe. No doubt in the future new concerns will develop which we could not even guess at. Therefore we tried to include all the suitable data.

## Uncertain data

Our explicit aim was to assemble the totality of evidence for these Jewish communities, but we had to confront one important challenge. It was a fundamental principle that all features selected for inclusion had both spatial and temporal detail. We were obliged to exclude on principle all data that had no place or date attached to them, so that our maps would be accurate and reliable. A historical narrative can afford a certain vagueness; a map cannot. Published historical narratives have a tendency to rely on generalization, extrapolation, guesswork and, occasionally, pure fantasy, simply because the data are so limited. By enforcing a rigorous selection of data, we hoped to make a serious contribution to clearing away the fog and establishing the history of the Jewish presence in the region on a sound basis.

In many cases, however, the evidence of the sources, while reliable in itself, lacked details which are normally required in map-making. The two specific problems we confronted were *spatial* and *temporal* uncertainty, not sufficient to exclude the evidence in question from our maps but raising problems of visual representation. Owing to the novel character of our enterprise we did not find a ready-made solution to this problem. We therefore had to find our own way of dealing with it. We hope our solution can be helpful to others working in similar projects.

## Spatial uncertainty

Only events involving Jewish communities that can be located are included in our database, as space is fundamental to the mapping enterprise. But there are cases where multiple locations are known by the same or similar names. In such cases the location of the community becomes uncertain. For example, a Hebrew source dated 1362 refers to the city of Laodikeia. A reference work we used comments: “There are two cities named Laodikeia in Anatolia: one is just north of Konya (Cecumene); the other is on the Maeander River, southwest of Mastaura and south of Philadelphia”. The author of the work did not attempt to identify the Laodikeia in question. We therefore had two options: either to exclude this information on the grounds that it was not precise enough to locate it on the map or find a way to include it on the map without misleading users. We opted for the second alternative.

But how should we proceed? We believed that it was not up to us to decide which of the two possible locations was correct. Generally speaking, we carried out no original research for this project, but only represented what we found in reliable editions and reference works. In all probability, there is no way of deciding which of these two cities called Laodikeia had a Jewish community in the mid-14th century. On the other hand, if we put both cities on the map, that would suggest that both cities had a Jewish community, which was not necessarily the case. We pondered long and hard over this problem and came up with a solution: we would put both cities on the map but identify them with a special symbol which would point to the spatial uncertainty, and thus avoid potentially misleading users. Once we had decided on this solution, we could apply it to other types of spatial uncertainty as well.

In other cases, different scholars locate a single event in different locations, making the location contested. For example, a settlement known in Hebrew as Gagra and referred to in two manuscripts dated 1207 and 1208, is usually identified as Gagry on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. However, one historian has argued that it was really Germanicopolis in Paphlagonia, which was known by the name Gangra earlier. Our system displays both possible locations, indicating that the latter changed its name and linking the two entries.

## Temporal uncertainty

Our database deals with year-long intervals, as most relevant events concluded within such a period. The date of an event is uncertain where a source states that an event that lasted for less than a year occurred within a calendric period of longer duration. Because in the Jewish reckoning the year begins in September, whereas we use the current Christian (CE) system beginning in January, temporal uncertainty was a pervasive problem. If a source provided no date in the year, we could not be certain whether, for example, an event mentioned as happening in the year 5000 in a Hebrew document occurred in the year 1239 or 1240 CE. Clearly the map should not display both years, as the event only occurred in one of them. And so, we resorted to a similar solution to that used for spatial uncertainty: we used a distinctive symbol, of a different color, to indicate temporal uncertainty.

This symbol was useful in other circumstances too. It happened not infrequently that an event mentioned in a source could not be pinned down to a single year but was placed by historians within a range of years, for example in the reign of a particular ruler. In such cases, too, we were now able to include the event on the map, while indicating the temporal uncertainty. While we were working on these cases of spatial and temporal uncertainty, we came across some events that were both spatially and temporally uncertain. Once we had established the principle of using different symbols, it was not difficult to expand the range of symbols. In the end we used six different symbols to indicate the various possible combinations and also degrees of uncertainty:

- Temporally certain and spatially certain [the most common symbol]
- Temporally uncertain and spatially certain
- Highly temporally uncertain and spatially certain
- Temporally certain and spatially uncertain
- Temporally uncertain and spatially uncertain
- Highly temporally uncertain and spatially uncertain

In this way we were able to exploit as many of the data as possible while maintaining a high level of accuracy and reliability. In each case the user is able to access references to the data sources and publications we used. By this means we tried to make the maps a useful tool for specialized research while also making them accessible to a wide audience.

## Conclusions

To sum up, our project aimed to make a significant contribution to research, by making available for the first time reliable, evidence-based maps of the Jewish presence in the constituent territories of the Byzantine empire, both in Asia and in Europe. The project also aimed to contribute to *digital humanities*, and more specifically to *digital history*. Its major aim was to offer *interactive maps*, freely accessible online, and facilitating tailor-made searches by specialists and by the general public, using an advanced search and browsing mechanism. Through a comprehensive and rigorous selection of data it was designed as a reliable tool on which further research could be built, by scholars and others. In this regard a noteworthy feature was its pioneering exploitation of techniques for dealing with spatially and temporally *uncertain data*, so as to exploit a wide range of data without sacrificing accuracy and intelligibility. As well as being historically and geographically more reliable than existing maps, its usefulness to researchers was enhanced by the incorporation of references to all the relevant documentation and to key additional elements derived from the sources. Finally, it was designed to interact with other, analogous projects, so that potentially it can function as part of a mosaic of digital historical maps.

## Acknowledgements

I should like to acknowledge with warm thanks the contributions of my research associates Dr Gethin Rees and Dr Alexander Panayotov, as well as those of Dr Inci Türkoğlu, our local researcher for Turkey. Their work underlies much of this essay. My thoughts on this topic were clarified by an invitation to speak at a conference at ANAMED, the Research Centre for Anatolian Civilizations of Koç University, in 2017.

# The influence of Islam in Turkish Politics: From the Democrat Party to the Justice and Development Party



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## Part 1

### Introduction

Turkey has always had a separate place in the Islamic world, being the only country to have succeeded in forming a secular democracy. For a time, countries such as Tunisia, Iraq and Syria seemed to have established a secular regime, but without the democratic credentials that Turkey boasted. This has meant that for the West, until now, Turkey has been the only stable ally with a pluralist democracy in the region.

Atatürk founded modern Turkey from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire after the end of the First World War. Using the prestige he had earned during the National Struggle, he introduced major reforms with which he planned to make Turkey a modern, secular nation-state based on those of the contemporary Western nations. As a means to implement the revolution, Atatürk chose the institutions of the state, namely the army, education, bureaucracy, and provincial administration, as locomotives to instil the identity that he had envisaged for modern Turkey.<sup>90</sup>

Atatürk's conception of Turkey as a nation was embraced by the majority of the people, in spite of their diverse backgrounds. The basis of citizenship was straightforward: Anyone living within the political boundaries of modern-Turkey was declared as Turkish and expected to accept the tenets of the revolution. The spirit of this conceptualisation is epitomised in the well-known saying: '*Ne Mutlu Türküm diyene*': 'How happy is he or she who says, I am Turkish'. That conception was widely accepted. A similar approach was taken regarding religion. Although secular, the state has overseen religion, but of one particular kind: the Sunni, orthodox form of the Islamic faith. This has meant that other religious groups such as the Christians, Jews or Alevis, and followers of mystical variants of Islam, found little place in official religious education, although they are permitted access to worship.<sup>91</sup>

Throughout his life, Atatürk had created much of the institutional framework that was part of this vision. In an attempt to make the final transition into a true democracy, he had even experimented with opposition parties. Apparently, he had been surprised at how quickly the parties had grown, and how much emphasis they had placed, successfully, on religion. He thus drew back and closed down the parties that emerged. The outbreak of the Second World War meant that there had been no time to implement a multiparty system. However, the return of peace created a climate in

<sup>90</sup> David Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1999), pp. 18-19.

<sup>91</sup> Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, p. 21.



which an opposition party would be welcomed. Accordingly, the Democrat Party was founded in January 1946, and grew rapidly. The first election was held in July 1946. However, it was not fairly conducted, and so a second election took place in 1950, and the Democrat Party came into office.<sup>92</sup>

The rise of political Islam in Turkey has taken the country down a different route. The state's embrace of traditional Islam led to a religious revival within social and civil institutions of the Republic. Most noticeable has been the establishment of overtly Islamist political parties, which have been popular at a mass level. Today, many argue that the only remnant of Atatürk and his revolutionary vision is his portrait, which is hung on the walls in government offices and printed on the currency. There has been an increasing resistance to celebrating the national days, and school children are no longer urged to 'be proud, work and be confident'. Even the army is no longer responsible for the Republican values entrusted to it by Atatürk himself.<sup>93</sup>

The development of political Islam in Turkey can be described in five periods.

- First, between 1923 and 1950, religion was not allowed to operate within politics.
- Second, between 1950 and 1971, there was some relaxation on religious expression with the Democrat Party and Justice Party governments.
- Third, from 1971-1996 onwards, Islamists became a "sustained, tolerated minority group", which contributed considerably towards the general growth of Islam, but initially without any hope of gaining an electoral majority. However, during this period, political Islam became a mass force, culminating in its main representative, Erbakan, gaining the deputy premiership in 1973.
- The fourth stage began in 1996 and continued to 2002. This period is characterised by Erbakan gaining the premiership, the events of 28 February 1997 and the ensuing collapse of the government in June 1997. The end of this period saw disputes between the Islamists, and their separation into traditionalists and modernists.
- The fifth began in 2002, with the Justice and Development Party gaining the majority required to form a government on its own and culminating with the election to the President's Office of Erdoğan in 2014. The following sections will deal with each of these periods in turn.

### 1950-1971

1950 was one of the most significant years in the development of modern Turkey for three reasons. First, it was the first time that genuinely free elections had been held in the republican era. This brought the one-party system to an end, which in turn led to the fall from power of the Republican People's Party (RPP) after 27 years. While these changes were crucial in terms of the constitution, Turkey's social and political structure was not affected as deeply as expected. The Democrat Party (DP) regime that came into power on 14 May 1950 had a striking resemblance to its predecessor, mostly because the leaders of the DP shared the same social and political background as those of the RPP. In fact, some of the leaders, including Celal Bayar, had held prominent positions in the RPP. Although power had changed hands, it seemed that it was a change of personalities rather than policies. The DP programme placed more importance on agriculture than industry and was considering the privatisation of State-

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<sup>92</sup> Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>93</sup> Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, p. 21.

owned industries. However, with Turkey being a largely agricultural country, it could not be expected that these policies would result in a profound change in its national life, and there had not been enough time for them to take effect.<sup>94</sup>

The real significance of the elections held on 14 May 1950 was that, for the first time in modern Turkey, there had been a change in power by normal constitutional processes resulting from the freely expressed judgement of the electorate. For such a long time, the RPP had been equal to the State, the sole possessor of patronage and power, and few observers, even those who believed that the Democrats held a majority, seriously thought that the RPP would allow power to slip out of their hands.<sup>95</sup>

Since the end of the one-party rule in Turkey in May 1950, the central theme in internal political affairs had been the relationship between the DP Government and the Opposition. The unhealthy tension between the DP, led by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, and the Republican People's Party (RPP), the main opposition party led by İsmet İnönü, increased steadily, and the Government's occasional conciliatory gestures acted only to relieve the situation slightly. The calm of the election period did not last long, and renewed hostilities began between the new Government and the RPP. As a result, relations between the two main parties (DP and RPP) deteriorated throughout the 1950s.<sup>96</sup>



However, the Democrat Government wasted no time in making concessions to religious opinion, intending to appeal to the traditionalist elements that supported the Democrat Party in their rise to power. Within a few weeks, they had repealed the law against the chanting of the call to prayer in Arabic, allowed the reading of the Koran on the radio, and introduced religious teaching into elementary schools. Prime Minister Menderes also oversaw the opening of the *imam-hatip* schools, authorised the opening of important tombs, and indicated quite clearly that his government was favourable towards Islam, even early on in his time in office. This new policy may be considered a reflection of the religious revival in Turkey in the 1950s, and many observers detected a sign of an undesirable reactionary movement.<sup>97</sup>

The Government faced threats to domestic order from both religious reactionaries and Communist elements. After the 1950 elections, the atmosphere of liberty enveloping the country gave rise to the relaxation of internal discipline, which had always been strict in modern Turkey. For the first time, there were signs of an organised Communist movement. This threat was dealt with by several arrests and the passing of a law in

<sup>94</sup> FO371/95267/RK1011/1, Turkey: Annual Review for 1950, 13 January 1951. See Amit Bein, *Osmanlı Uleması ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Değişimin Failleri ve Geleneğin Muhafızları*, çev. Bülent Üçpınar, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013).

<sup>95</sup> FO371/95267/RK1011/1, Turkey: Annual Review for 1950, 13 January 1951. See Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye, 1945-1980*, (İstanbul: Hil Yayınları, 2010), pp. 55-134.

<sup>96</sup> FO371/95267/RK1011/1, Turkey: Annual Review for 1950, 13 January 1951. See Tefik Çavdar, *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi, 1950'den Günümüze*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2008), pp. 13-84.

<sup>97</sup> FO371/95267/RK1011/1, Turkey: Annual Review for 1950, 13 January 1951. See Kayhan Delibaş, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015). Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey*, pp. 36-40.

December 1951 which amended the Penal Code, imposing heavier penalties for sedition and the death penalty for leaders of Communist groups.<sup>98</sup>

The reactionary movement made its presence in public demonstrations against Atatürk's reforms by religious fanatics and iconoclastic attacks against his memorials. Thus, the Government found it necessary to introduce a bill for "*the protection of the memory of Atatürk*" which provided for special penalties against this type of offence. Many of the Government's supporters opposed the passing of this bill, like the amendment of the Penal Code, considering it undemocratic to prosecute people for their opinions, and that it was against Atatürk's own principles to place an individual, even if it be the founder of the Republic, in a category apart from his fellow citizens. However, the Government convinced the majority that the threat to public order was severe enough to justify such strong measures.<sup>99</sup>

The most noticeable evidence of the liberal policy of the Government was the revival of religious observance. The profession and practice of Islam, which had previously diminished due to laicism, re-emerged during 1952 with the tolerance of the Democrats. New mosques were built, old shrines repaired, and places of pilgrimage openly visited. The DP leaders viewed Islam as a personal faith with no effect on thinking outside the field of religion and ethics. Thus, they put forward a new idea of laicism, whereby religion should be guarded against all kinds of interference, on the ground that it laid no claim to power in the State. They were determined to crush any such pretence, as much as their predecessors, as they showed by their swift and firm action against the reactionary group responsible for an attempted assassination at the end of November 1952 of Ahmet Emin Yalman, one of Turkey's leading editors.<sup>100</sup>

This uneasy calm came to an end in July 1953 when the Government, alarmed at the religious overtones at the summer congress of the National Party, the second most important opposition party, decided to suspend the party, holding an investigation into its alleged exploitation of religion for political ends. The RPP felt this as a potential threat to all opposition parties and that it could not pass unchallenged. The Government introduced legislation that increased the penalties against the use of religion for political ends, giving the police wide powers to bring an end to political meetings that might lead to disturbances, which provoked further RPP protests.<sup>101</sup>

The National Party incident brought to light the religious issue, one of the Government's main preoccupations in internal affairs. The Government was faced with a dilemma. If it went back on the liberal policy towards the practice of Islam in the new ideal of laicism it had proclaimed, then it might lose popularity. On the other hand, it feared that any concessions to religious feeling, still very much alive amongst the Turkish peasantry, could lead to religious reaction with political consequences that might endanger the very foundations of Atatürk's Republic.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> FO371/101848/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1951, 2 January 1952. See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 243-245.

<sup>99</sup> FO371/101848/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1951, 2 January 1952. See Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>100</sup> FO371/107547/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1952, 9 January 1953. See Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>101</sup> FO371/112921/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1953, 1 January 1954.

FO371/107555/WK1051/16, Internal Affairs, Knox Helm to G. W. Harrison, 10 April 1953.

<sup>102</sup> FO371/112921/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1953, 1 January 1954.

FO371/112921/WK1011/1, Annual Report on Turkey for 1953, 1 January 1954.

Whatever the degree of political inspiration might have been, there was no doubt that there had been a swing back towards the outward expression of religious feeling. Two examples from the less developed areas of the country brought this to light. During one of Menderes' tours in 1959 in the south, a villager in the crowd waiting to greet him on the road offered to sacrifice his son as the Prime Minister passed. It is very probable that it was only a gesture, and Menderes immediately stopped any further proceedings, but such an event could not have taken place at all a few years before. The second incident occurred in Kayseri, where a number of dentists felt it necessary to affix to the doors of their consulting rooms a notice signed by the local religious leader to the effect that it was not against religious law to have teeth filled, as had been announced by a preacher in one of the mosques.<sup>103</sup>

At the same time, those elements in Turkey who believed the Turkish revolution had not gone far enough were not to be underestimated. They would have wished to see it completed by removing the authoritarianism that hampered democracy and resisting forcibly the reintroduction of religious influences in daily life. These elements included the large majority of the educated people of the generation who had grown up with the revolution and filled most of the senior posts in the administration, universities and business at the time in question. More importantly, the editors and journalists of most of the newspapers were on the look-out for evidence of "*reaction*" to bring to the notice of the public at frequent intervals. There was also a risk of attributing to the government leaders more decisive and definite views on these questions than they actually held. Burrows commented that "*it was in itself a tribute to the strength of the democratic idea that very little had hitherto been said in public about its being inapplicable to Turkey and still less about the possibility that the reform movement inspired by Atatürk had now gone far enough.*"<sup>104</sup>

Turkey in the 1950s, particularly in the provinces, presented many of the outward aspects of an orthodox Muslim country. The Government had periodically shown signs of uneasiness at certain outcomes of these manifestations. For example, in the summer of 1957, there was an ugly incident in the main mosque in Bursa when a fanatic in the congregation called on the Imam to denounce the Government for failing to direct the Supreme Court to pardon another Imam who had been sentenced to ten months imprisonment nearly two years previously for flagrantly introducing political themes into his sermons. A policeman in the congregation apparently tried to arrest the demonstrator. There was reliable evidence that the congregation then rose to support the demonstrator and seriously jostled the policeman.<sup>105</sup>

There was a general uproar in the mosque, and police reinforcements were called in to restore order. The Government took considerable trouble to gloss over this affair and issued several statements designed to minimise its importance, further alleging that the congregation had come to the policeman's aid. Equally, the Government had shown a certain amount of sensitivity by their summary action against the *Nurcular* Sect, some of whom were arrested at a secret meeting, and others who were

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FO371/107555/WK1051/16, Internal Affairs, Knox Helm to G. W. Harrison, 10 April 1953. See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. See Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>103</sup> FO371/153030/RK1011/1, Annual Political Review for Turkey 1959, 26 January 1960.

<sup>104</sup> FO371/153030/RK1011/1, Annual Political Review for Turkey 1959, 26 January 1960.

<sup>105</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential).



subsequently arrested for distributing pamphlets. Members of the fanatical *Ticani* Sect had also been arrested. Interestingly, the draft bill designed to tighten the law on religious offences got a mixed reception, even from Democrat Party deputies. No objection was ultimately raised to the bill, which was referred back for further consideration by the relevant Parliamentary Commission.<sup>106</sup>

The internal political significance of this general resurgence of piety, at least to the outward forms and observances of Islam throughout the country, was effectively revealed by the changed attitude of the Republican People's Party, despite their connection with Atatürk and strict adherence to his principles of laicism while they were in power. In 1957, the Republican People's Party had to make clear in the election campaign that the Democrat Party did not have the monopoly of Islam in Turkey and decided that opposition to Islam and propagation of Kemalist doctrine on the subject would be highly undesirable from the vote-catching point of view. Equally, in the Assembly debate on the Department of Religious Affairs' budget, Republican People's Party deputies reacted strongly to accusations of godlessness, and similar protestations of their devotion to the Muslim faith were made by party deputies during the discussions on the draft law on religious offences. In private, members of the Republican People's Party made no secret of their dissatisfaction with this state of affairs but made it equally clear that they could not afford to canvass such views in public.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, apart from the above-mentioned occasional misgivings, the Government's general attitude had continued to be a combination of mild encouragement and tolerance of Islam. Their assistance towards mosque building demonstrated this. The introductions of religious education into secondary schools, which turned a blind eye to the revival of such customs as the veil for women and polygamy in the remoter areas was plain vote-catching, as shown by their conduct during the electoral campaign. No serious attempt had been made to grapple with the problem of reconciling the tenets of Islam with the existence and continued development of the modern Turkish State on Western political and materialistic lines.<sup>108</sup>

Moreover, the Democrat Party was relaxed regarding the related question of the reform and "purification" of the Turkish language. Although there was no question of it being reintroduced in formal education, use of the Arabic script was no longer discouraged, and many of the Arabic and Persian words which Atatürk had removed from the dictionary were now freely returning to circulation. Several place-names were also altered accordingly. For example, the "Ministries" quarter of Ankara previously called by the neologism "Bakanlıklar" had now reverted officially to the Arabic derivative "Vekaletler", and Democrat Party newspaper reports were becoming increasingly "Ottoman" in their vocabulary and presented a marked, and sometimes

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<sup>106</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 102-121.

<sup>107</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496.

<sup>108</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496.



ludicrous contrast to the People's Republican Party papers which still rigidly adhered to the neologisms.<sup>109</sup>

This situation in all its aspects was a source of distress for the small band of young Turkish “intellectuals” and among the thinking element of the middle classes of the generation that had grown up in the early days of the revolution. They stated their views clearly at a seminar held in Ankara in April 1958 that was attended by Regional Inspectors of the Ministry of Education from all provinces in Turkey.<sup>110</sup> The inspectors, especially those from the remoter provinces, were genuinely worried by what they described as the revival of Islam and the consequent breakdown of Atatürk’s reforms. They said that since the Democrat Party had come to power, the village Imams and Hodjas (religious teachers) had regained their hold on the peasant population. At this point, they maintained, the work of the Ministry of Education in the provinces had been seriously hampered. Officials of the Ministry were powerless in the face of the reactionary elements.<sup>111</sup>

The inspectors considered these manifestations to be very serious. They were middle-aged men who had, when young, been possessed with the dynamism of Atatürk. Whether this had been right or wrong, it had resulted in some form of moral progress in Turkey. They had the impression that this dynamism had died out with the new generation, who had lost faith in the social and educational principles of the reforms. They seemed to be content to leave the material element to Americans and other foreigners.<sup>112</sup>

Clearly, outward manifestations of Islam continued to increase throughout the country as from 1950. The budget of the Department of Religious Affairs rose steadily: mosque building with government assistance continued similarly; mosques appeared fuller than ever, and it was a common sight to see the faithful praying in the open street for lack of space inside the mosque; while increasing numbers of people, including young men and women appeared to be keeping the fast of Ramadan.<sup>113</sup>

In the 1950s, the new generation had turned to the “mass hypnotism” of Islamic observance for its moral values. The future of modern Turkey as envisaged by Atatürk was in danger, and this could be attributed to the attitude of the Democrat Party. There

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<sup>109</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, pp. 102-121.

<sup>110</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, pp. 102-121.

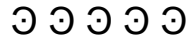
<sup>111</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496.

<sup>112</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, pp. 102-121.

<sup>113</sup> National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A1838, 209/2/1 Part 1 (Turkey-Political Developments-General), From Sir James Bowker to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, (9 June 1958), (No. 49 Confidential). See Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde*, pp. 463-496. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, pp. 102-121.

is much truth in these observations, and they deserve further analysis. Hence, it is necessary to delve briefly into the conditions in pre-revolution Turkey and into the early history of the revolution.

**To be continued: Part 2 will focus on the Demirel era, Erbakan`s Islamic party politics, the army interventions and the rise and continuity of Justice and Development Party.**



## THREE POEMS BY SEMRA EREN-NIJHAR\* ON 'WOMEN'

Semra Eren-Nijhar is a German-Turkish author, sociologist, documentary filmmaker, social commentator and an acclaimed consultant on migration and heritage. She is an expert on Turkish Heritage and Turkish people living in Europe and Executive Director of SUNCUT. She has researched social policy across Europe and Turkey over 35 years focusing on issues of heritage, migration, women, youth, exclusion, belonging & memory, and presenting her findings creatively through literature, poetry and art.



1)  
Özgürlüğümüze  
Sıkılan  
Mermilerin  
Sesleri  
İçimize  
Akan  
Bir nehir oldu  
Duyan  
Var mı?

The bullets  
Being shot  
At our  
Freedom  
Has become  
A river  
Inside  
Of us  
Can anyone  
Hear it?

2)  
Dokunduğunda  
Yaşlı bir  
Kadın  
Gözleriyle  
Hayata  
Akar yüreğinin  
Acısı  
Uzaklara...

If an old  
Woman  
Touches  
Life with  
Her eyes  
Her heartache  
Flows with  
Sorrow  
Into the  
Distance

3) Sıla Şentürk ve Sarah Everard anısı  
In memory of Sıla Şentürk and Sarah Everard

Biz KADINLAR

Bıktık

Yorulduk

Tükendik

Artık

Vurmalara

Dövmelere

Şiddete

Ve

Ölümlere

Yeter artık

YETER!

We WOMEN

We are fed up

We are tired

We are exhausted

Enough

To hitting

To beating

To violence

And

To killings

ENOUGH

## Conferences, Book Reviews & Publications



# BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

## BRISMES 2022

The proceedings of the five-day annual conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) held online in July 2021 were reported in Issue 38 of Autumn 2021. This year's conference was back in more familiar territory as a face-to-face event, being hosted 4-6 July by the Institute of the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies (MECACS) at the University of St Andrews.

With a main focus on coloniality, the three days of plenaries and panels ranged over an amazing diversity of topics from Morocco through Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, the Arab Gulf and all the way to Iran, Baku and Tashkent. Disappointingly from the BATAS viewpoint, however, Turkey did not feature prominently or exclusively in any of the panels, roundtables or keynote addresses; the trend now is more towards a thematic approach, typically with 4-5 related papers in any panel being delivered by mainly young researchers with affiliations to either British or foreign universities (or sometimes both). Turkish universities and research institutes represented included Ankara, METU, Marmara, Konya (Necmettin Erbakan) and the BIAA. Some interesting topics that were offered (no space for more detail here, but further information on them could be accessed online) include these:

- 1 - The Mediterranean trade in Turkish opiates, 1923-1940;
- 2 -The incorporation of Yemen into the Ottoman judicial system, 1872-1918;
- 3 -The 'Turkification'(Türkçeleştirme) of musical terms in specialized Turkish lexicography.

#### 4 - Nation building through the communicative practices of the Kemalist Republic in rural Turkey.

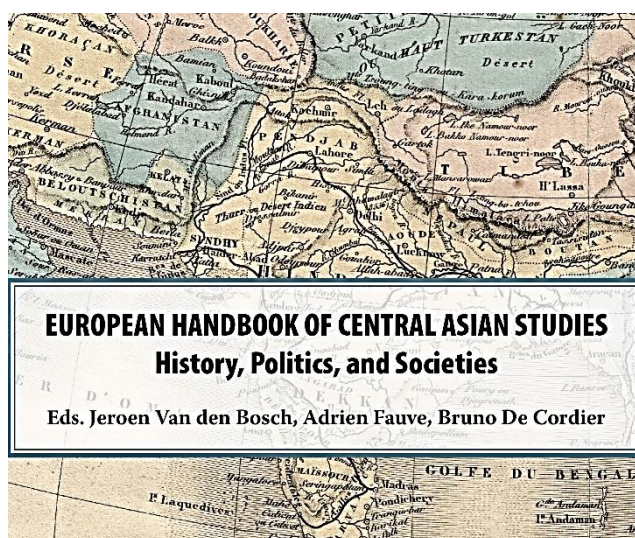
Next year's BRISMES Annual Conference is due to be held at the University of Exeter, 3-5 July 2023. The chosen theme is '**Ecology, Crisis and Power in the Middle East**', with the invitation to offer a wide range of such interconnected topics as climate and ecological change and the ways in which these will "shape future dynamics of political, social and economic power in the region" – a region, it is suggested, which has been "largely absent in contemporary debates around climate change". We can reasonably hope for and expect some challenging and stimulating studies on Turkey, Cyprus, and the whole neighbourhood to appear under this overarching theme for 2023.

**John Moreton**  
University of Leeds

## The European Handbook of Central Asian Studies

### History, Politics, and Societies

Eds. Jeroen J.J. Van den Bosch,  
Adrien Fauve  
Ibidem Press/Ibidem-Verlag (2021)  
ISBN: 978-3838215181



***Eurasian Insights: Strengthening Central Asian Studies in Europe (EISCAS)*** is an Erasmus + Strategic partnership for higher education, co-funded by the European Union. *The European Handbook of Central Asian Studies. History, Politics, and Societies* is the open access product of this project – a collection of comprehensive teaching materials for teachers and students of Central Asian Studies (CAS), as well as material for advanced readers. The book covers the Turkic states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan with predominantly Tajik titular majority population. Inevitably it is also about the Uyghurs, both in CA and in China. <https://eiscas.eu/about-eiscas/project/>

Its strong pedagogic dimension differentiates this book from other similar works. The elements of the book, which are designed to facilitate learning include:

- A glossary of concepts (in the beginning of the book)
- A list of abbreviations and their meaning
- Maps (for visualization of the explained phenomena/trends/etc.) and other visual materials
- Links to e-learning materials (recorded lectures)

- A guide on self-study (in Introduction, chapter 3, under the title ‘How to use this handbook’ by J. Hadaś)

There is also some career advice for students (in Introduction, chapter 1: ‘Why study Central Asia’ by A. Fauve)

The book is divided into five topics and has 22 chapters, prepared by 19 European scholars of the field, covering all aspects of Central Asian studies. All the chapters are structured the same way. Each chapter gives a brief overview of the topics covered in the chapter and how they have been approached by the mainstream literature, as well as pointing out to areas where these works fail or succeed. References to additional online materials are also provided for self-study. The sections of the chapters are designed with learners in mind, and each chapter has:

Introductory questions

Learning outcomes

Summaries/conclusions (after each section)

Information Boxes

    Aimed at providing depth to an argument/statement

    Aimed at providing context to an argument/statement

Cases / Case studies

    As the basis for an assignment/exercise

A future reading list

Exercises for revision, self-study

The first section of the book is the *Introduction*, which sets the pedagogical tone of the book. Its first chapter contains a reflection on the state of the discipline; the second chapter asks the well known question “What is Central Asia?” and gives interpretations of where Central Asia starts and where it ends. This is the most comprehensive and logical and academic handling of the question to date, what is more, some recommendations for readers on what criteria they might want to use to formulate their own interpretation are also provided. The third chapter presents a range of study and teaching techniques for students, teachers, scholars, non-academic experts and interested audience. The three chapters of this section are:

**Central Asian Studies: A Maturing Field?** – Adrien Fauve (IFEAC & Paris-Saclay)

**Defining and Delineating Central Asia from a European Perspective** – Bruno J De Cordier (Ghent University) and Jeroen J J Van den Bosch (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań AMU)

**How to use this handbook: Didactic Vision and Study Guide** – Justyna Hadaś and Jeroen J J den Bosch (AMU).

Each following section of the book is designed to provide the student/reader with contemporary academic terminology and tools to approach an aspect of the area. Rather than giving descriptions and data, the authors motivate the reader to think further around issues and do further research. Instructive tables and maps, which can also be used in the classroom, contain amazing historical and contemporary information.

The second section/topic of the book is *Identities and Historical Roots*, and after an excellent chapter on Islam in the Middle Ages and its spread in Central Asia, the following three chapters show that “There is not a single period of Central Asian history



until the 19th century which is not in one way or another linked to or marked by pastoral nomads, and by their interaction with the powers and populations of the sedentary territories. Central Asia is therefore the cradle of numerous intertwined political, social, cultural and linguistic processes of assimilation or dispersion, of consolidation, and acculturation.” (p.108):

‘The Original Islamization of Central Asia: From the Arab Frontier Colonies to the ‘Governate Dynasties’ (650-1000) – Bruno de Cordier (UGent)

‘Early modern interactions between pastoral nomadic and sedentary societies in the Central Asian culture complex’ – Vincent Fourniau (EHESS i.c.w. IFEAC)

‘Orientalism, Postcolonial and Decolonial Frames on Central Asia: Theoretical Relevance and Applicability’ – Svetlana Gorshenina (Eur’Obem, CNRS-Sorbonne Univ. i.c.w. Ghent University)

The fourth chapter, titled ‘Central Asia’s Contemporary (post-Soviet) Religious Landscape: A ‘De-Secularization’ in the Making?’ – Sebastien Peyrouse (George Washington University), gives the reader information about how diverse the religious landscape of the area is, although it is mainly Islamic, as well as the effects of global movements and their branches in CA.

The fifth chapter of this section is ‘The Historical Conditioning of Languages and Ethnicities in Central Asia’ – Gian Marco Moisé and Abel Polese (Dublin City University) and it gives a much needed historical and socio-linguistic survey of the area centred around the Turkic languages, including Uyghur.

*Societal-political Dynamics* is the third section of the book and is presented under six chapters:

The first chapter of the section is ‘Clans, Class, Ethnicity and Politics in post-soviet Central Asia’ – Jeremy Smith (Zayed University i.c.w. University of Eastern Finland). The chapter contains a contemporary discussion of clans/hordes (*juz* in Kazakh) for the Kazakh and Kyrgyz, and *mahalla* for the Uzbek, and the myths connected to these structures in the analyses of the political situations in these Republics.

The chapters ‘Presidential Elections and Ruling Parties in Central Asia’ – Adrien Fauve (IFEAC & Paris-Saclay), and ‘Political Regimes in Central Asia: Tracing Personalist Rule from the Khanates to the Present’ – Jeroen Van den Bosch (AMU Poznan), contain valuable research and observations of the contemporary political situation in the area.

‘Civil Society in Central Asia’ – Baktybek Kainazarov (National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan i.c.w. AMU) chapter contains a discussion of the press for each republic as well as the traditional role of *mahalla* and *chayhana*, and NGOs.

The aim of the next chapter ‘Women in Central Asia: Decolonizing Gender Studies – Rano Turaeva-Hoehne (LMU München i.c.w. AMU)’ is given as being “twofold: first to shed some light on the trajectories of changing women’s roles in the family and in the public sphere, and second, to highlight the importance of decolonizing the field of gender studies in the Global South in general, and Central Asia in particular. Following criticisms of the Oriental approaches in Western scholarship, this chapter focuses on the agency of women and the emergence of new opportunities for women created by Soviet rule and thus avoids the discourse describing women in Central Asia as acting only from a ‘position of weakness’.” The following chapter is an analysis of the legal systems – which is the least studied aspect of Central Asian Republics.

It is titled 'Contemporary Central Asian Legal Systems in Developmental Context: Genealogy, Political Economy, State Architecture' – Scott Newton (SOAS, University of London). This most interesting chapter concludes that 'the readers should appreciate from the descriptions and analyses of both civil and constitutional legal developments in Central Asia that the five states have followed distinct trajectories, like a Roman candle firework – launched from one point but following out separate spark trails. Law appears to have been more a dependent variable than a determinant, reflecting divergences in political economy (more entrepreneurial in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, more state-controlled in the other states) and societal and political dynamics (pluralization of power in Kyrgyzstan, manifest in a more parliamentary state architecture)." p 602.

The fourth section is *External Interactions*, and has four chapters: 'History and Evolution of Geopolitics toward Central Asia' – Slavomir Horak (Charles University in Prague); 'Between Myth and Reality – The Restoration of the Silk Roads in Central Asia' – Sebastien Peyrouse (George Washington University); 'International Relations in Central Asia: A Focus on Foreign Policies (1991-2020)' – Catherine Pujol (INALCO i.c.w. IFEAC); 'Terrorism and Security in Central Asia' – Maria Raquel Freire and Bernardo Teles Fazendeiro (University of Coimbra). This section can be read and taught on its own as a part of any course either in geopolitics or international relations, as it also explains concepts and terminology related to these areas of study. Turkey's relations with the Republics and the area in general feature prominently in this section and is given in detail.

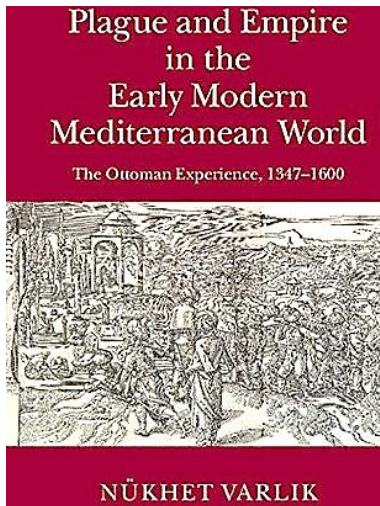
The final section is *Economy and Environment*, and again has four chapters:

'Facing the Soviet Legacy: Political Economy and Development Patterns in Central Asia' – Luca Anceschi and Julia Schwab (Glasgow University); 'Environmental Geopolitics in Central Asia' – Natalie Koch (Maxwell Syracuse Univ., i.c.w. Ghent University); 'Labour Migration from Central Asia to Russia: Laws, Policies and Effects on Sending States' – Bhavna Davé (SOAS, University of London); 'Between *Sotsgorod* and Bazaar: Urbanization Dynamics in Central Asia' – Suzanne Harris-Brandts (Carleton University) and Abel Polese (Dublin City University). Each chapter looks at the region as a whole, as well as the five Republics when providing data. The environmental tragedy around the Aral Sea is particularly well written, again the section as a whole can be used as a part of a different course on its own.

The sixth section of the handbook is devoted to Case Studies & Overview of Learning Outcomes, which stress the pedagogical aspect of the book. Section seven is Indices of names; concepts; events; and places.

It is very difficult to do justice to this comprehensive and amazing handbook of Central Asia. Through the EISCAS website, the reader has access to Online Lectures, Teaching Guidelines and Curriculum Design materials, as well as the Handbook. One must also read the research paper on how to improve Central Asian Studies on the same website. This incredible work should set an example of how we can approach the study and teaching of 'area studies' in general. The editors and the authors are to be congratulated. The project also has a data base WIKISTAN, which enables scholars of the area to connect with one another by registering themselves and their interests.

**Çiğdem Balım**  
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# Plague and Empire in the Early Modern World The Ottoman Experience, 1347- 1600

by Nükhet Varlık

Cambridge University Press 2015  
ISBN 978- 1-107- 01338- 4

## Retrospective

When this book was first published it was well before the first covid pandemic and naturally only attracted academic interest from the small but growing circles involved in Plague Studies and amongst Ottoman specialists. It sets out the central factors involved in the early plague epidemics as the Empire was growing and when the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans was underway. The early part of the book deals in detail with the historiography of the epidemics. As Professor Varlık observes, ‘this book could not have been written ten years ago, as it draws heavily on recent discoveries in science and particularly forensic archaeology, and in genetics.’, and sets out in great deal the current state of knowledge of the biology of the plague and its animal and human vectors. It focuses mostly on the so-called ‘Second Pandemic’, the Black Death period between about 1346 and 1353, but with extensive material from the Justinianic Plague period from 541 to about 750.

The author sets out the changing currents in Ottoman historiography, from the time when plague and epidemics played different ideological roles, often first being fitted into a Gibbonian paradigm of plague as a symbol of ‘decline’, and therefore often omitted from serious consideration by many ‘official’ historians, and the differences in perception between Arabic and Turkish language historians and Western writers. This resulted in much more thorough Western attention on the eighteenth and nineteenth century epidemics during Ottoman decline than in the ascendant period of the conquests of the Balkans and the Middle East. Early Ottoman chroniclers hardly ever mention plagues in their records, and this has been reflected in modern writing about these periods. Varlık’s book is a welcome and valuable corrective and although not a light read is a seminal and informative book.

The chapters concerning the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans are most valuable, but do not yet seem to have been very widely assimilated into historical writing in the Balkan nations. Prevailing national narratives in modern Balkan historiography have always seen the Ottoman conquest as bringing nothing but social and economic and political evils. The reality of the time was that plague required an urban context to be a meaningful threat to the Ottoman order and in most of the Balkans there were very few cities of any size likely to embody it. There was, however, one major exception,

which became more and more important over the centuries, the burgeoning Macedonian city of Salonika. Bubonic plague is believed to have first arrived in Salonika and along the nearby coast in autumn 1347. It remained intermittently endemic for hundreds of years. One of the few facts about the medical history of the city that has passed into mainstream English culture are the repeated attempts of the painter Edward Lear in the mid-nineteenth century to visit Mount Athos, only to be stymied by Ottoman quarantine regulations that stopped him entering Salonika and taking ship to the Holy Mountain. The Ottoman order has always been seen as the ultimate 'lockdown' culture with its severe quarantine restrictions, lazarettos, and leper colonies under armed guard and so on. This survives in some modern Balkan place names e.g. the small village of Lazarati just outside the southern Albanian town of Gjirokastra. Yet in reality, as Varlik shows, many of these measures i.e. lazarettos were 'western' in origin (usually Venetian) and in general associated with the impulse of Turkey's Christian neighbouring states to control disease by state-imposed institutional constraints on personal behaviour, exemplified by the measures common in Venetian-controlled ports.

In reality, as Varlik shows very clearly, different practices developed over the years. In the Black Death period, the Ottomans were largely living with their epidemics, and they are only recorded if affecting the central interests of the dynasty. Like other diseases they were part of the fabric of life, decreed by Allah. Later on, in urban contexts and where plague outbreaks could affect and sometimes even completely close down important trade routes, it was regarded differently, whereas in, say, the Ottoman conquest of Albania when plagues were recurrent, it is hardly mentioned by chroniclers at all.

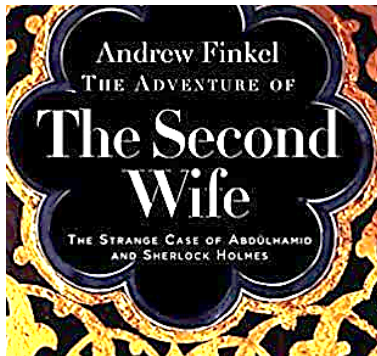
The retreat of plagues, gradually, from most of western Europe in the eighteenth century was not matched in the Ottoman world, where in many places epidemics became more severe, and where bubonic plague was joined by the diseases closely linked to industrialisation and growing international trade, like cholera and yellow fever. Again, Salonika was on the 'front line' with these diseases, with endemic malaria in most of lowland Macedonia needing to be added to the analysis. The Empire was seen in the West not only as a 'plague exporter', but an exporter of many serious illnesses, as Orientalist threat. The trope of 'Islamic fatalism' was firmly rooted in some writing, particularly in the Habsburg domains as early as the sixteenth century, and the passive, 'fatalistic' Turk was entrenched in perceptions, and was even more and more closely linked to the view of Gibbons – derived from decadence and decline. In the writing of the great eighteenth century English historian of the *Decline and Fall of Rome*, the fall of empires is depicted by Gibbon as closely connected to poor personal behaviour and loss of personal morality. The complex pathogenesis of the epidemics was displaced into an issue of personal behaviour and lack of 'modernity'. But even in Gibbon's time, in the West the issue was fading away. In reality plague came to be seen as less and less a threat in Europe as Ottoman power declined.

Varlik's book, written and published before the covid pandemic therefore raises very valuable questions. It is obviously impossible to know what early medieval 'lockdowns' achieved and the superficial answer to that is obviously the paucity of accurate data about their effects. The seemingly eternal question – can we learn from the study of history? – is bound to arise. But the experience of the Ottoman centuries also shows that very rigid quarantines and lockdowns were most favoured by insecure political regimes and dispensations, highly exploitative 'colonial' traders, like the Venetians,



and where growing Ottoman urban centres were often foci of opposition, active or passive, to traditional authority. It is only necessary to open a contemporary newspaper, particularly reports from China, to see many contemporary resonances.

James Pettifer  
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## THE ADVENTURE OF THE SECOND WIFE

– an introduction to the novel

by Andrew Finkel

Some years ago, when reading Philip Mansel's *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, a particular sentence lodged in my imagination and sent me sliding down a precipitous tangent. It described the enigma that was Sultan Abdülhamid II. Even now, I find it surprising that the phrase which was to alter my destiny was parenthetical.

**“He was a collection of antitheses, subtle and silly, brave and frightened, cruel and tolerant, modern and traditionalist, listening one moment to the Koran the next to the adventures of Sherlock Holmes” (read to him at night from behind a screen in a specially commissioned translation). [my italics]**

How wonderfully peculiar that the last Ottoman sultan to command the world stage was, like the monarch in *The Thousand and One Nights*, teased in perpetuity by a Scheherazade in the form of the world's first consulting detective. That the Shadow of God on Earth was in thrall to an early hero of mass popular culture seemed to me a sturdy hook on which to hang a piece of fiction. It would be a rich conceit and one that would connect my two adopted cultures and help me translate one into the other.

Translation was key. At the back of my mind was the tale of the Turkish novelist Kemal Tahir. He translated Micky Spillane to make ends meet and when he ran out of Mike Hammer stories, sat down with a map of New York, a city he had never visited, to make some up. What if the palace translation department in Yıldız Palace somehow found itself in a similar pickle? They would be forced to invent a Sherlock Holmes adventure and do so based on court intrigue: the best plot lines they had available to them. But Abdülhamid, being Abdülhamid, was too-well served by an army of spies and informers and no palace shenanigans would have gone unreported. This was a man who slept with a loaded revolver under his pillow, a man whom his enemies accused of deep paranoia. How would he react to listening to a Sherlock Holmes

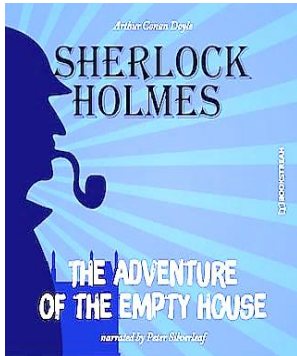


adventure by night and reading a similar story in an informer's report the very next day?

That was then. Working my way back in time to the court of Abdülhamid turned out to be a ride of hairpin curves and treacherous diversions. Many writers describe a sort of a Geppetto syndrome – the adrenalin rush of seeing characters come alive and, like wilful children, acquire a momentum of their own. I recall the slightly battered feeling after one such character decided to take over the narration mid-novel, leaving me to write a very different book with a very different structure from the one I had intended. My lingering resentment of this behaviour was only dissipated, much later, when a copy editor not given to flattery offered praise for the offending chapter where this rebellion occurred. Yet far more surprising and even unsettling, was a growing sense, not so much that I was lost in a fictional world, but that I had stumbled upon one that had anticipated my arrival.

To explain, I should set out that I started with two main premises – one historical and the other of my own invention.

The first, I have already described, was Abdülhamid's love of Sherlock Holmes. I read only recently that the "*siftah*" [first sale] of the translation department which triggered this addiction by was "The Adventure of the Empty House" a classic "locked room" mystery published in in 1903 (although set in 1894). It is conspicuous for bringing back to life Sherlock Holme ten years after Arthur Conan Doyle sent him tumbling to what seemed certain death off the cliff edge above the Reichenbach Falls. While I can see how it would have appealed to an existing readership, overjoyed to see their hero's resurrection, I confess to the heresy of believing the story to be far from ingenious; the crime a bit dull. I struggle to understand how it would have created a fresh convert of Abdülhamid. Fortunately, I had already taken the precaution of setting the clock back a full decade. In my account, Abdülhamid's first encounter with Sherlock Holmes is "The Adventure of the Speckled Band". This happens to be first Holmes story I came across as a boy, contains a far superior "locked room" mystery and manages, in circumstances I need not go into here, to save the Sultan's life.



Crime fiction, the cheap perfume of mystery and suspense, is often placed under the rubric of escapist literature, particularly by those who have never read Raymond Chandler. In many of its later incarnations – from the *Name of the Rose* to *My Name is Red* – it has aspired to be more. Even so, a ruler poised so precariously on the throne and who many of his European contemporaries referred to as *Abdul the Damned*, would have reason enough to escape under the bedclothes with a whodunnit. A purportedly true account by *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*-author Francis Yeats-Brown has Abdülhamid reading "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans" as he waited in 1909 to be removed from the throne. Three years later, the Young Turks were hastily arranging his evacuation from exile in Thessaloniki, only days ahead of an advancing Balkan army. According to a report in *The New York Times*, the Sultan's refusal to be manhandled back to Istanbul aboard a German gunboat was at first mistaken as a sign of senility, a diagnosis dispelled when he spoke perfect French, discussed world affairs, and then enquired whether Sir Conan Doyle [stet] was still amusing the world with the exploits of Sherlock Holmes. "These stories were the

only ones that ever appealed to him,” according to the paper, before quoting Abdülhamid’s judgement that Doyle would have made a “magnificent Chief of Police”.

Abdülhamid II is not the main character in my novel but is a central presence. It was no simple challenge portraying a ruler whose reputation fluctuates between merciless tyrant and heroic defender of the empire and the faith. My first literary encounter with him was in Barry Unsworth’s *The Rage of the Vulture*, where he prowls his own private torture chamber, a villain no less subtle than Mister Tooth Decay of early toothpaste ads. To the religious and nationalist right in today’s Turkey, Abdülhamid has become an emblem of imperial tradition and defiance of a jealous and hostile world. *Payitaht*, the recent historical soap opera whose 154 episodes, broadcast by Turkish state television and inspired by the work of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, is a melange of xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In it, according to one commentary “A free press, secularism and democracy are the work of foreign powers, religious minorities and godless liberals, and ultimately serve to erode national identity, honor [stet] and security.”<sup>114</sup>



As a warning against Hamidian exceptionalism, I was pointed in the direction of the Belgian ruler depicted in *King Leopold’s Ghost*, a figure of such cruelty and corruption as to make Ivan the Terrible seem like Ivan the Not-So Bad. I was struck by ambassadors’ accounts of Abdülhamid as an unpretentious figure capable of private charm who would lean over to light a visitor’s cigarette in a way one could never imagine of Queen Victoria. Selim Deringil’s *The Well Protected Domains* describes a monarch much preoccupied with his own image and the representation of his empire abroad. I leafed through the photographic album which The Porte would present to foreign powers. The fountains, hospital wards and mechanical looms offer proof of the empire’s progress, but, with exception, are noticeably void of people. There are certainly no pictures of Abdülhamid. The only portrait he sat for, as far as I know was taken in 1867 during a trip to England while still prince. A more enduring image is Arminius Vámbéry’s tantalising description of him as “the very personification of the bourgeois monarch”. In the end, I consoled myself that I was writing fiction not history. Not everything I wrote did happen, but it might have.

That second premise of the novel was the reply Arthur Conan Doyle gave in 1930, near the end of his days, to the question of which of the Holmes adventures he liked the best. “I hated them all” he said, an answer born of resentment that no one remembered him for his more serious work. However, at one point he corrected himself to confess that there was one story which continued to intrigue him, “The Adventure of the Second Wife”. Of course, there is no such story and unravelling what the dying author really meant became *the* mystery for generations of Holmes enthusiasts. One of those determined to find the solution is my principal narrator, for whom an idle pastime turns into a life-time obsession. *The Adventure of the Second Wife* also became the name of my novel. It contains one or two locked rooms of its own.

My protagonist was a member of what I discovered to be a very substantial community for whom the Sherlock Holmes canon is something of a sacred text. They play “The

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/05/15/a-turkish-tv-blockbuster-reveals-erdogans-conspiratorial-anti-semitic-worldview/>

Game” of treating the stories as historical fact, where half the fun is accounting for the occasional inconsistency in the literary account. There are screeds devoted to the moment in “The Man with the Twisted Lip” when Dr Watson’s wife, Mary, refers to him as James, not John, a lapse of concentration easy enough to understand. These enthusiasts comb the 1883 edition of Bradshaw’s Railway Guide with monk-like devotion to discover if there really was a 6.20 train from Leatherhead, which would have allowed Helen Stoner in the “Adventure of the Speckled Band”(or SPEC, in the famous Finley Christ system of abbreviation) to reach Baker Street by 7.15 that fateful April morning (it would have to have been the 4th of April, according to the renowned Holmesian authorities Dakin and Zeisler – while the formidable Baring-Gould opts for the following Friday).

At one point I took myself off to what I thought might be “Game” headquarters – or at least a sacred site along its principal ley line. This, at a stone’s throw from Baker Street, was the very comprehensive Sherlock Holmes Collection, then in the bowels of the Marylebone public library, and which had started life as the Borough of St. Marylebone’s contribution to the 1951 Festival of Britain. I had decided that the death of Sherlock Holmes in “The Adventure of the Final Problem” would play a pivotal role in my own narrative, and for some reason I wanted my first reading of it to have tactile authenticity. So, I trooped down to the reading room to find an original, unbound December 1893 edition of the *The Strand* magazine. As I turned to the last page, the fate of my book, if not my own, was suddenly sealed. On the verso (page 470) was the Sydney Paget illustration with the caption “A small square of paper fluttered down,” that shows Dr Watson standing at the cliff edge from which his friend has just fallen into the rapids below. “The best and the wisest man I have ever known” are the final words on the final page of the “Final Problem”. On the recto (page 471) was a new article, “The Sultan of Turkey” with a three-quarter-page portrait (the one taken in 1867) of Abdülhamid II.

The author of this piece was the Maulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed, who I discovered was a barrister at the Middle Temple, a confidant of the Queen’s Munshi who had also tutored Victoria in Farsi and Urdu (though he called it Hindustani). Reading not too closely between the lines it was clear one of his priorities in life was protecting the Muslim community in India, by which he meant preserving the British presence and, in turn, stopping the Porte from allying with Russia. Reading a bit more carefully, it was also clear that Ahmed was trying to promote the opening of a theatrical spectacle at Olympia called “Constantinople at London” in which he had some mysterious interest. The hall was turned into a Las Vegas-style replica of the Ottoman capital (repurposing the canal infrastructure from “Venice in London,” of the previous year) and twice daily a cast of over a thousand performed *Constantinople or The Revels of the East – A Grand Terpsichorean, Romantic and Lyric Spectacle, and Aquatic Pageant*, replete with extravagant water features, including a waterfall and a lake.

My plot began to thicken, or more accurately, what I thought was invention was turning out to be real. I now possess an 82-page copy of the original theatre programme. Sure enough, among the advertisements at the back are ones for anthologies of Sherlock Holmes.

\* \* \*

A codicil to this story took place some time ago, while I was a journalism fellow at Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was 12 April, my wife’s birthday, and we had decided to celebrate by boarding the 7.14 train to Chicago to take Philip Mansel (he who had set the whole

ball rolling) to lunch before going on to the lecture he was giving at the Newberry Library. I had to collect something from the hotel so made my own way to the auditorium. I still arrived early but could hardly find a seat. I remember being impressed that so many Chicagoans would choose to spend a Saturday afternoon attending a Courts, Households and Lineages Seminar on cultural clashes between ambassadors and Sultans in Constantinople. It took me some time to realise that I was in the wrong room, and that the hordes were there to listen to the famous Sherlockian scholar Richard Lancelyn Green speak at the opening of an exhibition of “Doyleiana.” I crept away before it began, albeit with nagging regret that I was missing a chance to witness an episode from my book come to life. It is no disrespect to Philip’s scholarship that his session was in a more intimate room upstairs, attended by a smaller audience of specialists.

If I had hoped to hear Richard Lancelyn Green on another occasion, this was not to be. The next year, the police broke down his London door to find his body in bed, accompanied by a menagerie of stuffed toys and a bottle of gin. He had been garrotted with a shoelace and a wooden spoon to prevent him, or so the suspicion ran, from blocking the £1 million sale of a Doyle family archive at Christie’s to stop it going into private hands. A widely accepted counter theory was that he had staged his own death in a secret, stylish, if psychotic tribute to Sherlock Holmes. The coroner returned an open verdict. What happens in a locked room is ours to imagine.

**Andrew Finkel**



## **MULTI-LINGUAL E-LIBRARY ON TURKEY (TÜRKİYE): PAST AND PRESENT**

by **Erdal Atrek**

Retired Engineer and Curator of  
*E-Library on Turkey (Türkiye)*

The e-library on Turkey (Türkiye) is designed to cover all publications, in any language, related to Turkey, past, present, and future, good or bad, as long as they have historical, educational, social, artistic, or research value. The definition of Turkey encompasses all that has been called by this name, correctly or not, throughout the history of publishing. Under this definition, all lands and dates related to Ottoman governance, to the Republic of Türkiye, and to the interim government of the Grand National Assembly are of concern.

While the e-library covers publications within the above framework, it does not cover fiction by Turkish authors (except in Ottoman, since that is a closed set), or Turkey related fiction by foreign authors. Nor does the e-library cover subjects that do not touch upon the above listed subjects. For example, books on descriptions or histories of medical facilities are included, but purely technical books on medicine are not. Again, there are exceptions for publications in Ottoman.

The holdings of the e-library mostly consist of PDF files of books, periodicals, and maps. There is also a small audio-visual section comprised of music, films, and albums. For reasons of copyright protection, newer publications are added only with permission or with an understanding of expired copyright, and thus, for the time being, much of the holdings is pre-1926. Currently, including single issues of periodicals, there are over 5400 publications in the e-library, or over 4500 unique titles (each periodical being named once). These publications are across 26 different languages, from Arabic to Urdu, the majority being in English (over 1400), Ottoman (over 1100), French (over 800), and German (over 600). Titles in this collection can be downloaded by the e-library members. Another small section consists of PDF files of physical books owned and held by the e-library members, usually under copyright, and these files can only be “borrowed” (to read online) on demand, a single person at a time, the actual book being under virtual lockdown.

It should be noted that the e-library is not run by professional librarians, and therefore the holdings are not recorded in a library-scientific manner. However, subject spreadsheets and a global list of holdings, as well as grouping under the various languages make it easy to find publications of interest. Further re-arrangement for improved ease of access is planned for future.

Membership in the e-library is free for all time. There are no rules for membership, except that currently, unless invited, a person needs to express interest in joining and provide an email address (preferably, but not necessarily, gmail) that can be used to provide access. Otherwise, the e-library is not openly accessible on the Internet. A Google group of library members and other interested people receive a monthly report including a list of that month’s additions and interesting information on some selected publications. The e-library is a subsidiary of the Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California (ATASC), and thus is able to accept donations through the association. Those interested in membership should write to Erdal Atek at ea1000@yahoo.com.

## RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

### ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

Curatola, Giovanni. *Turkish Art and Architecture: From the Seljuks to the Ottomans* (illustrated) (Abbeville Press, 2021). ISBN: 978-0789210821.

### HISTORY.

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Compiled by Arın Bayraktarođlu

## Reminiscence



## SOME MEMORIES OF THE ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

by Kathleen Allanach

When you walk nowadays from Tunel towards Taksim Square along pedestrianised İstiklal Caddesi the only traffic passing is the occasional antique tourist tram, and the only loud noise the shouting of protest groups. Step back with me to September 1969 when I came to Turkey as a young English teacher, newly recruited by the British Council, and eager to experience the delights of an exotic city. Now you will see that the street is divided by a roaring one-way torrent of traffic, mainly ancient American cars used as *dolmuş* (shared taxis) heading at breakneck speed towards Taksim; while on the sidewalks you can see the full spectrum of Turkish society, but very seldom a tourist.

Soon after passing the Dutch Embassy, you are hardly likely to notice, on the right, a narrow, precipitous lane called Nuruziya Sokak, which wends its way downhill to various historic establishments. A battered signpost at that corner points to 'MEKTEP' (the old word for 'school', borrowed from Arabic.) We will turn the corner and, taking few steps down the hill, you will see on your right, beside a large entrance, a brass plate proclaiming 'İNGİLİZ KIZ ORTA OKULU' (The English High School for Girls or EHS.)

Now come with me up through the huge metal doors and into the marble-floored high hallway. It's all dark wood and mysterious closed doors. To the left is the dining hall and straight ahead the imposing principal stairwell. You might notice a little door on the first landing. That leads to the back stairs, the province of the Greek maids, and very useful for a quick getaway. The entrance hall is guarded by Mustafa, a kindly elderly gentleman who has been *kapıcı* (doorman) here since 1934. Although, officially, he speaks very little English, he always knows what is going on. Somewhere

nearby you will also find the housekeeper, Madame Christides, a benign but very efficient Greek lady, who ensures that everything is spotless and runs like clockwork. In the basement the servants are also hard at work. The most impressive feature down there is the array of huge, shining cooking pots.

Today, only the staff are on the premises, preparing for the school year ahead. I feel so grateful for the cool calm of the building, as yesterday I was seriously shaken up in the plane over the Aegean Sea; then on arrival, I was assigned to a gloomy hotel close to the school, in a dusty *pasaj* (covered alleyway) haunted day and night by the noise of sewing machines and tailors' banter. In contrast, silence reigns in most of the old school building. No doubt the maids and servants are busy cleaning and polishing everything to a high gloss. Come with me up the stairs. On the first floor we can peep into the school hall, an ample space with a curtained stage, a balcony, and a high ceiling supported by four substantial pillars.

Onwards and upwards. Here we are on the second floor, the domain of the very busy school secretary, a small lady who buzzes around like an industrious bee. She knows all there is to know about everyone and everything connected with the school. Her typewriter is busy all day long. Her filing cabinets are full of mysterious objects and information. Also on that floor is the headmistress's room, the Turkish teachers' staffroom, some small classrooms, and the science lab.

Up we go to the third floor, passing on the landing a huge mirror where generations of pupils have checked their appearance. On this floor the classrooms are rather dark because the surrounding buildings are high and too close; and quite old-fashioned, with antiquated desks and a platform for the teacher's table. More inviting is the English teachers' staffroom with its comfortable chairs and cosy wood-burning stove. Please do pause for a few minutes in the library to view the selection of English books, chosen to appeal to young lady readers, many dating back generations. Another historical gem can be found in the staff loo near the back stairs: – a flower-embellished toilet bowl dating to the early nineteen hundreds.

On the fourth floor is the junior department. The pupils are mostly the children of expats. Their light-hearted chatter entertains the senior pupils. Just one more flight of stairs to reach the top and we can pause for breath in the covered area used for recreation and 'fresh' air during breaks. From here you get a pigeon's eye view of the surrounding neighbourhood. That's not the full extent of the building, however. On the main street, there are several rented shops and, above them, a furrier's atelier, all of which belong to the school and provide a little extra revenue.

It is not surprising that the school has the appearance of an institution from a bygone era. Thanks to the English Schools Alumni website, I learned that its history dates to 1858 during the late Ottoman period. The property in which the school started was granted to the British Community after the Crimean War by Sultan Abdul Mejid, for the specific purpose of establishing a girls' school for the daughters of British residents. This was no doubt a reward for the help given by the British to Turkey in the Crimean War. The French community were given a similar gift. At that time landed property in Turkey could not be registered in the name of a foreign individual or organisation. Consequently, a legal loophole was exploited. In Turkish law, all women living in Turkey were considered Turkish citizens. It was decided, therefore, to register the gift in the name of Lady Canning, the ambassador's wife. The property was in the very fashionable Grande Rue de Pera, now Istiklal Caddesi. The building itself was a large,

ramshackle old Turkish house that had once been a café and rendezvous of the French and English officers during the Crimean War.

The school would be open to all nationalities, but the medium of instruction was to be English, and so it remained during the school's existence. Despite the unsuitable premises, the school was at first very successful, then its fortunes fluctuated for some time. Later in the century, the problem of the title deeds was solved as a result of a change in Turkish law. The property was re-registered in the name of the British Embassy and run by a board of trustees. The number of girls enrolled at that time reached 200. At the turn of the century, when the Grande Rue de Pera was being rebuilt as a retail thoroughfare, the British Community took the opportunity to demolish the old building and construct, on the same site, the school building and shops that still exist today.

In her preface to the 1970-71 EHSB school magazine, the headmistress, Mrs Petter, refers to a recent conversation she had with a "Miss Harris, whose mother and aunts left the school in 1901, when our present building was not quite completed. She told me that they used to walk over the fields from Hasköy every day." Apparently, nothing daunted young lady walkers in those days.



Soon after the completion of the new EHSB building, the English High School for Boys was opened in Tesvikiye. The two schools had close ties. During the sixties and seventies, some teachers worked in both schools. While I was at the EHSB the most memorable event shared by the English Schools was the visit in 1971 of Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Anne. As the street at the entrance to the Girls' school was not considered suitable for a royal arrival, the Queen visited the Boy's School only, but the pupils from the Girls' School also took part in the event. The two schools shared a sports ground at Şişli, where our pupils went regularly with their PE teacher. I was there only once, for a speech day. The morning started with fine sunshine, everything went well, and the dignitaries were duly installed behind a table for the prize-giving ceremony. Suddenly the sky darkened, and a squally wind blew up. Papers started to fly around, then rain came down in bucketfuls. The crowd ran for cover leaving the dignitaries clinging onto the billowing tablecloths. Even the weather followed English traditions at EHSB events!

To return to the serious subject of education, the English High School for Girls was one of the academically desirable private schools in Istanbul at that time. Pupils, mainly from well-to-do families, and mostly of Turkish nationality, gained places in the school by sitting a competitive examination approved by the *Maarif* (Turkish educational authorities.) The pupils worked hard and had high expectations for their future careers. In the words of Mrs Gwyneth Petter, the headmistress of the EHSB at that time:

"This is a private school within the Turkish state system of education. Girls enter at 11 after completing the course at a Turkish junior school and competition for entry is fierce: as many as 650 children competing annually for the 30 places we can offer. They are given a two-year intensive course in English and thereafter, for three years, they follow a programme in English, Mathematics, French and Science based on that of an English Grammar



School. I reckon that our best girls could manage “O” Level at the end of the course; most, however, would need another year’s tuition.”

Besides their English subjects, the pupils were all required to study the full range of Turkish subjects and had to pass the annual Turkish exams to proceed to the next form. Altogether, it was a demanding programme of studies, but the pupils had been used to that from an early age.

Let’s return to the school on the morning term begins. The teachers, now upstairs putting the finishing touches to their plans of work, cannot fail to hear the crescendo of horn sounding and angry noises in the street below. Meanwhile from the entrance hall downstairs comes the shrill sound of girlish voices. Eventually, the twittering dies down a little, followed by the thunder of many feet racing up the stairs. *Talebeler geldi!* (The pupils have arrived!). Proceedings always began in the assembly hall. A girl carried in the Turkish flag and the *İstiklal Marşı* (National Anthem) was sung with great gusto. The headmistress addressed the pupils, who listened attentively. New teachers were introduced, timetables were given out, prefects were appointed, and so on. The girls looked like model pupils. In 1969 the uniform was very much in the British tradition – white blouse and black gym tunic accompanied outdoors by a little black hat with the school emblem, a blue pansy.

In the weeks that followed I found that teaching English at the EHSB was not so different from teaching elsewhere, except that most pupils worked harder than those I had encountered in the UK. In English lessons we read the same kind of novels, short stories, plays and poems that classes in a British school would read for formal examinations. The only difference in pupil reactions that I recall was a shocked refusal to accept the supernatural in literature. They asked me how Shakespeare could possibly expect an audience to take the ghost of Hamlet’s father seriously. A good question! That aside, the girls enjoyed most of the English literature in the curriculum. English grammar and formal exercises like precis, as in UK schools, were not so popular. At first, there were some minor problems for me, such as learning so many unfamiliar names. Then there was the question of the school rules, principally the “only English to be spoken in school” rule. Although English was adhered to in the classroom, it was often “forgotten” in the corridors and on the stairs, particularly at the end of the day and especially if there was not a teacher in sight. A pupil heard speaking in Turkish was given a black mark in her little book. Three of those meant detention. *Vay! Vay!* (Oh, dear!)

It was not all study, though. The most important extra-curricular school activity for many pupils was probably the inter-school volleyball matches, most often with Robert



College. This was the sport they enjoyed best. After the Şişli sports field was sold, the pupils went to Galatasaray Stadium for athletics practice, as Sue Linge, the very popular PE teacher at that time recalls. Sue also took groups of pupils to entertain the residents at the home for the elderly run by the Little Sister of the Poor in Bomonti. In

the summertime she would organise picnics for those residents and the pupils in a garden on the Bosphorus belonging to the British Consulate. Many thanks to Sue for helping to fill some of the gaps in my memories!

In the years that followed, besides the Queen’s visit, there were other highlights, such as a performance of “The Importance of Being Earnest” by Form 7 for parents and friends, a jolly school concert and an inter-school debating competition, which our



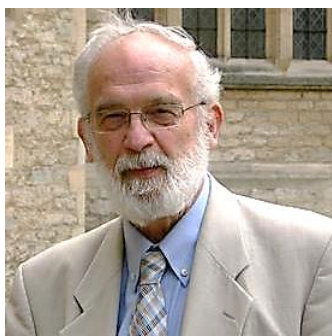
school won, to our great surprise and pleasure. In addition, there were yearly parents' lunches and dinners in hotels. However, as the school was situated in the city centre and most pupils lived in the suburbs, after-school and evening activities were somewhat limited.

During my five years at the High School there were a few changes. Naturally, teachers came and went. We had an international mix of staff, but the majority were from the UK. An important change for the pupils was a new uniform. The girls felt that gym tunics were too old-fashioned and agitated for something more up to date. Eventually, with the headmistress's approval, they agreed upon a smart blue, grey and white 'tartan' skirt with a white blouse and navy pullover. Pupil power had prevailed! It was a great privilege to have taught at the EHSG and I was sad to leave in 1974. The school at that time appeared to be thriving. The pupils arrived and left feeling they were achieving their ambitions. Unfortunately, not long after, in 1979, the English Girls' and Boys' Schools had to close for financial reasons and the buildings were absorbed into the Turkish state educational system. Now the notice beside the door of the former EHSG reads: 'BEYOĞLU ANADOLU LİSESİ.'

When I stopped outside the building one summer's day about twenty-five years ago, the *kapıcı* came out to greet me. He said he recognised me from the old days and told me I could come in and have a look around. To my amazement, nothing seemed to have changed, neither the colour of the paintwork – odd greens and pinks – nor the big old mirror in the staircase. As I looked around the assembly hall, I remembered the sound of the *İstiklal Marşı* and Mrs Petter's voice on that first day saying: "Good morning, girls. I hope you all had a very happy holiday...."

*Hey gidi gunler hey!* (Ah, the good old days!)

## In Memoriam



### Dr Richard (Dick) C. Repp

(1936-2021)

Dick Repp, University Lecturer in Turkish History at Oxford (1963-2003), Master of St Cross College (1987-2003) and Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University (1994-2003) was a highly gifted Ottoman historian whom I was privileged to have as my doctoral supervisor fifty years ago. Born and brought up in Pittsburgh, Dick had majored in Classics at Williams College, Massachusetts. He came to Oxford in 1957 to study Arabic and Turkish, and completed a second BA with First Class Honours in just two years. He then spent three years as an Instructor in the Humanities at Robert College

in Istanbul (the forerunner of Boğaziçi University), teaching a programme in Eastern and Western civilisations newly established with the participation of Geoffrey Lewis. In 1963 he returned to Oxford to take up a newly created Lectureship in Turkish History and to embark on the doctoral project that was to become his unique contribution to our understanding of the Ottoman system of government.

Dick's research on the development of the learned hierarchy (*ilmiye*) within the Ottoman administrative system in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was summed up in his 1987 monograph, *The Müfti of Istanbul*, described by Dr Christine Woodhead (University of Durham) as "a model of the most thorough research and clarity of argument". She adds "It has become a classic reference work for any Ottomanist working on the 15th and 16th-century Ottoman learned profession, and on many other related topics".

When I became his student in 1968, Dick Repp was only a couple of years on from completing his own doctorate. But he already had an authoritative command of the methodological issues involved in the study of Ottoman history and the research tools available. As noted by Christine Woodhead (who was Dick's undergraduate student in 1971-3), Ottoman studies still had very few practitioners in Britain at this period.

Engaging with Ottoman source material involves formidable linguistic challenges. The language known as 'Ottoman' was Turkish in its basic structure but contained, especially in its learned and 'courtly' registers, a heavy overlay of vocabulary and even grammar borrowed from Arabic and Persian – languages with which Turkish has no genetic relationship or similarity. It was written in the Arabic alphabet. In many text types a further obstacle to comprehension, from the modern scholar's point of view, is the stylistic tendency to favour rhetorical effect over semantic precision, a phenomenon brilliantly captured by Dick in his favourite description of Ottoman as an "impressionistic" language. Christine Woodhead recalls the kindly encouragement of Dick Repp as she struggled with the early stages of learning to read Ottoman as a first-year undergraduate. As my own doctoral project was making a critical edition and translation of a sixteenth-century Ottoman historical text, it had many points of connection with Dick's own work, and the experience of being supervised by him was highly instructive and stimulating. Detailed attention to language and terminology was, for Dick, the essential key to understanding a very different historical culture. It was clear that he positively relished the process of engagement with Ottoman documents and texts, even if it could sometimes engender as much mystification as clarification.

By the 1980s Dick was becoming increasingly interested in a different aspect of academic life, university governance. On his appointment in 1987 as Master of St Cross College (one of Oxford's graduate colleges) his university teaching duties were reduced to part-time. In 1988 I was appointed University Lecturer in Turkish at Oxford and we thus became professional colleagues. During the period down to his retirement in 2003 Dick was a greatly valued member of the autonomous academic governance structure on which Oxford prides itself, much sought after across the university for his wisdom, fairness and impartiality. Research and teaching no longer occupied the place in his life that they once had, but even during this second phase of his academic career he continued to contribute to the advancement of Ottoman studies through his devoted supervision of graduate students, some of whom have gone on to academic careers in the UK and elsewhere.



Celia Kerslake

## Request for contributions

**TAS *Review* welcomes articles, features, reviews, announcements, and news from private individuals as well as those representing universities and other relevant institutions. Submissions may range from 250 to 2500 words and should be in A4 format and, preferably, sent electronically to the Co-Editors Sigrid-B Martin [sigimartin3@gmail.com](mailto:sigimartin3@gmail.com). and/or Dr Mina Toksöz at [mina@blauel.com](mailto:mina@blauel.com). Submissions for the Spring issue would be particularly welcomed by 1 March 2023 or earlier.**



The two venues for BATAS' main events 2022/23:

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(The annual John Martin Lecture}



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