Elisabeth Özdalga & Simon Stjernholm (eds)

A Hundred Years of the Turkish Republic

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Content

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Introduction

ELISABETH ÖZDALGA & SIMON STJERNHOLM

This issue of *Dragomanen* is dedicated to the hundredth anniversary, in 2023, of the Turkish Republic. But what, exactly, is to be commemorated? What immediately comes to mind when contemplating this historical event is the establishment of the Republic itself as it emerged from the War of Independence (1919–22), established as it was on the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. Many probably also instantly recall the Republic's founder and first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), his follower as head of state and comrade-in-arms İsmet İnönü (1884–1973), and other prominent political leaders like Celal Bayar (1883–1986), Adnan Menderes (1899–1961), Süleyman Demirel (1924–2015), Bülent Ecevit (1925–2006), Turgut Özal (1927–1993), Necmettin Erbakan (1926–2011), and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (b. 1953). These renowned figures are furthermore closely connected to key political parties throughout the Republic's history. These include the Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Atatürk in 1923, and the Democrat Party (DP), which ruled the country from its first free parliamentary elections in 1950 until 1960, when it was brutally deposed from power through a military coup d'état. Other leading political parties have been Demirel's Justice Party (AP), Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP), Erbakan's National Salvation Party (MSP) and Welfare Party (RP), followed by Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party, AKP.

Rather than focusing this commemorative issue on explicitly political leaders, parties, institutions and events, however, this issue will direct more attention to the great diversity of people living within the borders of the Turkish nation state. As the heir to a great empire, modern Turkey represents a conglomerate of ethnic

and religious groups and communities. Responding to that reality, *cultural identities* constitute one of the core themes in the collection of essays presented in this volume. We also want to feature the role of various *visions* in the formation of the new Turkey. The establishment of a modern and west-oriented society has been one of leading ideas of generations of leading cadres as well as common people. Alongside and often in competition with these ideals have been more conservative and exclusive visions rooted in Turkish nationalism as well as Islam. Many of these imaginaries concerning the Turkish past, present and future – as well as responses to them – have been expressed in the creative arts. For that reason, Turkish cinema, novel writing and poetry constitutes another important theme in this issue. Cultural manifestations, be it ethnic and religious identities or creative art, all depend on language, which therefore holds a central position in the context of the republic's first hundred years. The same is true of journalism, a central mode of communication with wider audiences in the modern era. Whether approved or criticized, embraced or rejected, public media constitutes an important institution for the circulation of visions for society.

The first five articles explore creative arts, language reforms and journalism. Murat Belge discusses the emergence of Turkish prose fiction, introduces leading novelists, and notes the ideological currents affecting these authors. In the next essay, Orhan Tekelioğlu presents three important types of poetry in modern Turkey, shows how these relate to the wider societal context, and emphasises the contribution made by individual poets such as Nazım Hikmet (1902–1963). The topic of Savaş Arslan's article is Turkish cinema, which is presented through 'four stories, with a fifth in the making'; important in this regard is Yeşilçam, a name for the Turkish popular film industry between the 1940s and the 1990s. Bernt Brendemoen takes us through the various stages of the Turkish language reform and discusses its aims, challenges and sometimes confusing results – his essay includes illustrative examples of reformed Turkish and shows its various sources. Concluding the issue's first half is Yavuz Baydar's pensive treatment of journalism during the republican era; he notes both the optimism of and the repeated disappointments of reporters and editors within journalism, as their increase and decrease in opportunities have closely followed the state's political developments.

In the issue's second half, various ethnic and religious identities and minority issues are at the centre. Oya Baydar's essay on the 'test' that the Kurds have posed to the Turkish republic – a test that it has failed, according to Baydar – traces the tragic consequences of exclusive nationalist policies as well as efforts by Kurdish actors to create a space for themselves. In the next article, Hege Markussen delves into Alevi historiography, noting a more complex story than the one in which the establishment of the republic was a liberation for the Alevi from religious persecution during Ottoman times. Another type of group with a more complex relationship to the republic than is often imagined is the Sufi orders, or *tarikat*s, as is discussed by Fulya Atacan – she shows that despite being formally banned, several orders have not only survived but even adapted rather successfully to the circumstances. As Svante Lundgren reminds us in his essay, Christian minorities have met a grimmer situation in late Ottoman and Turkish republican times, including massacres, pogroms and discrimination. In this issue's final contribution, Mehmet Hayri Kırbaşoğlu discusses various Sunni identities in Turkey through a focus on their respective notions of the prophet Muhammad; Kırbaşoğlu also criticises what he sees as contemporary Muslims' failure to deal with the many problems humanity faces.

The result of this issue's focus on cultural identities, creative art and language/media is that different kinds of personalities or 'leaders' than the politicians mentioned above take centre stage. The key figures in the issue's articles are, for example, poets, novelists, film directors, journalists, and leaders or activists from various religious and ethnic groups. These figures' relationship to their diverse audiences is often different from that of national political leaders to the masses.

However, a doubtful mind might reasonably ask: since when has it *ever* been possible to sidestep the political in *any* Turkish context? It is certainly true that politics has been – and is – closer to and more intertwined with 'culture' in Turkey than one may anticipate or wish for. This is also the case in the following essays. One significant example is spelled out by Murat Belge in his essay on Turkish novels: Belge states that many authors have felt an obligation to construct their plots under the influence of current political issues. To some extent, the same is true of poetry, as well as Turkish film-making. The presence

of politics in all topics related to ethnic and religious identities and minorities is even more obvious.

The reason for this general permeation of politics into most domains of Turkish society is a query to pursue in its own right. It may be related to the fact that Turkey is replete with a number of unresolved social, economic, cultural, religious and political problems. The essays collected here can only touch the surface of many of these issues. After a century as a modern nation-state, Turkey is in great need of settlements and solutions to its many difficulties. The history of the Turkish republic really is a 'Drama without end' (*Drama utan slut*, 2023) as the title of Bitte Hammargren and Stefan Bladh's recent Swedish-language book aptly observes. That may also explain the fact that wherever people come together in Turkey, *memleketin hali* ('the whereabouts of the nation') remains a constantly recurring topic of more or less loud-voiced conversations or disputes. This means that regardless of our aim to tone down the explicitly political and instead focus on various cultural aspects of the Turkish republic's centenary, political concerns still shine through as an ever-present undercurrent. We hope that you, our readers, will find that the following essays throw new light on topics with which you are already familiar, but also open your eyes to new areas that may not have caught your attention before.

After the ten thematic articles on a hundred years of the Turkish republic, the historian Frederick Whitling briefly introduces, with a selection of previously unpublished images, the recent publication of his *Palais de Suède. From Ottoman Constantinople to Modern Istanbul*, published in the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul's book series *Transactions*.

Prose Fiction in Modern Turkey

MURAT BELGE

The conditions engendered by the movement for 'westernization' was understandably the basic dynamic that shaped modern Turkish literature. The Ottoman civilization had been able to create a tradition of quality poetry, but the output in prose literature was not rich, or interesting enough. There was, of course, a relatively fertile tradition of oral narrative, but that was nothing in comparison with the early narrative works current in the West.

'Westernization', or, what has become a more favoured term in recent times, 'modernization', was not a popular demand coming from below. Probably it never is! It was defined as a necessity from above, by the state, by certain sections of the ruling classes. Consequently, the political and intellectual elites were expected to introduce Western ways to society in a top-down manner. Intellectuals were regarded as a necessary part of the 'pastors' of the inadequately educated 'herd', the masses. The masses were not (nor expected) to be the acting 'subject', but were to be the 'object' (target) of the movement for change. The non-Muslim communities living within the Empire had set out on the road to westernization by their own initiative, as they were naturally feeling closer to the West, but the Muslim bulk of Ottoman society was still far from the desired level of acquaintance. There had been some efforts to produce novels in the Turkish language like *Akabi Hikayesi* (Story of Akabi) by the Catholic Armenian Vartan Pasha or the Karamanlis Greek Michailidis *Temaşa-i Dünya*, present day Turkish *Seyreyle Dünyayı* (Observe the Universe), but as yet, no attempt by the Muslims. However, translations had started and became popular reading material, so that it would not take long before the 'Turkish' novel appeared. The

first translation was Fenelon's *Telémaque*, and, interestingly enough, this was the case for almost all the nationalities living in this part of the world, including Russia.

The Ottoman Empire and Russia were the two closest neighbours of the 'West', though not westernized themselves, and consequently they were the ones most accessible to the material and intellectual influences coming therefrom. In the Ottoman case, the actual encounters usually took place in the form of war, which, unlike those in the past, generally resulted in Ottoman defeats. Both Ottomans and Russians had come to understand and accept in their own way, the idea that to compete with the West, westernization was indispensable. Unpleasant though it was, traditional forms had to give way to Western norms.

There is an obvious distinction in the intellectual attitudes that the westernizing enterprise produced. Russia had been a society marching towards greatness (especially after its expansion towards the East) in a more or less steady manner for some time. She needed to westernize her social structure in order to take her place among the Western powers. The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, had already had her golden age, and was now undergoing the throes of a struggle for survival. This distinction certainly had its consequences for the speed and the willingness of, and the spirit in which the effort was carried out. For the Ottomans, who felt uncomfortable about betraying their identity and values, the past was an obstacle. This was not such a big problem for the Russians. However, both societies resented the necessity of conforming to certain rules and patterns which were not their own creation. The position of being the imitator does not usually lead to pride.

Such a process is bound to give way to an opposition; every social formation produces some people who have their interest in the status quo and are to lose this position if conditions change. However, change itself is difficult enough. In the Ottoman case (which was not very different from the Russian) it was the Establishment that pressed for change, while the opposition came from certain conservative circles, as well as from the poorer classes for whom it meant the loss of jobs and income. The existing manufacture was ruined as economic relations with the West flourished.

Beginnings of the 'Turkish novel'

The first Ottoman novel, *Taaşşuk-u Talat ve Fitnat* (The Love of Talat and Fitnat) by Şemseddin Sami, an Albanian, handles the westernization problematic in an oblique way. It is basically a melodrama about an unhappy love relation, but involves a criticism of the absolute authority of fathers in deciding the fate of their children (this is, of course, a real feature of traditional Ottoman life). Fitnat's father decides who she should marry (though she is already in love with a young man, Talat). However, this elderly man turns out to be her real father. In the end, they all die! In these examples incest is a common theme (the ultimate tragedy) and we know that in cases of narratives written in the societies that have found themselves facing the necessity of changing their referential framework, this is a common theme. It probably reflects the unconscious of the intellectual, who has to confront such a mixture of values. This is an interesting subject of another, preferably comparative, research.

There were other men of letters who used the novel as a form of criticizing certain traditions or practices of Ottoman society. For instance, Samipaşazade Sezai wrote a novel attacking the continuation of slavery, *Sergüzeşt* (An Adventure). Namık Kemal also wrote a play in which parents dictating the marriage of their children, especially their daughters, were condemned. But, there were also early novels critical of what they saw as a slavish admiration and emulation of the West. Ahmed Midhat, though a 'westernist' in his own way, but also very loyal to certain, especially religious Ottoman mores, tried to find a balanced form of modernizing society. He wrote many novels on this theme, which obviously preoccupied him more than any other topic. The most prominent example is Felatun Bey, a character ridiculed throughout the novel as a westernizing dandy. The real hero of the novel is Rakım Efendi (the title of the novel is *Felatun Bey ve Rakım Efendi*), a moderate and rational modernist, who marries the slave he once bought! *Araba Sevdası* (Craze for a Carriage) of Recaizade Ekrem depicts another ridiculous westernizer.

For all these novelists, with the possible exception of Recaizade, the real difficulty was to write a novel! They were all born and bred in a society, where a prose narrative was, as a rule, a moral fable. Didacticism was not seen as a 'literary

sin'. Aesthetics itself was not anything to be sought beside moral fortitude. These early writers quite seriously saw themselves as 'teachers of the nation' and with all the devotion that this concept involves, they tried to form and inform – and *re-form* – good citizens with their moral fables. This kind of attitude is to be seen even in writers like Nabizade Nazım, who tried to write naturalistic novels.

A very important critical contribution has been made by Jale Parla to understand this initial stage of the Turkish novel. She probed into the depths of the Turkish collective unconscious and came up with the metaphor of the 'loss of the father'. This was not a case of defiance of the father, but quite the contrary, the loss of the father at a moment when his guiding presence was most needed. How to distinguish what is right from what is wrong? What are the legitimate limits of imitating foreign models a lot of which we cannot even understand? To what extent should we protect, or forsake, our traditions, our values? The 'father', who, in the context of this metaphor, was of course the Sultan, was there in person, but also seemed quite bewildered, if not totally lost, like the rest of us. The mere fact of writing a novel under these conditions was an act of westernization. However, many novel writers wrote novels to condemn what they saw as over-westernization.

A small minority of the men of letters tried to write good quality novels rather than struggle with such codes and recipes. Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil and Mehmed Rauf could not and did not want to totally avoid the effects of the westernization effort. Halid Ziya tackles with the question in most of his work, and, of course, the models they wanted to reproduce were of Western, mostly French, origin. But, the question of westernization was an element of life and the westernization issue was an important part of it. The 'westernizing individual' was inevitably one of the prominent characters of social life, amply reflected in fictional works. The real interest of such novelists was in triangle dramas, which was still very popular, in especially the French tradition.

The early Republic

The twentieth century for Ottoman society opened up with a succession of wars: the occupation of Libya by Italy (1911), the catastrophe of the Balkan Wars

(1911–1913) and then the disastrous First World War followed one another. At the end of the World War, the Ottoman state lay prostrate. These conditions understandably contributed to a heightened nationalism in society and among the intellectuals. The ridiculous 'dandy' of westernization was now transformed from 'clown' to 'traitor'. This is demonstrated by Berna Moran in *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* (A Critical Look at the Turkish Novel). Ömer Seyfettin, a popular and influential short story writer, known primarily for his strong nationalist leanings, played a leading role in this transformation.

Defeat and the 'peace' terms imposed by the winners of the war, which meant partition, together with the spirit of nationalism invigorated during the Great War, led to the resistance of Turkish society. The successful end of the War of Independence (1919–22) also brought the collapse and disappearance of the Ottoman state. The last Sultan left the country on a British warship. The victorious commander of the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal, became the first president of the Turkish Republic. These transformations and developments are naturally of immense importance for Turkey.

With a few exceptions, the long term consequences of these transformations were not immediately treated in literature. It took some time to soak. From the point of view of westernization, the experience was disconcerting in some ways, because the main enemies of Turkey during and following the War, were the countries that the westernization movement aspired to emulate, notably, Great Britain. These forces had been the close allies of the Ottoman establishment in the beginning of the modernization process, but war had placed them in enemy camps. Britain had decided to support Greece against the Ottomans. However, it did not take long for relations to improve between the West and the young republican regime in Turkey.

One relatively early novel was written by a woman writer, Halide Edip, entitled *Vurun Kahpeye* (Bash the Whore, 1926), which deals with the treachery of the Muslim conservatives who, in alliance with the Greek army of occupation, lynch the village teacher, a patriotic young woman. This novel largely reflected the 'rift of roles' as presented by the official ideology (Kemalism) in the early days of the Republic. There were such tragic occasions at the time, but the novel does not really present a complete picture of the situation. In literature, the reaction of the conservatives took a long time to become articulate. Tarık Buğra,

a right-wing writer, published *Küçük Ağa* (The Little Agha) forty years later, in 1966, where he wrote the story of the, in fact, *leading* role played by the conservative Little Agha in the resistance movement. This novel also deals in a different manner with Ethem the Circassian. Ethem was an early rebel to the Istanbul government and the leader of an Islamic guerrilla resistance fighting the Greek army in the initial stages of the War of Liberation.

Halide Edip Adıvar (1884–1964). Wikimedia Commons.

Yorgun Savaşçı (The Exhausted Warrior, 1965) by Kemal Tahir also touches on this somewhat mysterious event. Ethem had defied Mustafa Kemal, who was opposed to the methods of Ethem and wanted to fight against the Greek army with regular forces, meant to become the Republican Army of the Republican State, when victory was won. However, the Turkish army, getting ready to start combat with the Greek army, pushed Ethem's forces toward the enemy and Ethem had to surrender to the Greeks. He died in Amman in 1948, refusing to come back to Turkey, even after an amnesty was declared. Kemal Tahir ends his novel at this critical moment, that is, when Ethem has to seek refuge on the Greek side, since this event was enough to show how the rest of the fight would be waged.

The establishment of the Republic strengthened the commitment of Turkish writers to the social and political problems of the country. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889–1974) can be taken as perhaps the prototype of the Turkish novelist during the early phase of the republican period. He certainly was one of the best educated writers, an intellectual with a broad scope. One can garner a fairly accurate picture of modern Turkish political history by reading Karaosmanoğlu's works: last years of the Empire and the beginnings of modernism (*Kiralık Konak*, Mansion for Rent, 1920), the self-exile (to France) of a progressive intellectual (*Bir Sürgün*, An Exile, 1937), the dichotomy between the westernized intellectual and the peasantry during the War of Independence (*Yaban*, Alien, 1932), the intellectual poverty and the tyranny of the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP (*Hüküm Gecesi*, Night of Judgement, 1927), the abject fans of Western powers in occupied Istanbul during the resistance (*Sodom ve Gomore*, 1928), changing attitudes during the beginning and aftermath of the War of Independence and the subsequent enrichment of the 'war heroes' (*Ankara*, 1934), the betrayal of Atatürk's principles during the multi-party period (*Panorama*, 1953). Despite his historical-political commitment, he said one day that he would have liked to be a novelist in the style of Proust, but Turkish politics forced him to become a follower of Balzac.

Halide Edip, whom I have mentioned, tried to write from, not a feminist but a 'feminine' standpoint. She did not follow her own line reflected in *Vurun Kahpeye*, but took a more restrained attitude towards westernization, which probably caused a breach between her and Atatürk and consequently forced her into exile, where she wrote her most popular novel, *Sinekli Bakkal* (Clown and His Daughter, 1936). Reşat Nuri Güntekin, of the same generation, started as a staunch westernizer, but in time evolved in a more moderate way, also critical of Kemalism. His play *Tanrı Dağı Ziyafeti* (The Feast at God's Mountain), is an allegorical satire of Atatürk's dinner parties as president and his dictatorial presence in Turkish politics. And Mithat Cemal Kuntay (1885–1956) writes a devastating critique of Union and Progress politics. The novelists of the mid-war period are mainly interested in recent political history and, in general, they adopt a pro-westernization attitude. In this way, they are the adherents as well as the creators of the general ideology of the Republic.

As one can see, the turmoil of political life during the Ottoman-Turkish eras almost forced men of literature to take part in the political struggles. One writer of the period, who must not be forgotten, is Memduh Şevket Esendal (1885–1952). He is better known as a short story writer and could be referred to as 'the Chekov of Turkish narrative'. He writes in a direct, unornamented style about simple people and everyday events, revealing a fine sensibility under his objective narration.

Towards a mass society

At the time Esendal was acting as secretary-general of the Republican People's Party, led by İsmet İnönü after Atatürk's death in 1938, there was the serious attempt to educate the peasantry, which originated in the project of starting a movement for education in new rural schools named as Village Institutes. The peasantry had been left as a largely ignorant mass of people, who did not show much enthusiasm for the changes brought about since the proclamation of the Republic. To extend education to the peasantry itself, teachers of peasant origin would look and sound more genuine to rural people. These teachers could be trained in such a way that they could be advisers in economic life in the village, showing people how to build better houses or encouraging new crafts such as apiculture. Another aim was to make peasants stay in their villages by improving the living conditions in the countryside. To have literate people ideologically loyal to Republican values was of course another target. In this way, the 'village teacher' would act like the spokesperson of the westernizing state in every village.

The project was open to criticism, especially because it manifested itself as an impediment to the establishment of a national market to nurture a national economy. Instead, however, it opened up new perspectives in village life that had been quite conservative and static. Literature benefitted! Writers of peasant origin, most of them the new teachers, began to produce stories and novels. In this way, the movement of so-called 'village novels' was initiated. Mahmut Makal, with his *Bizim Köy* (Our Village, 1954), was a pioneer. But writers such as Fakir Baykurt, Dursun Akçam, Talip Apaydın, and others created a subgenre in the Turkish novel. Some writers who did not have a peasant origin also

followed suit and for some time, this was the dominant fashion of writing fiction. In this way, the Turkish author sustained his political commitment and expressed his ideas on the socio-political situation of the country. The 'village novel' became the dominant genre, especially during the fifties.

One of these writers was Yaşar Kemal, the self-educated peasant from Adana, the Çukurova basin, famous for its cotton. Yaşar was not a product of the Village Institute. He made his fame with *İnce Memed* (Memed My Hawk) in which – and in other works – he studied the stages of capitalism in the country, not as a historian of economics, but as a novelist. For a long time, he was a candidate for the Nobel Prize which he never got. But he was a fine writer.

In the shadow of military interventions

The sixties in Turkey were heavily affected by the military intervention of 27 May 1960. The intervention brought to an end the rule of the Democrat Party, in power since 1950. The leader of the party and the Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, was executed after a longish trial with two other prominent ministers. Nevertheless, the intervention was welcomed by a slim majority as a patriotic move to make Turkey more democratic. A new constitution, in many ways more democratic than the previous one, was written and accepted in a referendum. However, in the following elections, the results showed that there was not a general support for the military coup and its products. The new constitution was considerably more lenient towards left-wing parties and as a result the Turkish Workers' Party was founded in 1961 by a group of trade unionists. The presence of a 'left' after all these years, was an important new element in political life.

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, who published his two main novels, *Huzur* (Peace of Mind) and *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (The Time Regulation Institute) in 1949 and 1961, was not noticed by the novel readership until the seventies. Both these novels are fair and intelligent assessments of Ottoman-Turkish westernization and Tanpınar is now regarded as an outstanding novelist, as well as poet and critic, and historian of literature.

Women had not been closely involved with literature during Ottoman times and early stages of the Republic. There were a few women novelists after Halide Edip, but they specialized in sentimental and rather cheap love stories. The most famous among them were Güzide Sabri, Kerime Nadir and Peride Celal, who in later years changed her approach and produced some really good novels. In the sixties, there was a proliferation of women writers, most of them novelists. Adalet Ağaoğlu, Sevgi Soysal, Leyla Erbil, Füruzan, Tomris Uyar, Afet Ilgaz are some of them. Pınar Kür and Ayla Kutlu in the seventies and Nazlı Eray in the eighties joined them. In the nineties, Latife Tekin, a young woman coming from a shanty town background, made a spectacular entry into the world of letters with her novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (Dear Shameless Death, 1983). Women have a more sensitive and receptive relationship with life in general. They can notice objects and feelings normally missed or ignored by men. Thus, the presence of a number of women writers enriched the craft of novel-writing in Turkey.

The military intervention of the seventies was reflected in literature mainly as stories of torture, which was actually always there, but not on this scale. In this way novelists continued the tradition of writing novels under the influence of their political commitments. These novels, which revealed the repulsion that men and women of letters felt about the brutality of the security forces, were not really representatives of high-class aesthetic writing, but they brought an end to the domination of rural subjects in literature.

One novel in particular, *Tutunamayanlar* (The Disconnected, 1972) by Oğuz Atay, opened up many vistas for Turkish novelists. Because it deals with language in a special way, its translation into Western languages was delayed. For a long time, there was only one translation into Dutch; more recently, an English translation (by Sevin Seydi) has been published. Therefore, it is not well-known outside Turkey which is a shame, because it is a first-class work of art. It can be taken as a critical account of Turkish adventure of westernization, but that does not give an adequate idea about it. It is also a highly avant-garde novel, employing (in a surprisingly successful way) several modernist techniques, including internal monologue.

In 1973 another writer, Yusuf Atılgan, who was remembered by lovers of literature mainly for his story of a 'flaneur' (*Aylak Adam*, 1959), published his second important work *Anayurt Oteli* (Hotel Motherland, 1973), which was

about a hotel clerk in a small town, a sexual pervert who fell in love with a woman customer, who stayed just one night and raised great expectations, leaving the next day. The clerk went back to the cleaning woman with whom he had a weird sexual relationship, which disturbed him because the woman betrayed no emotion during the affair. The clerk strangled her when she fell asleep during the act. In Turkish *iktidar*, meaning 'power', can be understood as 'political power' but also 'sexual virility'. Atılgan plays on this ambiguity in order to explore the nature and sources of masculinity and violence in Turkish society. This book was hardly met with acclaim at first, but with time it was better understood and appreciated. Atılgan, though not a prolific writer, is one of the masters of the novel in Turkey. Another writer I would like to mention is a young woman: Şule Gürbüz. She is not a prolific writer either, but what she produces (with longish intervals) is of very high literary quality.

On the international scene

This brings us to the Turkish winner of the Nobel Award for Literature, Orhan Pamuk. Pamuk is a person who devoted himself totally to the activity of writing novels. This sounds rather 'stale' since we are talking about a writer of universal renown. However, Pamuk's special way of literary devotion attracts attention in the world of literature as well. He entered this world with a novel which could be labelled naturalistic, but it was followed by a work employing the method of 'internal monologue'. His third novel, *Beyaz Kale* (The White Castle), is best defined as postmodernist. It looked as if Pamuk was trying to contain the history of novel writing in his own career. Since then, he has tried almost every novelistic method or approach: each novel employs a different technique or a mixture of techniques, varying from the picaresque *Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık* (A Strangeness in My Mind) to the detective fiction *Veba Günleri* (Nights of Plague) and *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (My Name is Red). He has dealt with historical periods; he has written a love story *Masumiyet Müzesi* (The Museum of Innocence) and a political novel *Kar* (Snow) and has combined the love story with a museum of everyday objects of a particular period. In each of his novels, he tackles one important question, such as the development – or failure of development – of

modernization as in *Yeni Hayat* (New Life) or the question of the Koranic ban on the use of perspective in Islamic visual arts. He studies such problems and comes up with perceptive observations and original ideas.

Orhan Pamuk attending a seminar at SRII in 2017. Photo: Helin Topal.

Turkish writers began to write novels as a contribution to the project of modernization, which most of them supported and cherished. This fictional enterprise therefore included an element, which was not purely 'literary'. It was partly triggered by a socio-political commitment. As we come closer to the present time, we notice that this concern begins to fade and leaves its place to more personal issues and problems. In many cases, this kind of a shift may signify that novel writers of the present time are more preoccupied by their own personal affairs, which does not necessarily make the subject matter more interesting to read. One can see that there has been an increase in literary output over the last ten or twenty years, but with the exception of writers such as Orhan Pamuk or Latife Tekin, this does not correspond to a striking rise in the quality of literary value. However, a significant degree of improvement can be seen on this level as well. This is probably a good sign for the future.

Future prospects

Over the last ten to maybe twenty years, one notices a quantitative increase in the production of novels. As the number of books published every year expands, there is a much richer variation in topics. The earlier political commitment of Turkish writers to socio-political problems is still there, but this kind of matter is interwoven with personal experience. It would probably be an exaggeration to claim that this relatively new literature is of excellent quality and one does not discover new writers, who promise to be the Pamuks, the Atays and Atılgans, or the Tanpınars of the future. However, neither would it be correct to say that this output generally is of poor quality. Most of these works show a more intimate relationship with literary theory. The handling of the subject matter, the importance given to the technique of delivery, the self-control has noticeably been improved. From certain statistical research we can gather that a corresponding increase in the readership is also taking place and all this points to a maturation of production of fiction in Turkey. Another point to be taken into account is that thorny subjects such as the Armenian genocide are dealt with in novels tackling ethnicity and nationality problems. This means that

ideological writing has not ebbed away all together, but it also means that it lacks the energy or the sophistication of the kind of literature I have been speaking about.

Before I finish, let me add that there is a small number of Turkish writers like Elif Şafak and Sevgi Özdamar, who live and publish their work abroad, mainly in the German or English languages. The work they produce is also quite interesting. All this goes to show that the Turkish novel is experiencing a coming of age, which promises the emergence of new writers of international repute in the not so distant future.

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Hece, *Aruz* and *Serbest* in Turkish Poetry

Towards a Spontaneous Synthesis

ORHAN TEKELIOĞLU

In the context of European nation-building history, Turkey is one of the 'latecomers' (Jusdanis, 1991). The development of the modern nation-states is not just a question of political transformation. It also involves a series of changes in arts and culture, targeting the formation of a common 'national culture' for its people – now visualized as a 'nation' (Anderson, 1998). This process takes place in basically three areas: music, visual arts, and literature. Literature is very important since it is related to the standardization of written languages, an important ingredient of public education. National culture formation thus requires the development of a curriculum connected to the school system, which is based on the literature of the people ('nation'). In this article, focus will be on a series of 'cultural reforms' (*kültür inkılapları*) or, in 'pure Turkish' (*öztürkçe*), 'cultural revolutions' (*kültür devrimleri*). The stronger expression 'revolution' was chosen, because the transformation was meant as nothing less than a 'purification' since, in the eyes of the republican elite, the existing culture was not Turkish at all, but rather a degenerated residue of Ottoman multi-ethnic culture.

To be sure, the cultural reforms did not directly concern the production of literature, that is, the republican elite did not venture any reform entitled 'literature revolution.' The reforms rather aimed at the fundamental, general arrangements. The first effort was carried out in the system of public education. Even though it was not called a 'revolution,' the Law of the

Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) from 1925 was by any means a revolutionary move from the state's side for achieving a modern, secular nation-state. The second, and equally ground-breaking, was the 1928 'script revolution,' that is the Latinization of the alphabet, which also brought with it a renewed vocabulary and new grammar rules. In another article I have written about 'music revolution', I have employed a term, 'spontaneous synthesis', which could also be utilised here for explaining what has happened in the developments of Turkish poetical discourse (Tekelioğlu, 1996).

Based on these linguistic reforms, issues emerged, which were related to the training of school teachers and the construction of suitable programs and teaching material. The development of course syllabuses was essential, but this also marked the starting point of a series of problems. Curricula necessarily involve the question of a literature canon corresponding to the sentiments of the nation. This was especially urgent for classes in literature. The predecessors from late Ottoman times were not regarded as national or Turkish enough. At best they were considered as 'archaic' or 'out of date,' certainly not suitable for nation-building. For the republican elite the new national culture should be homogenous and purified from all non-Turkish, allegedly Ottoman elements. Neither should one forget that the goal was a 'westernization' of Turkish society, to be reached in the shortest possible time. The aim of the republican elite was articulated by sociologist Ziya Gökalp in the form of an 'east-west synthesis' (*doğu-batı sentezi*). The pure, but not yet fully developed features of the Turkish people, its 'eastern' (read: Turkish) qualities, should be fused with the 'western' civilization (Taha, 1985).

However, the attempt to carve out a canon of Turkish literature was in fact impossible, for the simple reason that the officials had closed the door to Ottoman culture. Repeated attempts throughout the republican history have not succeeded in producing such a canon.[1] In reality, however, several canons have been formed, but then informally by the 'literary public,' all of whom graduates

[1] The solution the republican cultural elite came with up, was going back to the pre-Ottoman period of Anatolia and referring to oral literature of some dervishes and minstrels like Yunus Emre, Karacaoğlan and so on. Their Turkish was understandable yet their cultural world was not in accordance with the nationalist sentiments (Reichl 1992).

from public schools. Thus, in actual fact there are multiple canons; in itself a paradoxical situation.

When analysing the different literary genres, it is interesting to note that it is poetry that has been most resistant to canonization attempts. The resistance was not an expression of opposition against the reforms as such. Poets of the day, both the established, that is, those rooted in the Ottoman period, and the newcomers, had without difficulty accepted Latin script as well as the new regime's nationalist sentiments. This loyalty was based on the fact that they admitted that there was no return to the old sultanic, Ottoman regime after years of lost wars, foreign occupation of the capital city Istanbul, forced migrations from the Balkans to Anatolia, and other failures.

What made it difficult to agree upon a new, nationalism-oriented canon within the genre of poetry was the fact that poetry was the only established and fully mature literary genre with authentic roots in the Ottoman period. The situation in this field was different from that of prose literature (novels, stories, theatre pieces, and so on), which, in any case, was 'foreign' to Ottoman literature practices. It was only towards the end of the Ottoman Empire that these genres had developed by being 'imported' from the West. During this early phase of the Republic, they still lacked a proper home-grown ground; something that, however, matured over the years.

During the foundation years, Turkish poetry went through three metric paths: *hece* (syllabic verse, common in the folkloric poetry), *aruz* (traditional prosody with strict rules, used in Ottoman poetry), and *serbest* (free verse, common practice in western countries). *Hece* was the official preference, but not adopted by the majority of poets. Some important poets continued to write in *aruz*. More interesting, however, is that *serbest*, at that time an almost unknown metre, also entered into the scene. This 'trifurcation' process ultimately ended in the victory, or at least a common acceptance, of free verse, *serbest*. Since it was neither deliberately planned, nor anticipated from the beginning, there are good reasons to describe this as a 'spontaneous synthesis' in Turkish poetry. To understand what this synthesis amounted to, one has to take a closer look at the situation of the mentioned metre trajectories of the early republican era.

The official path (*hece*)

The most important representative of the official path was a quintet of poets, who called themselves the 'Five syllabic poets' (*Beş hececiler*). They vigorously attacked *aruz* and wanted to replace it with *hece*, the metre of the Turks. In this they sought to revive pre-Ottoman, allegedly genuine Turkish traditions, much like nationalists in the West had used early, pre-modern history for their nationalist projects. This quintet was composed of Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel (1898–1973), Enis Behiç Koryürek (1892–1949), Halit Fahri Ozansoy (1891–1971), Orhan Seyfi Orhon (1890–1972), and Yusuf Ziya Ortaç (1895–1967). Ironically enough, all of them had started their compositions with poems written in *aruz*. As mentioned before, the 1928 'language revolution' was already in force with public campaigns. Everyday alternatives to Ottoman Turkish were published in the dailies or read aloud in speeches held by state authorities like Mustafa Kemal. Most of the new words were either taken from some local or provincial vocabulary, or 'borrowed' from other Turkic languages. This so called 'pure Turkish,' or *öztürkçe*, was publicly positioned against *eski Türkçe* or 'old Turkish' – in that context synonymous to Ottoman Turkish. The new language and its vocabulary became a support for poets who preferred writing in *hece* metre. It is a matter of common knowledge that Ottoman Turkish, thanks to being rich in Arabic and Persian vocabulary and idioms, was suitable for writing in *aruz*. Writing modern Turkish in *aruz*, on the other hand, was not easy at all. Yet, as shown by some great masters of the Ottoman tradition, it was indeed difficult, but not impossible. Ahmet Haşim (1884–1933) and Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (1884–1958), who will be mentioned below, are good examples of that.

The literary audience of the day was familiar with the syllabic – *hece* – poetry, but not particularly fond of it. One should not forget that literate people were not just few in number, but also bred in Ottoman Turkish, which was perfectly suitable for *aruz*. Their cultural as well as social capital was shaped within this particular 'taste' (Ganz, 1999). However, even if a small group, this quintet played a pioneering role for the development of literature classes in school education. To be sure, some other Turkist (*Türkçü*) poets from the demising Ottoman Empire could also be added, for example, poet and writer Mehmet Emin Yurdakul (1869–1944), founder of *Türk Yurdu Mecmuası* (Homeland

Journal of the Turk). In fact, *hece*-based curricula had been enriched with another five poets, whereby the group was renamed 'Ten poets of syllabic meter' (*Hecenin on şairi*). Born after 1900, the 'new five' represented a younger generation. Their impact on Turkish poetry was relatively stronger compared to the first group. Names of the latecomers are: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–1962), today not so much remembered as a poet, but more as one of the main pillars of the modern Turkish novel. Ahmet Muhip Dranas (1908–1980), Ahmet Kutsi Tecer (1901–1967) and Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910–1956) were rather 'lyricist' poets and respected as such by the readers. The most influential of them has undoubtedly been Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1905–1983), who like Nazım Hikmet (see below), opposed the political agenda of the Kemalist republic, even if on the contrary side of the political spectrum. Necip Fazıl's life was full of complexities, but in the end, he became the founder of a reactionary poetical school with Islamist as well as nationalist sentiments and the leading ideologue of an influential journal, *Büyük Doğu* (Great East) from 1943 (Özdalga, 1994).

Some journals functioning as hubs of literary circles have been very important in the formation of Turkish poetry. One example is the still issued *Varlık* (wealth/fortune), founded in 1933 by Yaşar Nabi Nayır (1908–1981). It has ever since been an important part of Turkish literary life. During the early years it was never in conflict with the Kemalist regime, subsequently turning into a semi-official journal. However, after the 1960s it gradually turned oppositional with some 'socialist' leanings and, after the military intervention in 1980, it has served as a journal of the Kemalist left.

In spite of the fact that *Varlık* was close to the early Kemalist elite, it was not a journal gathering *hece* poets. Neither did it publish *aruz*. Instead, *Varlık* opened the doors to free verse poets. This development of *Varlık* is an indication of how *hece* poetry (and its concomitant, namely, idolization of Anatolia and its people) was replaced with a more realistic and/or politically engaged poetry written by free verse poets. A large number of free verse poets without a political agenda, who aimed at expressing their individualistic voices, were also drawn to this literary magazine.

The Conservative Path (*aruz*)

In spite of its general traditionalist inclination, not all *aruz* poetry was conservative. It is therefore important to mention a different modernization attempt, achieved by Yahya Kemal Beyatlı. He never gave up writing in *aruz*, thereby reaching what was regarded 'unthinkable' by the republican elite, namely writing successful poems in *aruz* without the help of Ottoman Turkish. He never used the difficult words, phrases or expressions of Ottoman Turkish, nor did he borrow the new *öztürkçe* vocabulary. He used a form of sociolect based on a balanced form of the daily vocabulary of the urban upper class, a comprehensible mix of the educated people, which was neither colloquial nor classy (stylish). With this usage of language, Beyatlı differed from Ahmet Haşim, another well-known and respected poet using *aruz*, whose language was not far from Ottoman Turkish.

In addition to his lyrical poems, Beyatlı also wrote an unconventional type of nationalist poetry, which was opposed to Turkey's new peaceful (nonaggressive) foreign policy, laid down in the Lausanne Treaty (1924). Turkey was no longer an expansionist power, looking for the revival of the Empire. Curiously enough, besides being a poet, Beyatlı was also a statesman. He was elected a member of parliament in different periods and also served as an ambassador in Warsaw and Lisbon (1926–1932) and Karachi (1945–47). In spite of Turkey's official peaceful foreign policy (*yurtta sulh*, *cihanda sulh*), as a poet he apparently felt free to write poems based on expansionist dreams (reconquest). One might therefore say Haşim was a purist, who confined himself to literary discourse, while Beyatlı developed a double discourse moulded around literature as well as politics. He embraced the best of the Ottoman past and maintained his imperial sentiments, thus addressing a faction within the culture elite, who did not approve of the Kemalist attitude towards the Ottoman era. Another important poet writing in *aruz* was Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873–1936). He was a devout Muslim and the author of the Turkish national anthem (reproduced in Turkish and in Swedish translation immediately following this article). However, due to his disapproval of the secular character of the new republic, he left the country for Egypt in 1925, and did not return until 1936, shortly before his death. He wrote in *aruz* and was sometimes difficult to

understand due to his Ottoman Turkish affinity. Yet, after the 1950s, he became a part of the school curriculum, and was rendered a distinctive position in the conservative canon.[2]

With their mere existence, this triad of *aruz* poets clearly demonstrated that it was possible to write national romantic poems in *aruz*. There was consequently no need for *hece* as argued by the republican culture elite. Still, it has to be added that these three – Beyatlı, Haşim and Ersoy – did not act in unison. Beyatlı was, for instance, a mundane person, who never lived as a devout Muslim. His political position was, albeit on the conservative right, close to the regime. Haşim was not a political person at all, and believed in high culture and wrote accordingly. Ersoy was oppositional, but without being part of any political struggle. As a matter of fact, the genuinely conservative opposition was represented by a *hece* poet, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. Writing in *aruz* did not necessarily set these poets up against the regime. It rather demonstrated the force of tradition in literature.

The Modernist Path (free verse – *serbest*)

Being, in Jusdanis terms, a 'late-comer' among European nation-states Turkey succumbed to imitating the forerunners, especially France and Germany. Laicism, the French type of secularism, became a distinctive feature of the Kemalist ideology. Concerning the romantic features of its nationalism, for example the importance bestowed to poetry based on the simple, folksy *hece* form, inspiration came from Germany. However, to frame the developments within poetry during the early Republic in such terms is simply anachronistic and not in accordance with poetry practice abroad in the 1920s, where free verse had already turned into the main form. It is at that point that the powerful voice of Nazım Hikmet (1902–63), based as it was on free verse, comes into the picture – a development that shattered the whole playground.

[2] As noticed I use the notion of 'conservative canon', simply because a unified national canon never established neither in school curricula nor amid the literary public (Tekelioğlu 2003).

As a political poet Nazım Hikmet had experienced the tumultuous socialist revolution in Russia and had been exposed to powerful Russian poets like Vladimir Mayakovsky, who had challenged the traditional techniques of poetry. After his visit to Moscow, Hikmet made a powerful entry into Turkish poetry with unknown literary and political usages of language. He became the champion of free verse and master of this genre, influencing a lot of young poets and readers. His personal story was full of ups and downs. On the one hand, he became very famous, on the other, he was imprisoned for longer periods (twelve years in total). His poems were banned, and eventually, in 1951 he escaped and lived abroad until his death in 1963.[3] During his exile he became world-famous and translated into many languages. Despite his renown, his poems were inaccessible in Turkey and could not be published until the late 1960s – even then, however, on a limited scale, owing to the anti-communism criminal code. It was only when the notorious paragraphs 141–142 were abolished in 1991 that his whole work was made available. Worth mentioning is that almost all the poems appearing in books and journals since the 1940s were written in free verse. Thus, Nazım Hikmet's work was fundamental for the establishment of this metre in Turkish poetry.

Soviet stamp featuring Nazım Hikmet. Wikimedia Commons.

[3] After the last release from prison, Nazım Hikmet was promptly called up for military service. He was then forty-nine years old and feared for his life.

There are two distinct movements related to free verse. One is known as 'First New' (*Birinci yeni*), which, even if not lasting very long, had a vital impact, especially thanks to three powerful poets: Orhan Veli Kanık (1914–1950), Oktay Rifat (1914–1988), and Melih Cevdet Anday (1915–2002). They collected and published their poems in a book entitled *Garip* (Bizarre) in 1941, which also included a manifest, according to which all forms of fixed metre (referring to *hece*) should be abandoned; poems should be written with colloquial language (rejecting other vocabulary than *öztürkçe*); should avoid ornamentation (referring to *aruz*); and, thematically speaking, should emphasize the lives of the ordinary people. *Garip* poetry was mainly apolitical and easily comprehensible. It gained an unexpected popularity in a short time, supported by the mainstream media. *Garip* poetry became a 'fashion,' saluted as 'ordinary people's poetry.' Yet, its hype did not last long, because it was too 'simplistic' and thus easy to imitate. However, the literary potential of *Garip* poets exceeded this type of writing. Especially after the sudden death of Orhan Veli Kanık, their poetry developed in different directions.

A strong reaction to First New poetry came from a younger generation of poets publishing in *Pazar Postası* (Sunday's post) and *Yeditepe* (Seven hills) journals. Even if there was no organic connection between these poets, there were still certain similarities in their use of language, namely complexity. This movement was later to be named the Second New (*İkinci yeni*) by their critics (Messo, 2009; Sharpe, 2021). Some of its members were: Cemal Süreya (1931–1990), İlhan Berk (1918–2008), Edip Cansever (1928–1986), Ece Ayhan (1931–2002), Turgut Uyar (1927–1985), Ülkü Tamer (1937–2018), and Sezai Karakoç (1933–2021). In fact, all of them developed their own personal trajectories, but they were united in their use of language, which was opposite to that of the First New poets. They all believed in the distinctiveness of poetical language, which, according to them, had nothing to do with the colloquial. Their poetical language was complex, not easily accessible, requiring a motivated reader. Their language was ornamental, full of unusual words, patterns, expressions and even neologisms. One may argue that with the help of these writers, Turkish poetry was fused with the language of contemporary global poetry. It was no longer a matter of national romanticism, but a modernist poetical discourse comprised of individual poets.

Second New never got much publicity in the mainstream media. Neither were they respected by the social realist poets of the day. Instead, they got a strong following among the new generation of poets, as well as particularly keen readers looking for cult (off-beat, alternative) poets. As already said, the poets of Second New were different in personality. Their focus on creating an artistic style with individualized content was first and foremost a question of the use of language. That is also the reason why there was no need for a manifesto or a unified expression other than the free usage of all the means of language. In fact, the poets under this unifying name wrote differently, focused on different themes and topics, and of course also got some followers ('imitators'). For example, two poets from First New (Melih Cevdet and Oktay Rifat) eventually developed their own styles and approached the Second New.

There are also some extraordinary poets outside the two 'New' movements that have made an immense contribution to the development of Turkish poetry. First to be mentioned are two signature poets: Behçet Necatigil (1916–1979) and Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca (1914–2008), without whom, one could never get a good grip of contemporary poetry. They were independent of the 'New' movements in their mentality. For instance, Dağlarca in general used free verse, but without being afraid of using *hece*. Necatigil was inspired by Ottoman poetry traditions, but his use of language was plain and close to avantgarde language. Besides, Necatigil, as well as Dağlarca were supporters of Kemalist ideology. Three more distinctive and 'independent' poets from either 'new' schools should be mentioned: Asaf Halet Çelebi (1907–1958), Attila İlhan (1925–2005), and Can Yücel (1926–1999). Çelebi was a mystic person who followed closely the Sufi tradition (as a member of Sufi lodges) but also aware of the Buddha thinking. At his time he was considered as an eccentric by the literary audience or at best, as a poet with surrealistic style. A self declared 'socialist', İlhan on the other hand condemned Second New poets for being 'unpolitical' — which, however, is debateable, if one looks at for instance Cemal Süreya's politicially oriented poems. İlhan was always controversial, but still had a strong following of readers. Socialist Yücel developed a rare sarcastic style and always wrote with a political touch. He also disliked Second New and criticized some of them, for instance Ece Ayhan. Unlike İlhan, Yücel was imprisoned after the 1971 military intervention. In fact, one may underline the fact that social realist poets always

have been critical of Second New for their lack of political profile. Still, Second New poets have been respected by the majority of the readers even if, one may claim, the majority of them belong to the political left.

Conclusion

One may argue that the choice of writing in free verse was not accidental, but the outcome of cultural policies imposed from above, which sorted out *hece* as the only alternative worthy of building a new national culture. However, the *hece* form was not only anachronistic in a Western European nation state formation perspective, but also not in accordance with the 'taste' of the Turkish urban reader of poetry, who was not familiar with *hece* metre and saw *aruz* as the proper way of writing poetry. Taste is an important criterion, particularly in artistic consumption (Gans, 1999). In addition, literary circles – writers and audiences – were facing a campaign for a 'language revolution' aiming at separating Ottoman linguistic traditions from new and mostly unknown or made-up words (neologisms) under the rubric of *öztürkçe* (pure Turkish). Out of these conflictual contestations between different forms of poetry, the free verse and its linguistic means appeared as a remedy for both reader and poet. An additional channel of communication opened up, that is, a new 'spontaneous synthesis' was put into practice. Besides, free verse was in principle not against the official understanding of the East-West synthesis. The republican elite did perhaps not enjoy the development of free verse against the syllabic, *hece*, but neither could they develop a counter policy, simply because the free verse had already become the mainstream among poets in the West.

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İstiklal Marşı, by Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1921)

The Turkish national anthem, composed using the 'conservative' metre *aruz*

Korkma, sönmez bu şafaklarda yüzen al sancak;
Sönmeden yurdumun üstünde tüten en son ocak.
O benim milletimin yıldızıdır, parlayacak;
O benimdir, o benim milletimindir ancak.

Çatma, kurban olayım çehreni ey nazlı hilâl!
Kahraman ırkıma bir gül… ne bu şiddet bu celâl?
Sana olmaz dökülen kanlarımız sonra helâl,
Hakkıdır, Hakk'a tapan, milletimin istiklâl.

Ben ezelden beridir hür yaşadım, hür yaşarım.
Hangi çılgın bana zincir vuracakmış? Şaşarım!
Kükremiş sel gibiyim; bendimi çiğner, aşarım;
Yırtarım dağları, enginlere sığmam, taşarım.

Garb'ın âfâkını sarmışsa çelik zırhlı duvar;
Benim iman dolu göğsüm gibi serhaddim var.
Ulusun, korkma! Nasıl böyle bir îmânı boğar,
"Medeniyet!" dediğin tek dişi kalmış canavar?

Arkadaş! Yurduma alçakları uğratma sakın;
Siper et gövdeni, dursun bu hayâsızca akın.
Doğacaktır sana va'dettiği günler Hakk'ın…
Kim bilir, belki yarın… belki yarından da yakın.

Bastığın yerleri "toprak!" diyerek geçme, tanı!
Düşün altındaki binlerce kefensiz yatanı.
Sen şehîd oğlusun, incitme, yazıktır atanı;
Verme, dünyâları alsan da, bu cennet vatanı.

Kim bu cennet vatanın uğruna olmaz ki fedâ?
Şühedâ fışkıracak, toprağı sıksan şühedâ!
Cânı, cânânı, bütün varımı alsın da Hudâ,
Etmesin tek vatanımdan beni dünyâda cüdâ.

Ruhumun senden, İlâhî, şudur ancak emeli:
Değmesin ma'bedimin göğsüne nâ-mahrem eli!
Bu ezanlar-ki şehâdetleri dînin temeli-
Ebedî yurdumun üstünde benim inlemeli

O zaman vecd ile bin secde eder –varsa- taşım;
Her cerîhamdan, İlâhî, boşanıp kanlı yaşım,
Fışkırır rûh-i mücerred gibi yerden na'şım;
O zaman yükselerek Arş'a değer, belki başım.

Dalgalan sen de şafaklar gibi ey şanlı hilâl;
Olsun artık dökülen kanlarımın hepsi helâl.
Ebediyen sana yok, ırkıma yok izmihlâl:
Hakkıdır, hür yaşamış bayrağımın hürriyet;
Hakkıdır, Hakk'a tapan milletimin istiklâl!

Frihetsmarschen – översättning av Johannes Kolmodin

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Frukta ej! Min röda fana, skimrande mot österns sky,
Slocknar först med sista röken från mitt hemlands sista by …
Den är stjärnan över leden, som oss för i heligt krig.
Stråla skall den! Mig tillhör den, blott mitt eget folk och mig.

Nyckfullt trolska måneskära, vänd ej bort från oss din blick!
Le en gång mot dina kämpar! Vadan detta stränga skick?
Om vi offras, om vi blöda, rör dig ej så litet dock …
Fram! Mitt folk, som tror på rätten, har en rätt till frihet ock.

Från en urtid fri jag levat, fri jag lever nu som då …
Vilken dåre skall den vara som vill mig i bojor slå!
Älven är jag, där den brusar, spränger dammar, bryter väg …
Vilken dalbädd kan mig rymma, vilket berg mig hejda, säg!

Väl kring västerns horisonter stryker pansarjättars rad …
Men mitt bröst, där trosglöd flammar, är en bättre palisad.
Den skall stå sig, frukta icke! Aldrig bräckas sådan mur
Av det odjur, snart nog tandlöst, som fått namnet av ”kultur”.

Broder! Skall en hop infama strafflöst kränka hemmets härd?
Ställ din kropp till värn och stoppa sådan skamlös plundringsfärd!
Å, den nalkas, segerns stund, som Gud dig låter hoppas på!
Kanske randas den i morgon, kanske ännu förr än så.

Minns att jorden, som du trampar, är ej jord blott! I dess famn
Hava tusenden av fäder utan svepning gått i hamn.
Du är hjältars son! Bedröva då ej dem, var du dem värd!
Paradiset-fosterlandet byt ej bort emot en värld!

Paradiset-fosterlandet – låt oss dö för detta land!
Hjältar skola, var du stampar, springa upp med svärd i hand …
Se, mitt liv och dem jag älskar – tag dem, Gud, tag allt jag fått!
Jag begär en sak: att aldrig mista fosterlandet blott.

Du som gett mig liv och anda, Gud, jag ropar, hör min röst!
Aldrig får profana händer fingra på mitt tempels bröst!
Dessa bönerop, som bära till mig summan av min tro,
Måste evigt återklinga i mitt hemlands id och ro!

Själv min gravsten, om jag får en, skall i bön då sänka sig …
Rörda glädjetårar strömma ur vart sår jag hämtat mig,
Andelikt min kropp ur döden springa upp vid segerns ton
och jag lyfta högt mitt huvud, kanske skåda får Guds tron.

Stolta halvmånsfana, skimra liksom morgonrodnan, du!
Om jag offras, om jag blöder, rör mig ganska litet nu.
För min stam, för dig det finnes ingen undergång ändock …
Fram! Mitt folk, som tror på rätten, har en rätt till frihet ock.

Cinema in Turkey

SAVAŞ ARSLAN

Cinema in Turkey can be told in the form of four stories, with a fifth in the making. The first one is about how movies entered the country in the late Ottoman era, from 1896 until the 1920s. The second is about how film was slowly, but gradually received, processed, and produced during the early Republic, that is during the 1930s and the 1940s. The third one, the story about Yeşilçam, is at the centre stage, because it was thanks to that institution and during that period – from the 1950s until the 1980s – that the formation of Turkish popular culture took place. The fourth story, which succeeds Yeşilçam, is the period between the 1990s and 2010s, which talks about the demarcation of the artistic from the popular. Lastly, the fifth, the contemporary 'digital' one – in the making since the pandemic – is about a plural and compartmentalized cinema made up of films, filmmakers, and audio-visual material extending beyond feature filmmaking. In the following, I will shortly narrate the story of cinema in Turkey by touching upon each of these periods.

The Arrival of Cinema in Turkey

Cinema arrived in Turkey in 1896 as a spectacle and sensation. This novelty of the late Ottoman era first reached a private audience at the Ottoman Palace, before it opened to the public. The introduction to the people occurred first in Izmir on 10 December at the Apollon Theatre, and then, two days later, in Istanbul at Sponeck Brasserie. The newspapers reported this as a scientific and

photographical curiosity introduced by Thomas Edison and the Lumière Brothers. The fact is, however, that the films first screened predominantly belonged to producers such as Georges Méliès (Erdoğan 2017, 78). Unlike the conventional understanding of cinema, which is dominated by feature films, these early short and silent films were attractions, rather than vehicles for storytelling (Gunning 1986, 3f). This was, indeed, the era of non-narrative filmmaking, when film was a medium of curiosity, astonishment, and wonder, of technological novelty animating images with movement. They were representations of life, mediating an illusion of reality, which had developed through a Western history of perspectivism.

Some of the earliest films showed in Istanbul and other Ottoman cities were handled by the Lumière affiliated filmmakers.[1] However, the question of what amounts to the first 'Turkish' film is a controversial issue. The official version, represented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, takes note of Fuat Uzkınay's *Ayastefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Hedmi* (The Demolition of the Russian Monument in San Stefano, 1914). As the story goes, this, now lost, film was shot by Uzkınay by using the Austrian Sascha-Filmindustrie's camera, whose camera crew was also present.[2] However, against this claim, Burçak Evren notes that the Ottoman citizens Manaki Brothers had shot their film Grandmother Despina (*The Weavers*) already in 1905 in the then still Ottoman Monastir vilayet (Evren 2013, 72–76). Furthermore, Manaki Brothers also filmed Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's visit to the Ottoman Balkans in 1911. Yet, there was still another filmmaker, Sigmund Weinberg, a Romanian Jewish entrepreneur, photographer, and filmmaker, who lived in Istanbul from 1885 until the year before he passed away in Berlin in 1929. Apart from opening the first proper film theatre in Istanbul, the Pathé in 1908, Weinberg was also a visual chronicler of his era, who worked in official capacity as a photographer and filmmaker for both Sultan Abdulhamid Han and Sultan Reşad. His earliest known film was Sultan Abdulhamid's Friday Prayer procession in 1908, entitled *Selamlık*, deemed by the editor of a major German trade magazine of the era, as the 'first

[1] See for instance *Constantinople, panorama de la corne d'or* (1897).

[2] The monument symbolizing the Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878) was immediately destroyed once the Ottoman Empire joined the Great War.

pure Turkish film' (Brauner 1908). Thus, it is therefore possible to argue that Weinberg, in fact, was the first, even if not *Turkish*, so at least the first *Istanbulite* filmmaker. Such were the first moments of cinema in Turkey, when it arrived in Ottoman lands as a Western illusionistic spectacle.

The Localization of the Medium

The transition from a newsreel medium to one telling stories took place in the late 1910s. With the Great War, the Ottoman Army wanted to utilize news and documentary films to propagate national sentiments and the Army Photo and Film Center was founded in 1915. During this period, some of the earliest feature filmmaking attempts had also started with two incomplete or lost films by Weinberg, *Leblebici Horhor* (Horhor, the Seller of Roasted Chickpeas, 1916) and *Himmet Ağa'nın İzdivacı* (The Marriage of Himmet Agha, 1916–1918). Later, three films are directed by Sedat Simavi with the support of *Müdafaai Milliye Cemiyeti* (the National Defence Organization, founded in 1911): *Pençe* (Claw, 1917), *Casus* (Spy, 1917), and *Alemdar Mustafa Pasha* (1918). While several films were made around 1920, the young Republic did not see filmmaking as a priority.

However, the urge toward development of a national cinema initially became a hotly debated topic through the inter-titles of imported silent films and especially with the advent of sound films. Early studios especially focused on translation and dubbing, an activity which helped disseminate the mainstream Istanbul accent to the whole country through theatre actors hired as dubbing artists. This practice first involved the translation of dialogues and second the performance of dubbing artists with lip synchronization. In both cases, the original films were revised or adapted to the premises of the new nation's early reform programs. At times this practice included changes in the ethnic identity of film characters or even the re-writing of films in order to mute their ideologies (Arslan 2011, 49–52).

The earliest major filmmaker, Muhsin Ertuğrul, was originally a professional theatre director, something which affected his film production. Among his several films, including the film versions of popular plays, comedies and

melodramas, two fell in line with the republican nationalist sentiment: *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Shirt of Flame, 1923) and *Bir Millet Uyanıyor* (A Nation is Awakening, 1932), both covering the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22).[3] However, despite his predominance, neither Ertuğrul's films, nor scanty attempts by other filmmakers succeeded in creating a fertile film industry in the early Republican era.

The Early Yeşilçam (1950s)

Cinema did not fall into the immediate purview of the Republican cultural reform programs. However, some steps had been taken that indirectly paved the way to a development on the grass root level of filmmaking, such as a tax cut in ticket sales in 1948 in favour of local films. Two other developments were also instrumental in the rise of Yeşilçam cinema – the name of the popular film industry in Turkey from the late 1940s until the early 1990s – so labelled after the street in Beyoğlu (Istanbul), where the industry was accommodated. These two critical events were the establishment of a dubbing industry and the influx and popularity of Egyptian films.

The earliest dubbing companies such as İpek and Kemal Film and filmmakers like Muhsin Ertuğrul were all proponents of a Turkification-from-above, which supported the Republican reform programs and its mould of Westernization. However, the influx of Egyptian films, which started with *Dumu al-hubb* (Aşkın Gözyaşları [Tears of Love], Muhammad Karim, 1936) brought a new practice of Turkification, namely one inspired from the below. These Egyptian films featured songs, their dialogues and lyrics were translated and adapted into Turkish and performed by the well-known Turkish singers of the era. As with the increase throughout the country of film theatres, these films also resonated with the local audiences through their – for a Turkish ear familiar – *maqam* music and melodramatic overtones. Unlike the realistic dramas featuring the secular nation-building process set against traditional society, these films

[3] *Ateşten Gömlek* is based on a novel by Halide Edip Adivar, also mentioned in Murat Belge's article.

set an early example for local filmmakers, who later came to present alternative (different from the official) and ambivalent responses to modernization.

In the late 1940s, multiple production companies started to spring up on and around Yeşilçam Street in Beyoğlu and they successfully lobbied for a tax cut in favour of domestic films to produce better alternatives to Egyptian and Western films. Even if domestic film production in this way became economically profitable, there was neither a sound filmmaking infrastructure, nor apt crews. Filmmakers, therefore, had to learn by practice. While films were made in dire conditions and shot on location, the film exhibition was under control of the major film companies. Most of the first-run theatres were still devoted to Western films, which steered the domestic filmmakers into finding alternative venues. Thus, the early Yeşilçam era established the vocabulary of a domestic popular cinema. This partially substituted that of the early production, which had stood under the influence of Republican Westernization, but, as such, it also displayed an uneasy relationship with Western cinemas, and dreamed of, adapted, translated, and transformed Hollywood films. Thus, Yeşilçam came to utilize classical Hollywood (illusionary and realistic) language but revised it and developed a home-grown language of filmmaking based on traditional narratives and performative forms.

In this process, Yeşilçam also developed a melodramatic modality that created a complex relation to modernity that persisted in both realist and melodramatic films. In this sense, 'Yeşilçam is caught between restoration and reform, progress and regress – in a constant state of transition. Turkification […] emerges from a transition that cannot be fixed in a rational path of linear progression' (Arslan 2011, 91). Yeşilçam films displayed the drama of nation-building and nationalization, but offered an alternative, yet ambivalent path presenting the myths of democracy and nationality side by side with romanticism and nostalgia which reached its mass popularity in the 1960s and 1970s.

High Yeşilçam (1960s and 1970s)

The two military interventions, 1960 and 1980, demarcate the most popular era of Yeşilçam cinema. This peaked in the early 1970s both in terms of the films

made per year (around 300) and film-going. While some claim that the Yeşilçam's golden age ended around the mid-1970s with the rise of sex films and the spread of television broadcasts, some of the most coveted Yeşilçam classics, including the *Hababam Sınıfı* series (comical films in a secondary school setting), were made during this era.[4] During High Yeşilçam, cinema peaked and created a well-established mechanism of production, distribution, and exhibition. In this picture, major and minor production companies parcelled different parts of the business; the financing of filmmaking business had fallen under the control of loan sharks; the film distribution system is partitioned based on regions and regional tastes;[5] and finally, some film theatres were 'fourwalled'.[6] In this system, the film production companies in Istanbul had become dependent on the money that came from the regional distributors, who collected the money from the film theatre owners in their regions. Thus, in financing the films for the upcoming season, the producers were paying the film crews through bond futures, which are brokered at a discounted rate by semi-illegal bankers or loan sharks. Furthermore, this system also led to vertical integration of film production, distribution, and exhibition, especially in Istanbul, where major production companies four-walled first-run theatres (also known as *ayak sistemi*) by not allowing smaller companies to show their films at popular theatres. Thus, minor producers started producing cheaper films in the so-called 'lowly' or exploitation genres, much like Hollywood B-movies.[7] On the other hand, majors were producing dramas, melodramas, comedies, romantic comedies, and period films featuring major stars of the era.

What knotted these films in terms of Yeşilçam's filmmaking practice was dubbing. As an overarching practice in the industry, Yeşilçam filmmakers, to cut

[4] For a full list, see Arslan 2022.

[5] Apart from Istanbul and the Marmara region, Turkey was divided into five further regions, each of which was represented by a major city (Izmir, Adana, Samsun, Ankara, and Zonguldak) from where films were distributed to other cities in their vicinity.

[6] In the fourwalling practice, major film production companies booked important film theaters in advance by paying a certain amount and guaranteed the exhibition of their productions (see Arslan 2011, 277).

[7] Some of the action-adventures, sci-fis, and even the late 1970s sex comedies that later become cult examples of the Turkish trash cinema were produced by these companies, including many remakes or adaptations of Hollywood's costumed superhero movies among others.

the costs,[8] opted to film actors silent (to avert the risk of reshooting due to sound troubles) and employ professional dubbing artists who later voiced the films at sound studios. This created an interesting situation, an amalgamation of a star's recorded image and a dubbing artist's voice (and even at times, a professional singer's voice, if the actor is singing). Furthermore, there was no atmospheric sound or background noise in films, while sound effects were produced in sound studios by foley artists. This may seem problematic to a non-Yeşilçam filmmaker or audience by noting the discrepancy between the bodies and voices. However, these films featured an amalgamation of such discrepancies through star texts.[9] For instance, the major star of the era Türkan Şoray was voiced by Adalet Cimcöz and her songs were dubbed often by Belkıs Özener. Yet it was Şoray's star image, her face on the screen, which knotted them all.

Yeşilçam was also scolded as 'small' Hollywood since there was a widespread adaptation or remake practice in the industry (approximately, a quarter of all Yeşilçam films). In line with the Republican model, Yeşilçam also looked toward the West, learned and borrowed the vocabulary of filmmaking while localizing it in its own practice. In this regard, Yeşilçam cinema is not simply a purveyor of classical Hollywood's realistic film practice based on continuity editing. Instead, in adapting it and in wrestling with an imported realism, Yeşilçam produced its own take by introducing the non-illusionism and non-realism of traditional arts. For instance, both theatre-in-the-round and Karagöz traditions share such a non-illusionistic presentation in which, say, a chair as a prop may be an apartment, a vehicle, and any other object depending on the verbal cue spoken by an actor (And 2002). Hence, its in-between situation, by being neither one nor the other. Yeşilçam's melodramatic modality infiltrates all its films as a phantom, as both sensational and spectacular, ambivalent and parasitical, by displaying an endless fight between the virtuous common people and the evil by laying the bricks of a moral framework for its middle-class audiences.

[8] Not only film cameras and other auxiliary equipment, but also raw film stock was imported and rather costly, especially when filmmakers had to do multiple takes.

[9] Major celebrities of the era, through multiple film, media, and concert appearances, formed an intertextual presence and a public personality that went beyond their actual presence (Dyer 2008).

Late Yeşilçam (1980s)

While Yeşilçam was a self-sufficient popular film industry of a semi-capitalist country, the 1980s marked both an economic and socio-political shift. The military intervention, the new constitution (referendum 1982), new economic policies, and the rise of ethnic and religious identity politics have all supplemented this transformation. Separately, the demise of family audiences with the transition to videotapes and television, started changing the film industry practices. Furthermore, the penetration of American distribution into the country in the late 1980s marked an end of the longstanding dominance of domestic films at the box office as well as a heavy drop in film-going.[10] Yet Yeşilçam adapted itself to these new conditions by also producing films for the video market, both in Turkey and for the migrant workers abroad. While Yeşilçam's filmmakers continued to operate in this new market with their usual generic pieces, three major new genres also appeared: The first was the *arabesk* film, featuring singers at lead roles and displaying a dim outlook at times channelling the experiences of new urban migrants at the outskirts of cities. The second was rather a by-product of the 1980 military intervention and its heavy effect on the intellectual and pro-left circles, displaying the effects of the military rule and its oppression and also some self-reflexive abominations of the film directors, adapting an 'auteurist' approach, while witnessing the demise of both their outlook and the industry. Third and the most important, was the so-called 'women films', though mostly directed by male directors, focused on issues of gender and womanhood with central female characters.

Despite such pushes, the socioeconomic changes in Turkey, the imminent integration of the country to global capitalism, put Yeşilçam behind, and rendered it a cinema of nostalgia for many. However, Yeşilçam not only produced the most classical examples of filmmaking in Turkey, which brings together people from all walks of life. It also created a certain mould of realistic storytelling enmeshed with melodramatic modality. It did not present an illusion of reality, but pointed to what was there with its reliance on two-dimensionality,

[10] While the number of film theaters rose to almost 3500 in the early 1970s, this figure dropped to around 350 in the early 1990s.

direct address, and oral narration, all of which displayed traces of local literary and performative arts.

Post-Yeşilçam (1990s)

The four-decade long popular and cultural entertainment industry in Turkey ended in the 1990s. A series of changes were instrumental in this process. As noted, the film-going figures dropped heavily and the remaining film theatres started showing predominantly Hollywood (and some other Western) movies, hence also the film distribution which fell under the control of American companies. In line with the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc, the questioning of the national, and the rise of the global culture, Post-Yeşilçam era also carried such stresses in terms of filmmaking. While the country was undergoing a violent period beset by coalition governments, the film market was also bifurcated. As a precursor to the compartmentalization of the contemporary cinema of Turkey, the first divide appeared in this era between popular cinema and art house/auteur films.

Though gone, Yeşilçam still found a niche for itself in the 1990s which also opened the path toward its lasting impact. The start of private television networks in Turkey, which, until their legalization in a few years, were satellite broadcasts from abroad, allowed a rehashing of Yeşilçam cinema throughout the 1990s. The newly founded networks heavily relied upon studio programs (news, talk shows, concerts, etc.) and filled their schedules with mostly Yeşilçam films, which were cheaper than imported movies and TV shows. During such a time, popular cinema had major difficulties and the successful films of the era, including *Eşkiya* (The Bandit, Yavuz Turgul, 1996), relied on American production and distribution companies. Yet such bright spots were not sufficient for the rejuvenation of popular cinema in Turkey which ensued in the early 2000s.

A new generation of filmmakers, though growing in the Yeşilçam era, started making their first films throughout the 1990s such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Zeki Demirkubuz, Yeşim Ustaoğlu, Semih Kaplanoğlu, Reha Erdem, and Derviş Zaim. To these, a new breed of internationally educated and migrant filmmakers, such as Kutluğ Ataman, Tolga Örnek, Ferzan Özpetek, and Fatih Akın,

were added. These filmmakers were no longer a part of the popular filmmaking industry. They relied for the most part on funding and festival popularity, rather than box office success. Perhaps a transition from the national to the transnational, idealist social movements to identity politics displayed some early signs during this period. However, this was crystallized in the following decades.

The New Cinema of Turkey (2000s and 2010s)

After a decade long pause in the industry, domestic filmmaking once again rose to popularity in this era by surpassing foreign films in both the number of films exhibited and the ticket sales. Since 2000, the total number of tickets sold continually rose until 2018, as well as with the number of films made – though these numbers are not correlated. While almost half of the tickets sold were shared by several major films, the remaining amount was up for grabs by many minor companies or first-time filmmakers.

This almost two-decade long period of cinema indicates a total separation from Yeşilçam and the introduction of novel trends and divisions. First, there is a division of labour between cinema and television. During this era, television series, which carry multiple tropes of Yeşilçam cinema including its melodramatic modality, became popular both in local and global markets. There is also a generic division of labour: the TV shows are predominantly melodramas and action-adventures (both contemporary and historical), whereas major popular films are predominantly comedies, while there is also a niche in the market for a limited number of romantic dramas or comedies, as well as with low-budget horror flicks. Second, as detailed below, there is a clear-cut compartmentalization among the filmmakers and their audiences.

This new cinema of Turkey is plural and compartmentalized. The initial divide between popular and art house cinema led to further bifurcation in each compartment. Major production houses collaborating with foreign distributors and film theatre owners dominated the popular film market, while mid-range or smaller firms desperately attempted to find some breathing space. The first generation of auteur directors has become household names, while young first-time filmmakers have taken major economic risks to make their first features or

relying solely on funding schemes. In this new picture, major companies dominated the film market from the early 2000s until the pandemic pause by surpassing the total ticket sales of foreign films.

While Yeşilçam was a self-subsistent industry, the young filmmakers who grew up watching foreign films at film theatres (for them, Yeşilçam was only accessible through television and videotapes) have started relying heavily on funding mechanisms. Apart from the Eurimages funds, the Ministry of Culture also started a new support scheme, funded by a percentage taken from film ticket sales, in 2004. This new generation is more global in terms of their cinema culture and production practices, open to co-production, integrated with contemporary liberal social movements such as the Occupy movement or Woke culture, and thus voicing concerns mostly related to identity politics.

What Now?

When one looks at the history of the Turkish economy, there are some interesting parallels between the periodization of cinema here and the major economic crises and the pertaining devaluations that the country's lira went through. In this regard, the 1946 devaluation is followed by the early Yeşilçam era, while the 1958 instigated the rise of high Yeşilçam (which reached its peak after the 1970 devaluation) and gave way to the late Yeşilçam after the 1980 devaluation, whereas the post-Yeşilçam is demarcated by the 1994 and 2001 devaluation, and a new era is in the making since 2018 through the ongoing, gradual economic crisis due to floating exchange rate policy. As noted, both the number of films made and tickets sold for domestic cinema peaked in 2018 and the pandemic paused the earlier film-going habits to an extent, while increasing the popularity of Internet platforms and pirate Websites. Since the pandemic, many films, including major features, are rather released through platforms than film theatres.

Thus, the completion of digital transformation, the penetration of Internet to almost each and every household, the immense increase in the audio-visual content (other than feature films) produced for social and new media, the penetration of digital platforms which started releasing the films of popular and

even auteur filmmakers, the democratization of filmmaking through cheap cameras and mobile phones, and the incremental fall in the share of feature films in terms of total audio-visual content produced have all been factors spurring the question, 'What now?' In this era of asymmetric globalization, when more developed countries and the global one per cent of the population is benefiting more from the free trade and market-led globalization, the imported liberal cultural divisions of identity politics, discussed through hyphenated and transnational identities, created the existing compartmentalization where each sociocultural impulse separates itself from others through sharpened identity claims.

The major productions are separated from the minors, older generation auteur directors from younger generations, festival circuits from mainstream avenues, liberal democratic circles from liberal conservative ones, feature films from television series and Internet and social media content, etc. What now is at stake is not only the compartments, but also the expansion of the cinema itself or of the audio-visual content in general. In this new world of multimedia, transmedia, intermedia, hybrid media or new media, not only the forms of expression are multiplied but also the plurality of expressions created endless opportunities. Thus, we are at a moment when conventional cinema experienced at a dark film theatre through a projection machine is paving way to novel and continually changing machines of alternative experiences. As it stands, it is not only cinema, but also audio-visual expression and experience is compartmentalized, each and every part standing beside others in sharing a world of spectacle and sensation.

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The Turkish Language Reform

BERNT BRENDEMOEN

Compared with Atatürk's other reforms, the alphabet and language reforms affected every literate Turkish citizen in a more direct, personal and fundamental way. Not only was a new alphabet introduced based on completely different orthographic principles; with the more or less rigorous abolishment of words of Arabic and Persian origin and their replacement by known or unknown Turkish – or allegedly Turkish – words, the speakers of the language were forced to change their way of expressing themselves. This process inevitably resulted in the adoption of a more reflective attitude towards their language. Moreover, the more educated the speaker, the more fundamental the change had to be.

Since the reform, if it was to be carried out efficiently, thus would affect every literate speaker personally, the necessity, extent, and methods of the reform have been discussed fervently from both scientific and unscientific points of view from the time it was first announced until today.

The language situation before Atatürk's reform

Since the conversion to Islam from the tenth century onwards, most of the Turkic languages came under a strong impact of Arabic, and because of the dominance of Persian Islamic culture in Central Asia and later also in Anatolia, the linguistic influence of Persian was also very strong. In written Ottoman Turkish, the proportion of lexical elements originating from Arabic and Persian increased greatly especially from the fifteenth century onwards and did by no

means decrease with the cultural Europeanization processes that took place in the nineteenth century. The use of Arabic and Persian words partly was a sign of refined language, but at the same time, a great number of these elements also had become natural parts of both written and spoken Ottoman Turkish.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, strong voices pointed out the fact that the gap between the high and low varieties – or rather, between the written and spoken language – was so big that the high varieties were incomprehensible to ordinary people. This was the case not only when it came to poetry and literary prose, but also everyday writing, newspaper articles, advertisements etc. Two of these voices belonged to Namık Kemal (1840–1888), a patriotic writer, and his friend, the statesman Ziya Paşa (1825–1880). However, as also pointed out by Lewis (1999: 15), 'although the new newspapers and magazines frequently carried articles urging the use of simple Turkish, they tended to urge it in very complicated language.' An example of this is the following paragraph from a newspaper article which appeared as late as in August 1896 (the Turkish elements are underlined):

> *Safvet-i ifademizi ihlâl eden elfaz-i gayr-ı me'nuse ve sakile-i ecnebiyyeye mukabil servet-i mevcude-i lisaniyyemizden istifade etmiş olsak, daire-i safvet-i ifadeyi, binaenaleyh daire-i terakkiyi tevsi' etmiş oluruz.*[1]

As we see, the only Turkish elements in this sentence are some suffixes and the forms of the auxiliary verb *et-*; all the lexical elements are of either Persian or Arabic origin.

It is difficult today to judge the degree of comprehensibility of language such as this among people without higher education. What is significant, however, is that there were authors writing during the same period who managed to express their thoughts with much less Arabic and Persian both lexical and grammatical elements, and who obviously did this very consciously, such as Ahmet Midhat

[1] The quote is given as rendered by Levend (1972, 275), without diacritical signs, which are not used in this article at all except when necessary. In Geoffrey Lewis' (1999: 15) translation: 'Had we made use of our existing linguistic wealth instead of the unfamiliar and ponderous foreign locutions that corrupt our purity of expression, we would have broadened the compass of purity of expression and consequently the compass of progress.'

(1844–1912). One important factor in the perseverance of the old high style language in spite of the fact that progressive voices criticized it, is that the original Turkish equivalents that perhaps had existed before the impact from Arabic and Persian took place, or that perhaps still were in use in some remote dialect, were unknown to the traditionally-minded intellectuals of Istanbul. This means that they did not know with what they could replace their learned vocabulary. Besides, since they all learned Arabic and Persian during their secondary education and were familiar with both the Qur'an and with Persian poetry, it was no big deal to most intellectuals whether the language had a lot of foreign elements or not, or rather, having grown up with the old language, they of course felt quite familiar with it.

The first years of Atatürk's reform

The seeds of the language reform were sown in the *Tanzimat* period in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the attempts to bring the written language closer to the spoken idiom became more frequent during the first decades of the twentieth century. However, it did not become evident until the alphabet reform was promulgated by Atatürk in 1928 that a profound language reform was also inevitable. In the same way as the principles of Arabic script were quite unsuitable for spelling Turkish from both a phonological and morphological point of view, Arabic and Persian words, too, now became partially unintelligible when written with Latin letters. As an example, we may take the sequence of the Arabic letters *elif* – *vav* – *te*: this may represent the Turkish words *ot*, 'grass'; *üt*, imperative of the verb *ütmek*, 'to burn', 'to beat'; *öt*, imperative of the verb *ötmek*, 'to sound', 'to sing'; and the word *evet*, 'yes'. Meanwhile, the two Arabic words *rākib*, 'horseman' (now obsolete), and *rakīb*, 'rival', are written (and sometimes also erroneously pronounced) in the same way with Latin letters. Likewise, the modern spelling *hak* may represent the Arabic word *ḥaqq*, meaning 'justice, right', the Arabic *ḥakk* 'engraving, erasing', and the Persian *ḫāk* 'earth'. In 1929, when the teaching of Arabic and Persian as school subjects was abolished, the door to the East was irrevocably closed. Until then,

knowledge of Arabic and Persian had been a productive element of well-educated speakers' language.

Atatürk introducing the new alphabet in 1928. Wikimedia Commons.

It is often pointed out what an immense effort it must have been for a whole nation to change its alphabet overnight, so to say. That is of course true, but it should not be forgotten that illiteracy was extremely high before the reform, and that a great number of those who could read and write already were familiar with the Latin alphabet through French, which was widely used as a Lingua Franca in the multilingual Ottoman society. Today, the illiteracy rate in Turkey is very low, no doubt partly due to the fact that the modern Turkish alphabet is well suited for rendering the sounds of the language and also the fact that Turkish orthography is phonemic to a great extent, meaning that words are spelled in the same way as they are pronounced.

Linguistic nationalisation

Atatürk's aim – like that of protagonists before him such as Ziya Gökalp – was to create a language that everybody could understand, by nationalizing it, i.e. 'liberating' it from its foreign elements. '*Ülkesini, yüksek istiklâlini korumasını bilen Türk milleti, dilini de yabancı diller boyuduruğundan kurtarmalıdır*' ('The Turkish nation, which knows how to defend its sublime independence, must liberate also its language from the yoke of foreign languages'), Atatürk said in a speech delivered in 1930. He also wanted the Turkish language to attain the honourable position it deserved among the *Kultursprachen* of the world. The program for how these aims were to be reached and the institutional form to realise them were not established until 1932, when *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* (from 1934 *Türk Dili Araştırma Kurumu*, from 1936 *Türk Dil Kurumu*, abbreviated TDK), i.e. the Turkish Language Society, was founded. The abolishment of words with Arabic and Persian elements may also be regarded as an effort to secularise the language, in the same way as several other of Atatürk's reforms had secularisation as a superior aim. At the same time the *ezan*, i.e. the Muslim call for prayer, which 'always' had been in Arabic (starting with *Allahu ekber!*, 'God is the greatest') was replaced with a Turkish version (*Tanrı uludur!*).[2]

Even if Atatürk had not already regarded it as a major point at the beginning, the replacement of words from European languages by pure Turkish words also became one of the items on TDK's program.

Methods for linguistic purification

The methods used by TDK to find 'pure Turkish' substitutes for the old Arabic and Persian words were mainly the following:

- Encouraging the use of Turkish words already existing in the language, and the disuse of the more frequently used and more refined-sounding

[2] In 1941, reading the *ezan* in Arabic even became prohibited by law. The Arabic *ezan* was re-introduced only after the victory of the Demokrat Partisi in 1950.

Arabic or Persian ones, e.g. *ölüm*, 'death', and not the Arabic *vefat*; *yıl*, 'year', and not *sene*.

- Reviving Turkish words found in older, particularly Old Ottoman and Pre-Ottoman texts, such as *konuk* for *misafir*, 'guest'.
- Suggesting the use of words found in Anatolian dialects, e.g. *gözgü* for *ayna*, 'mirror', *görkem* for *ihtişam*, 'splendour'. Schoolteachers around Anatolia were encouraged to submit lists of dialect words used in their surroundings to TDK. However, many of the 'pure Turkish' words that were recommended actually had a non-Turkish origin. For example, to replace the Arabic *hudut*, 'border', *sınır* was suggested, but this word actually has a Greek etymology.
- Introducing words from other Turkic and Altaic languages, such as *ulus*, 'nation', a Mongolian word probably borrowed from Old Turkic, where it had the form *uluš*, to replace *millet*, and *ata*, '(fore)father', to replace *cet* and *peder*.
- Enlarging the semantic sphere of already existing Turkish words, e.g. *çevir-*, 'to turn around', which was 'enriched' with the additional meaning 'to translate', and the interrogative pronoun *neden*, 'why', which was used as a noun and given the meaning 'reason, cause' as well as its original meaning. In the same way *albeni*, which is actually a sentence in itself meaning 'take me', replaced *cazibe*, 'attractiveness'. The shift of grammatical content implied by the last two examples actually represents an intervention into the structure of the language.
- Introducing calques and literal Turkish translations of foreign terms, e.g. *bakan*, 'minister', a participle of the verb *bak-*, 'to look', for *nazır*, whose Arabic original is a participle with the same meaning; or *demiryolu*, 'train', which has been directly translated from the French *chemin de fer*.
- One of the most contestable methods was the derivation of new words by means of productive or unproductive suffixes of Turkic or other origin, such as {-Al} and {-sAl}, e.g. *dilsel*, 'linguistic' (to replace *lisanî*), { (I)ntI}, e.g. *ayrıntı*, 'detail' (to replace *teferruat*), and {-tay}, e.g. *çalıştay*, 'workshop'. Especially the use of (genuinely or allegedly) Turkish suffixes on Arabic stems, such as *siyasal*, 'political (to replace

siyasî) has been heavily criticised. In Turkish, derivational suffixes (e.g. the ones deriving nouns from verbal stems or vice versa) constitute closed groups with very few possibilities of transition from one function to the other. Hence, neologisms created by adding nominal suffixes on verbal stems, such as *doğa*, 'nature' (from *doğ-*, 'to be born', which was to replace *tabiat*), *biçem*, 'style' (from *biç-*, 'to cut', to replace *üslup*), are formations opposed to the structure of the Turkish language.

In 2004, approximately ten years after the fervour of TDK had subsided, the executive board of the Turkish broadcasting cooperation (TRT) published a list of 205 words which were from then on forbidden to use in radio and television. For political reason, this 'affair of the forbidden words' was blown up in domestic and international media, but in fact, all the words on the list were structural monstrosities (but are nevertheless still in use).

The development between 1935 and 1950

In the initial years of the reform, it is likely that neither the Ottoman writers who pointed out the necessity of reducing the diglossia gap, nor Atatürk himself realized how comprehensive a reform would have to be if the aim was to replace all words of Arabic and Persian origin with 'genuinely Turkish' ones. One of the first fruits of the intensive 'purification' efforts by TDK was *Osmanlıcadan Türkçeye Söz Karşılıkları Tarama Dergisi* (1934), which indeed marks the peak of Turkish purism. This was a dictionary with 7000 entries and approximately four times as many 'Turkish' substitutes. Because many of the suggested substitutes were completely strange and incomprehensible, and because more than one (sometimes as many as ten) substitutes were often suggested for a single Ottoman word, the dictionary was no success, and Atatürk was greatly disappointed. In fact, he 'tried out' the new language in a speech he gave at a dinner in the honour of the Swedish crown prince Gustaf Adolf in Ankara on 3 October 1934. Reportedly, he had problems reading the speech aloud because a

lot of the words were new to him. One of the sentences was, for example, the following one:

> *Avrupa'nın iki bitim ucunda yerlerini berkiten uluslarımız, ataç özlüklerinin tüm ıssıları olarak baysak, önürme, uygunluk kıldacıları olmuş bulunuyorlar; onlar bugün en güzel utkuyu kazanmaya anıklanıyorlar; baysal utkusu*. ('Mustafa Kemal Atatürk İsveç Veliahtı Gustav Adolf'la Çankaya Köşkü'nün terasında, Ankara (03.10.1934)')

We do not attempt to give a translation; the sentence is just as incomprehensible today as it must have been 89 years ago.

In the late autumn of 1935, the *Güneş-Dil Teorisi* (The Sun-Language Theory) was promulgated. According to this amazing theory, language – in its most primitive form – is based on the sounds and syllables expressed by man in primeval times, when human beings first felt the need to name the objects in their surroundings and their qualities. By comparing Turkish with more or less obscure languages like Sumerian, Elamite, and Basque, and by means of obscure etymologies and a vivid imagination, it was 'proved' that Turkish was the mother of all languages of the world, just as it had already been 'proved' that the Turkish civilization in Central Asia and Anatolia was the origin of all civilizations. Thus, since all words in the language, even those believed to have an Arabic or Persian origin, ultimately came from the Turkish 'Ursprache', there was no need to remove them from the language.[3] Thus, the purification work performed by TDK was more or less suspended from the end of 1935 until Atatürk's death in 1938, but after his death, TDK resumed its efforts with even greater fervour. This was possible partly thanks to Atatürk's testamentary bequest of half of his fortune to TDK. However, the intensity of the reform in the following years

[3] There has been a lot of speculation as to the origin of this theory, and whether it was just an invention in order to stop the language reform. However, it should be kept in mind that these kinds of ideas were very much *en vogue* at the time. Already in 1924, the Georgian linguist Nikolai Marr (1864–1934) had launched a theory along similar lines on the so-called 'Japhetic languages', which may have served as a model for the Sun-Language theory, and which gained great popularity especially in the Soviet union. The Sun-Language theory is reportedly based on a manuscript in French submitted to Atatürk by the Austrian/Serbian linguist Hermann Kvergić (1895–1948/9).

varied considerably with the political situation in the country. The work consisted mostly in attempts to make people adopt the new words already suggested by TDK, and in finding Turkish replacements for technical and other terms of foreign origin used in education. In 1940, TDK 're-affirmed that those foreign words which by constant use had penetrated into popular speech might, on certain conditions, be regarded as naturalized citizens of the Turkish language' (Heyd, 1954: 36). Nevertheless, in 1942, the crown jewel of the terminology dictionaries, *Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Dictionary of philosophical and grammatical terminology), was published by TDK and became subject to very hard criticism for its extremely purist line. This and similar endeavours of TDK, especially the 'translation' of the *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu* – the Constitution of the Republic – into the puristic *Anayasa* (1945) led to the formation of an organized opposition to TDK and the official language policy.

Politicization of the reform and further criticism

With the gradual democratization of the country from the late 1940s onwards, the language movement gradually became a party issue. Left-wing parties were strongly in favour of a continued reform, while conservative – religious or more right-wing – parties were against it. One would believe that nationalist parties would have supported a Turkification of the language, but the use of neologisms, particularly in the 1970s, came to be identified almost exclusively with the political left.

One reason for this is the important role played by Bülent Ecevit, the leader of the left-wing *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP, the Republican People's Party) and prime minister in 1974 and in two periods between 1977–1979 as well as 1999–2002. He attained immense popularity during the 1970s. His conscious use of neologisms in his speeches was no doubt the main reason for the common acceptance of words such as *olanak*, 'possibility' (to replace *imkân*), *olasılık*, 'probability' (to replace *ihtimal*), and *sapta-*, 'to establish, to prove' (to replace *tespit et-*). None of these words has the semantic transparency otherwise usually found in neologisms that were accepted.

One weakness in the creation of 'genuinely Turkish' replacements of the Arabic and Persian words is exactly this lack of semantic transparency: A number of quasi-homonymous words were introduced which were difficult to keep apart because they were derived from the same root with suffixes that actually did not give any strong clue about the meaning. Thus, it was not in any way obvious that the neologism *görenek*, which is derived from *gör-*, 'to see' means 'tradition' (*an'ane* in traditional language), and *görgü* means 'good manners' (*adab-ı muaşeret*), while *gözenek*, which is derived from *göz*, 'eye' means 'pore' (*mesame*) and *gözgü* means 'mirror' (*ayna*). The old words that these neologisms were to replace were not semantically transparent either, but they were at least what the speakers were used to and phonologically very distinct.

Moreover, as already mentioned, one of the main points of criticism against the language reform concerns the randomness and lack of philological foundation with which many of the neologisms were created. For example, the new word for 'school', *okul*, which was created to replace the Arabic word *mektep*, was derived from the verbal stem *oku-*, 'to read', plus a non-existing suffix, *-l*. However, in reality it is quite obvious that *okul* ultimately has been calqued on French *école*; accordingly, grammatical rules are of no importance. Another example is the new word for 'education', *eğitim*, which obviously has the verbal stem *eğ-*, 'to bend, to curve', as a base. The semantic connection between 'education' and 'bending' may not be clear, but obviously the fact that the Hungarian word for 'university' is *egyetem* has played a role. The fanciful and haphazard creation of neologisms based on non-Turkish stems is one of the features of the language reform that have been highly criticized and ridiculed; not only by Turkish opponents to the reform when these words were introduced, but also by foreign philologists such a Steuerwald (1963–1966) and Lewis (1999). The fact that quite a number of these words today are felt to be integrated elements of the Turkish language shows that other factors than linguistic rules were decisive for the acceptance of the neologies.

One heavy argument against the reform was that it created a generation gap, meaning that parents and their children did not understand one another anymore. This was indeed a problem during the most fervent years of the reform. However, the stabilization of the language in the 1980s onwards and the fact that the older generation who did not understand the new words more or less

has died away has rendered this argument invalid. Moreover, people in Turkey today do not seem bothered by the similar gap that was created between the readers of today and Ottoman literature – not only classical literature, but most texts written up to the 1930s. The fact that Ottoman Turkish is a different language that can only be read with the help of a dictionary seems to be accepted.

However, the language reform has also created another cultural gap which is almost never discussed, namely between Turkey and the other Turkic-speaking nations of the world. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, cultural contacts between Turkey and those nations were extremely limited. After close contact on all levels was established in the 1990s, the language barrier made itself clearly felt. If there had been no language reform, the Turks of Turkey would now have had a large common vocabulary of Arabic and Persian origin with which they could make themselves understood with most of their sister nations. In the present situation, the possibilities of communication are quite restricted (cf. Yahyaoğlu 2013).

The Turkish language today

With the military coup on 12 September 1980, opponents to the language reform tried to convince the government that the TDK should be closed down (which was no difficult task thanks to the right-wing orientation of the new government). In the autumn of 1983, the TDK was merged with the Turkish Historical Society and a society for Atatürk studies into an institution named *Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu* (Atatürk High Council for Culture, Language and History), and the president and board members were replaced by more conservative philologists. Since then, the society, which thus was transformed into a kind of academy, has kept a rather low profile, concentrating on dictionary work and publication activities. However, since the beginning of 1994, the society's periodical *Türk Dili*, 'The Turkish Language', has also contained modest lists of *Öztürkçe* words suggested as equivalent to words and expressions from European languages.

The language that is commonly used today consists both of words of Turkish origin that have always been in use, elements of Arabic and Persian origin, and

neologisms introduced during the reform – besides, of course, a great amount of words from European languages. Unlike the language prior to the reform, words of Turkish origin now constitute the bone marrow of the contemporary lexicon, with the old words playing a more marginal role. Accordingly, Turkish is extremely rich in synonyms. To a conscious writer who does not want to display any specific political profile, this richness represents immense possibilities of stylistic variation. At the same time, an individual, a newspaper, or a journal may still use a neologistic vs. a conservative vocabulary to display a political or religious vs. secularist attachment. Yet even in the most conservative publications, the amount of words that entered the language through the reform is high. No journalists today are capable of writing in the old language, and would have a very low number of readers if they were. Numerous new words that provoked fervent discussions and mockery when they were launched are fully acceptable today and preferred by most people to their old equivalents. Tendencies to ridicule the reform hardly ever occur any more. On the other hand, especially scholarly language – for example within social sciences – tends to have a vocabulary containing as few foreign elements as possible, which also represent a challenge to readers who are not specialists within that certain field.

Challenges today

In the same way as most other European languages, the main challenge Turkish is facing in the twenty-first century is the impact of English terminology accompanying all kinds of innovations in the field of technology and media. TDK is trying to launch Turkish equivalents, and sometimes it does succeed, as in the case of *bilgisayar*, 'computer' (actually 'data counter') and *ileti*, which is now widely used instead of e-mail. TDK has also campaigned against foreign shop names and gives out prizes to shops that have 'genuinely Turkish' names. Nevertheless, serious articles frequently appear claiming that the Turkish language is facing extermination, which is highly improbable. Besides the impact of English terminology, however, the 'trendiness' of inserting English words and phrases into Turkish everyday speech is quite common in certain circles. It may be compared to the use of French words and expressions by some segments of

Istanbul society in the second half of the 19th century. Both are examples of snobbism combined with linguistic laziness. Another aspect of the impact of English is the idiomatic changes caused by unconscious translations of English and American television programmes, which are always dubbed into Turkish. Today a sentence such as 'My mother was a teacher' is commonly translated as *Annem bir öğretmendi*, although in idiomatic Turkish the correct rendering would be *Annem öğretmendi* without the indefinite article which, when it is used, makes the sentence mean 'My mother was one teacher'. Likewise, in bad television language the third person copula suffix {-DIr} 'is, are' is gradually being used more frequently where it should not be used in traditional speech. For example, the correct way to say 'My wife is now in Ankara' is *Eşim şu anda Ankara'da*, whereas the translators of television text, obviously eager to render every word in the original English sentence, would translate it as *Eşim şu anda Ankara'dadır* (where *-dır* is a rendering of 'is'). This is not wrong, but has the meaning 'I am sure my wife is now in Ankara'. Some words have gone through semantic changes due to English, such as the verb *infaz et-*, 'to execute [a verdict]', which today is very frequently used with a person as an object, meaning 'to execute [a person as death penalty]', that is as a synonym of *idam et-*.

Although more than 90 years have passed since the Latin alphabet was introduced and the language reform started, voices against it are still raised now and then in conservative circles. For example, in 2022 the AKP politician Mahir Ünal praised the values of 'our own alphabet' (i.e. the Arabic alphabet), which, he said, along with 'our language and way of thinking, has been taken away by the Republic'. Huge billboards by the main thoroughfares in Ankara advertising courses in Ottoman Turkish are probably exponents of the same political view. Apart from reactionary manifestations of this kind, which occur quite infrequently, the alphabet and language reforms are not questioned anymore. The reason is that they have resulted in a sustainable, flexible and multi-faceted language in which all its users may find means to express themselves – and thanks to the reform, illiteracy in Turkey is on its way to becoming a phenomenon of the past.

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Failed Quest for Dignity

Journalism under the Republic

YAVUZ BAYDAR

The establishment in 1923 of a modern nation-state meant the opening of a new page in Turkey's history. However, despite deep-going transformations, the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in many fields should not be overlooked. The media is one of them. The reforms initiated by the Palace during the second half of the nineteenth century came to define the major patterns of journalism for more than 150 years. The order thus forged was based on external control of news outflow, legal restrictions, closures, threats, punitive measures such as imprisonments, and, at worst, assassinations. The period between the 1870s and the end of the Great War in 1918 was marred by nearly constant censorship of the Ottoman press. Also under the Republic, a state of emergency was imposed for about forty out of its hundred years' history, a situation that imposed severe limits on journalism. Still, the entire hundred and fifty years' long history of the press has also been marked by an unrelented battle for freedom, independence and pluralism. Hence, there have been periods, however brief, when journalists have felt the winds of optimism behind their backs, simply, however, to be pressured to yet another defeat.

The entry of newspapers and journalism onto Asia Minor was extremely delayed. When the first newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, was launched in 1831 – on the direct orders of Sultan Mahmut II – the press in the western world was already two hundred years old. By the 1850s, only three newspapers were circulating. Two major reforms deserve mentioning: in 1839 'The Imperial Edict of Gülhane' (*Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu*), and, in 1851, the 'Royal Edict of Reform' (*Islahat Fermanı*). These steps gave birth to a criminal code (1840),

which was later replaced by an enhanced one (1858). The latter was nearly a copy of the French penal code from 1810, and would – as an example of the above mentioned historical continuity – remain in force until 1926.

Sultan Abdülhamit's (r. 1876–1909) declaration of martial law in 1877 was followed in 1878 by the closure of the parliament. The following period turned into a nightmare for journalists, intellectuals and opposition politicians: many were either sent to prison or into exile. It meant zero tolerance for any form of public criticism, free debate or journalistic scrutiny. Only those who bent before, or were placed on the sultan's payroll, were allowed to publish, mainly to praise the ruler, and attack alleged traitors. However, the sultan's rule, was bound to implode: on 24 July 1908, Abdülhamit was forced to reopen the parliament. With his deposition in 1909, the Hamidian era was over, and during the period between 1908 and 1912 journalism in Turkey enjoyed its highest level of freedom and pluralism, including the later republican period.

From the summer of 1908 onwards, the number of newspapers and periodicals exploded (from around 120 to 725 in 1909). Pandora's Box had opened. Alongside the Turkish-language ones, publications by the Greek, Armenian and other Ottoman ethnicities flourished. An unprecedented freedom for public discourse was born, where aspirations for a democratic rule, or federalism or separatism surfaced. However, the 'springtime of freedom' – the first ever in Ottoman soil – did not last long. Concerned about the sudden growth of its adversaries, the ruling party CUP (Committee of Union and Progress), organized an early election in April 1912, during which its violence against the contesters reached extremes. After a disputable result and series of turbulent developments, CUP executed a coup in 1913 through which they brutally and bloodily deposed the government. The coup set a precedent for a culture that would haunt the history of the coming republic. The CUP became the archetype of intolerance, militarism and oppression.

A second period of freedom arrived at the end of the First World War, paradoxically following the British occupation of Istanbul. The occupation forces imposed censorship on the Istanbul press, but, with more than fifty existing newspapers, the control was not effective. Firstly, most papers were critical of the occupation and defended the nationalist mobilisation under Mustafa Kemal Pasha's command. Secondly, a group of newspapers were busy

focusing on the abuse of power of the CUP, including the crimes committed against the Ottoman Armenians. In fact, it was thanks to newspapers such as *Takvim-i Vekayi*, *İstanbul*, *Sabah* and *Muvakkit* that the reporting of the 'Istanbul Martial Law Trials' against hundreds of CUP officers could be put on record.

Newspapers in the early republican era

The First World War had gnawed not only at the finances, but also on the human resources. Therefore, as the first president of the new nation, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had to cooperate with many figures of the old CUP regime, some of whom were hard-core nationalists. He displayed remarkable skills, but success also came with huge costs for fundamental rights and freedoms.

The difference between the journalists of the new capital, Ankara, and the old one, Istanbul, would appear rapidly. Generally the latter were more skilled and experienced, and, different from many nationalist-minded journalists in Ankara, those in Istanbul were less committed to the new regime. However, many Istanbul editors were also inquisitive about the new system established by Mustafa Kemal and his team, while others questioned the formats of the republic, and, having the British model in mind, even believed in the maintenance of parts of the monarchy.

It took only a few months after the announcement of the republic before a major debate surfaced. Three heavyweight journalists, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (*Tanin*), Ahmet Cevdet (*İkdam*), Velid Ebüz-Ziya (*Tevhid-i Efkâr*) opposed the abolishment of the caliphate. They found themselves facing hard-core Kemalist judges in the so-called 'Independence Tribunals.' Even though the indictment was 'treason,' they were acquitted. Still, questions remained and bigger turbulence was just around the corner. About a year later, signs of Kurdish unrest developed into an uprising. On 4 March 1925, the notorious 'Law of the Maintenance of Order' (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) was passed. Part of the blame was put on the press, giving strong hints about the dramatic fate of freedom of expression. In 1931 a press law was passed, which brought increasingly restrictive measures. Censorship reached its peak in 1938–39, when the Turkish army

launched a massive operation against a Kurdish uprising in the Dersim province. The brutality and the large number of casualties in those massacres were entirely censored for more than four months. After Atatürk's death in 1938, conditions for journalism worsened even further. In November 1940, the new president, İsmet İnönü, declared martial law in seven provinces, including Istanbul, which continued until the end of 1947. By force of Martial Law, the authorities, arbitrarily and indefinitely, shut down newspapers. Disrespect for journalism, a pattern set by CUP during the early twentieth century, was now part of the DNA of the republican order. That the press should serve as a tool in the political struggle was introduced already during the 1908 revolution. However, due to the fierce and ruthless battle for political power, no room was left for discussions of the universal standards and ethics for an independent press. Journalism in Turkey was therefore too often conceived as a 'political mission,' where the duty to report the truth, factually and credibly, was lost.

Hopes for democratization – and backlash

In 1950, the single-party regime terminated and the ruling Republican People's Party's (CHP) adversary, the Democrat Party (DP), came to power. After a brief period of hope for freedom, however, the country turned into a huge boxing ring. However, there were a couple of exceptions. As Turkey moved into a new era of pluralism in the late 1940s, two newspapers, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, were launched, and soon after the coup d'état in 1960, they would become the centerfield of journalism. They never deviated from the main tenets of Kemalism, but developed a broad network of reporters and offices, both at home and abroad.

The defeat of the Nazi regime and Turkey's well-reasoned neutrality during the war, had raised the optimism for a democratic development. A Turkish-American alliance was launched, and Turkey entered NATO as well as the Council of Europe. However, would such changes also bring fundamental rights and freedoms? The new Press Law, passed with overwhelming majority of parliament in July 1950, was promising. Newspapers and magazines no longer required permission from the government; submission of a declaration was

enough. This was followed by an amendment about job security. According to a law from June 1952, journalists gained trade union and social rights. This honeymoon continued until 1954, when the economy began to stagger. Increasingly infuriated with criticism, the president, Adnan Menderes, resorted to the notorious 'template' of restriction and censorship.

The pogroms against Greek-Turkish properties in the Istanbul Pera district on 6–7 September 1955 (see Svante Lundgren's article) stands out as a prime example of how newspapers – and later TV channels and social media – have been misused by governments and state institutions as tools for propaganda and brainwashing. This incident also led to persistent allegations that, in the newsrooms of all major newspapers, there would be editors on the payroll of the secret service, MIT. The rest of the decade was extremely acrimonious. Major opposition newspapers were shut down. More than a thousand lawsuits were brought toward journalists, with 238 of them ending in imprisonment. State-owned radio stations in Istanbul and Ankara unleashed severe government propaganda and attacked the opposition. When the republic's first coup d'état took place in May 1960, partisan enmity had turned the press into downright paralysis.

Newspaper stand in Ankara, 1970. Photo by Victor Albert Grigas, Wikimedia Commons.

Freedom of the press and turbulent political strife

The new constitution, commissioned by the military, was paradoxically beneficial to the press and to journalists. The generals abolished restrictive laws issued by the DP governments. New laws improved job security and union rights. A socialist press emerged, and one could witness a more distinctive image of newspapers such as *Milliyet* – the backbone of independent journalism under its legendary editor, Abdi İpekçi. However, the political struggle escalated, stained with violence.

The 1970s, shattered by political violence, extreme polarisation, lawlessness and political deadlocks, became a nightmare for Turkish journalism. Assassination of journalists became a lasting pattern. Towards the end of the decade, with a wave of violence killing thousands of people, the 'ungovernability of Turkey' was reflected upon (1979) by the above-mentioned İpekçi (assassinated on 1 February the same year), who was pushing for a national consensus between right and left in order to maintain democratic order. His concerns turned prophetic: a military junta conducted a massive coup d'état in September 1980, with severe consequences which are still in effect. The martial law would continue until 1987. Its impact on journalism, especially until 1984, was destructive. The junta showed zero tolerance for the press, mainstream or partisan, and took full-fledged control of TRT, which, in any case, since its inception in the 1960s had operated more as a 'state' than a 'public' broadcaster.

Infected by fear and sheer obedience to authority, many newspapers towed the line. Pro-state editors became popular and established their own cultures. There was, however, one exception. In 1983, as the pressures of the military started to fade, the daily *Cumhuriyet*, which was established in 1924 by a confidant of Atatürk, decided to fill the vacuum of critical journalism. It became a hub of independent editors and columnists who spread a wider spectrum of views, unusual to any other newspaper at the time. Constantly critical and with a broad emphasis on 'reporting as much as possible,' it covered a lot of ground, even breaking the Kurdish taboo.

Turgut Özal, the liberal prime minister and an innovative political mastermind, eased the economic conditions for the new breed of business persons, and

encouraged those who supported his economic policies to enter into the media sector. A new era was dawning.

Media and big business

Until then, media ownership was marked by individuals or families, whose activities were limited to publishing. With Özal, media owners gradually felt the pressure to approach larger business holdings who, although having no idea about the requirements of the public service profession, launched new dailies, pouring resources and employing editors with high salaries. Most of these entrepreneurs were in insurance, banking, construction, trade and tourism. They kept their eyes on two 'flagships.' The first to change ownership was *Milliyet*. Only months after the assassination of its editor İpekçi (1979), *Milliyet* was purchased by Aydın Doğan, whose background included trade, retail and construction. Expanding his business venues, he also acquired *Hürriyet* (early 1990s) and built a media empire. He was challenged by other business families, such as Dinç Bilgin, who launched daily *Sabah* in Izmir, with fresh human resources. Thus, privatisation took a powerful grip on the sector. Journalism started to shed skin, and the rules of the game would never be the same again. From now on, journalism – and the public – would suffer immensely.

Strengthening this new trend beyond proportion was also the deregulation of the TRT monopoly. Until then, the TV and radio domains were entirely occupied by the state broadcaster, which the elected governments and the military top brass had seen as crucial tools for controlling the national mindset. However, both Özal and his successor Demirel agreed that the time had come to reach out, through the audiovisual domain, to loyal businesspersons, who would put their media empires in the service of politics. The idea was based on a 'win-win' philosophy: the more powerful a media mogul, the more effective his services for keen politicians. And vice versa: the mightier a political leader, the more benefits and revenues to reap for the media moguls. As a result, within a couple of years (1992–94), the number of TV channels mushroomed. The game was on. An elite segment of journalists started to gain enormous amounts of money, acting no longer as independent editors or free-minded

commentators, but as 'intermediaries' between the proprietors and power figures in Ankara. It went as far as to having some editors-in-chief acting as advisors to their bosses, breaking down the barriers between newsrooms and advertisement sections. Proprietors were encouraged to establish their own banks. The era of greed had begun.

On another level, however, censorship and oppression was back. As the Kurdish aspirations for equality and rights rose, a Kurdish press also emerged, but it was accompanied by waves of violence, due to clashes between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces. The push for more freedom of expression backfired, and in the middle of the 1990s an anti-terror law was introduced. It was aimed at limiting the freedom of the media, constantly causing problems for journalists. At one point during the second half of the 1990s, there were more than ninety journalists in prison. As the 1990s came to an end, Turkey was shattered by a huge systemic hiccup: a huge economic crisis shook the foundations of the republic. The main victims of the crisis were the media proprietors, many of whom had seen their banks go bankrupt, and losing also their media groups. Some encountered huge debts or ended up in jail. In a decade, corruption had infected the body of the press sector from head to toe. The crisis underlined the fact that a corrupt media can never cover power corruption credibly and effectively.

Politicization of the media

It was at this time that a small group of journalists realized the necessity for self-scrutiny. In 1999, the first ever post of news ombudsmanship was launched by daily *Milliyet*, backed by the Union of Turkish Journalists (TGC). However, the culture of self-censorship, apathy before the public, ignorance of ethics, and ownership corruption was so deep that a solid system of media liability could not be established. When AKP victoriously entered onto the political stage, it was even itself struck by surprise. The crisis of the system was so deep that the voters – now fed up – had offered them a landslide victory. When looking at the media, they only saw a landscape of ruins.

Reminiscent of DP in 1950, AKP started by encouraging decent and concerned journalists. The party promised that TRT, up until then a 'state broadcaster', would be reformed into an independent 'public broadcaster'. The path initially followed by the AKP was that toward membership in the EU. Thus, from 2002 onwards, curtains were up for a new 'media spring'. AKP passed more than 500 'laws of harmonization', some of which eased the restrictions on press freedoms. Anti-militarist and reformist trends, as well as minority groups' journalism were encouraged. Taboos were broken. Concrete changes in the TRT and the rise of a pro-AKP press led to a more open public discourse. Even if not true independence, freedom and diversity was clearly in the air. In many respects, the period of 2002–2013 was strongly reminiscent of that of 1908–13.

However, the ruling party needed robust media support. The AKP leaders felt that they had to establish a friendly dialogue with the major media groups, especially the moguls. The then prime minister Erdoğan also realized that the corruption that had shattered many major media groups could be used to his advantage. If attacked, he could hit back at any media proprietor, including their loyal editors. He kept this in mind, to strike when suitable.

There were two main adversaries: Cem Uzan, who owned the Uzan Group, and Aydın Doğan, proprietor of the powerful Doğan Media, which owned several TV channels and a number of newspapers. In practice, Doğan had, by the time of the new millennium, almost monopolized the sector. During the previous decade, he had often acted as a kingmaker in politics, encouraging his editors to engineer politics in favour of whoever in Ankara he was supporting. In other words, he had become the Rupert Murdoch of the Turkish media scene.

Using accusations of corruption as an instrument, Erdoğan first successfully 'silenced' Uzan, who had to flee Turkey. Meanwhile, Doğan, confident of his influential status, continued to maintain his critical position. Erdoğan and Doğan never got along well, and it would take around ten years for Turkey's powerful ruler to chase his adversary out of the sector.

The first signs of backlash for the media sector occurred when Erdoğan, confident of his popularity through consecutive election victories, started to display his 'harder' – many argue, 'real' – self. Around 2010 he launched a slow liquidation of his potential adversaries – 'reformist-minded founders' – within

the party, and displayed an open contempt for all critical content in the media. This change signalled a series of harder measures. Critical editors and columnists were either forced to leave, or subjected to character assassinations by Erdoğan's allies in the swelling pro-government media sector. The effect was entrenchment and polarisation with destructive results.

Before the rupture: media magnate Aydın Doğan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the opening of Trump Towers in Istanbul, 2012. Wikimedia Commons.

The method of the prime minister was classical: when taking an oppressive step, he tested the ground by observing how the entrepreneurs would react. Since nearly none of them dared to challenge him (they were dependent on his mercy for lucrative business contracts), he expanded his battlefield for full media capture. Three episodes especially marked the era. The first one took place at the end of 2011. When jets belonging to Turkish Armed Forces bombed to death thirty-four Kurdish villagers at the Turkish-Iraqi border, nearly the entire Turkish media remained 'blind' to the incident, and a self-censorship that lasted more than eighteen hours foreboded what was to come. Erdoğan had realized

that the media moguls were ready to tow the line, including the Doğan Media Group. The second episode was related to the massive Gezi Park protests that broke out in the heart of Istanbul. Again, the entire so-called 'mainstream' media chose to award it only minimal coverage. Major TV channels such as CNNTurk, NTV and Haberturk massively self-censored the events. As the turbulence continued, Erdoğan went even further. For days on end, he personally called the editors of TV news channels and successfully imposed de facto censorship. During the summer of 2013 hundreds of journalists – including the independent news ombudsman of Sabah – were fired. The 'cleansing of undesired elements' from the media intensified.

The third episode was even more dramatic. It began in the wake of two police operations during the last days of December 2013, with massive graft probes into the affairs of four AKP ministers. Those touched by the scandals included businessmen with close connections to the government, bureaucrats and bank managers, but also family members of prime minister Erdoğan himself, accused of being engaged in sanctions-busting against Iran and having links to financiers who laundered funds for al Qaeda. A critical part of the probe – backed by legal wiretappings – concerned consortia to co-finance media entirely in favour of the AKP government. This joint effort, in which businessmen benefitting from government contracts paid into a common slush-fund, has given rise to the term 'pool media'. But 'mainstream' media shied away from properly covering these scandals, while pro-government media staved off the drama either by describing it as an 'ugly battle between Gülenists and Erdoğanists' or 'an attempted coup.' For Erdoğan, this time the 'culprit' was what he saw as his main enemy, namely the Gülenist media. But also online media – so far out of Erdoğan's radar – had to pay a price, when a ban on various social media venues were imposed.

During the Gezi protests Erdoğan had tested the loyalty of secular media moguls. In 2014, he managed to use a polarised media to gnaw at each other: nationalist and secular media segments turned against the Gülenist media with contempt; and the Kurdish/Leftist media remained aloof to the corruption stories thanks to ongoing peace talks between AKP and PKK. Odds had once more been in Erdoğan's favour.

2014 was also the year when the mighty Doğan Media Group announced it had decided to dissolve itself. In 2018, it was taken over by the Demirören

Group, a family extremely loyal to Erdoğan's power base. With the departure of Aydın Doğan, Erdoğan's media capture was complete. By the end of 2018, his palace had taken direct or indirect editorial control over nearly ninety-five per cent of the media.

Things went further sour for Turkish journalism after the attempted coup in July 2016. The state of emergency declared a few days after the military uprising transferred power in terms of decrees to Erdoğan, who by that time had cut a new alliance with ultranationalist segments – his former enemies. In a series of decrees, nearly two hundred media outlets, including Gülenist, Kurdish, Leftist and reformist components, were shut down, their assets seized and their archives deleted. In many respects, Turkish journalism had returned to the dark days experienced under Sultan Abdülhamit II, CUP, CHP, DP and the military regime.

As the country enters its centennial as a republic, an unprecedented level of systemic crisis mars its future prospects. If its decades' long struggle for a liberal rights based democracy has again failed, the reason should be sought in the constant enmity of power holders to a free and independent media. The amount of harm done to Turkish journalism explains the state of things in the Turkish Republic.

The Kurds

Putting the Hundred-Year-Old Republic to the Test

OYA BAYDAR
Translated from Turkish by Allison Kanner

The century from 1923 to 2023 was arguably the longest and most dramatic century in recent history both for the world and for Turkey. During these hundred years, the Turkish nation-state attempted to establish itself on the ruins of the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire. Deep historical, social, and political changes also took place. The Republic that was proclaimed in 1923 was not only about demolishing the regime of the constitutional monarchy. It was also about a radical socio-cultural break. The nation was turned towards 'modern civilization', and society was forced to be redesigned from the ground up.

A social engineering project of this size and depth could not be easily achieved; it encountered resistance and led to grave social costs. The project was only possible through authoritarian, even dictatorial methods. Today, looking back a hundred years later, it appears that the most fundamental unresolved problems in the present day were caused by the founding conditions and original sins of the 1923 Republic. Chief among these problems is the Kurdish question. Briefly put, the fact is that the 1923 Republic has not been successful in dealing with the Kurdish issue; it has failed to pass this key test.

From empire to nation-state

Establishing nation-states on the ruins of multi-religious, multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-national empires is always filled with conflicts and problems.

If we consider that the disintegration and collapse of the Ottoman Empire took place in the context of the balance of powers and their vying for influence in the early twentieth century, we can better understand the difficulties faced by the Turkish nation-state building.

The process of creating nation-states, which started during the nineteenth century on the Balkan lands of the Ottoman Empire, resulted in the declaration of independence of Greece (1830) and Bulgaria (1908). Revolts and riots followed in Macedonia. During the Balkan wars (1912–1913), which ended the centuries-old presence of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, Albania too declared its independence. In the same period, Tripoli (Libya) was lost, Greece occupied the Aegean islands except for Bozcaada and Gökçeada, and Crete was given to Greece. After these defeats, the Ottoman Empire not only lost 83 per cent of its lands in the Balkans, but also 70 per cent of its population. Hundreds of thousands of Muslim Turks, Pomaks, and Albanians were forced to migrate, which culminated in humanitarian disasters. According to various sources, between 600 000 and 800 000 Turks and Muslims from Bulgaria and Greece were forced to migrate, leading to great atrocities, mass murders, and property confiscations. The painful memory of this migration, which continued throughout World War I, is as deep as the loss of land. The heavy losses of territory and influence struck not only in the West but also in the Arab territories. During the period in which most of the Empire's lands were lost, the occupation of Anatolia by the Allied Powers, Greece's entry into the Aegean, and finally the imposed Treaty of Sèvres (1920) created a trauma of division, loss, and collapse.

The Unending Sèvres syndrome

Sèvres syndrome can be defined as the belief and fear that the West aims to divide Turkey and establish autonomous Armenian and/or Kurdish entities in Anatolia under its mandate. From the cadres of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) to the founders of the Republic, and from there to the Turkish rulers of today, the unending fear is 'division and disintegration' – the nightmare of the collapse of the Empire. The principle of 'indivisible unity of the homeland

within its national borders' was accepted at the Erzurum Congress (21 July–7 August 1919) just prior to the War of Independence. 'The indivisible unity of the homeland' was the cornerstone of the state that would be established as a country while it fought a war of independence against the occupation of various states.

FIGURE 11. TURKEY IN 1920

Map showing the borders resulting from the treaty of Sèvres, 1920. Wikimedia Commons.

This fear of division, which has gradually turned into a phobia, was not an unfounded paranoia in the founding phase of the Republic. Right after the 'Balkan disaster' – with the Armistice of Mudros (30 October 1918) – Anatolian lands were occupied by the British, French and Italians. Armenians had started a fight for independence in six eastern provinces. With the Treaty of Sèvres, signed between the Allied Powers and the Ottoman State in August 1920, Thrace was granted to Greece; the Southeastern provinces to the French Mandate; Mosul to England; and Italy was left with the Ottoman rights and privileges on the Adriatic coasts (Dalmatia, Croatia, Albania), the 12 Islands, and Tripoli. The Northeastern provinces were given to Greater Armenia. It was

envisaged that an autonomous administration would be established in the Kurdish provinces east of the Euphrates, and that the Kurds would apply to the League of Nations for independence a year later. The trauma caused by Sèvres and the occupation of Anatolia continued not only for the state officials, but also in the consciousness of the Turkish people, and it has survived until today.

Towards nation-state building

The most important question for the military-civilian Ottoman intelligentsia from the late nineteenth century onwards was, 'how will the homeland and the state be saved?' The ideological and political answer lay in establishing a state of Muslim-Turkish elements on what remained of the Anatolian lands after the disintegration of the Empire.

The Republic represented a new and more advanced stage of the nation-state building process that had started in the 1910s. This state would be predicated on a Turkish and Muslim people; national unity would be achieved through Turkishness. The founding ideology of the Republic would be Turkish nationalism.

The story of the hundred-year-old Republic of Turkey is a quest for the creation of a nation and a state from communities that did not qualify as a nation at the time and that considered themselves subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The founders of the Republic faced the difficult task of first establishing the state, and then building a people for that state through Turkishness. The autochthonous Armenian and Kurdish populations, who had considered the region their homeland for centuries, made this task even more problematic.

The Armenian problem was 'resolved' with the 1915 massacre and deportation during the period of CUP government. The Pontus Greeks in the Black Sea region were deported and/or exterminated between 1913 and 1916 with similar methods. As for the Kurds, since they were Muslims and largely sided with the state throughout the Ottoman period, it was envisaged that instead of getting rid of them, they would be integrated through persecution, demographic interventions, forced resettlement methods, or assimilation (Turkification).

From being co-founders to facing denial

Considering the fact that even today it is difficult to name the Kurdish issue, it is clear how complex the topic is. While the terms 'Kurd', *ekrâd* (plural of Kurd), and 'Kurdistan' were used in the Ottoman period and in the time leading up to the foundation of the Republic, the word 'Kurd' was no longer used after the 1930s. Instead, until the 1980s, the issue would be referred to as the 'Oriental question' or the 'Eastern problem'. Then it became the 'terror issue'. The denial of the existence of the Kurds reached the point of claiming that they were originally Turks living in the mountainous regions of the east, and called Kurds simply because they made sounds like '*kart kurt*' while walking on the heavy snow. Although the ban on the words Kurd, Kurdistan and Kurdish was lifted after the 2000s during periods of relative calm, especially in the period called the Kurdish Initiative or Solution Process, the de facto ban returned after 2016. Still, when a Kurdish representative dares to speak Kurdish in the Parliament, the speech is recorded in the parliamentary minutes as 'he spoke in an unknown language'.

A Kurdish presence and Kurdish identity were unquestionably recognized during the War of Independence, in the establishment of the Associations for the Defence of National Rights, in the Erzurum and Sivas congresses, in the meetings of the Amasya Protocol (between August and November 1919), and in the 1921 Constitution, which should be considered the first founding document. There were 68 (according to some sources 70) Kurdish representatives in the first Grand National Assembly, which opened on 23 April 1920. Article three of the 1921 Constitution states that 'The State of Turkey is administered by the Grand National Assembly and the government bears the name of the "Grand National Assembly Government of Turkey".' The state and nation were defined not through Turkishness, but through being from Turkey. Mustafa Kemal considered Turks and Kurds as brothers of Islam: 'Our national borders are the lands where, of course, Turks and Kurds, who have worked with us to build a future together, live.' In his 16 January 1923 Izmit speech, he stated that local autonomy would be granted to the Kurds. The 1921 Constitution stated that the provincial governments 'have an incorporeal personality, have the authority to regulate foundations, madrasas, education, health, economy,

agriculture, public works and social assistance, and are autonomous, in accordance with the laws enacted by the Grand National Assembly'. Thus, it reflects a decentralized understanding that grants great authority to local governments.

The Kurds were regarded as founding partners of the Republic in the 1921 Constitution and in Mustafa Kemal's statements from that time. However, this lasted only a short time. The 1924 Constitution, especially in the new period that started with the Sheikh Said rebellion, spoke of the Turkish state instead of Turkey, the articles were defined through Turkishness, the decentralized understanding of the 1921 Constitution would be abandoned, and a strict centralized administration was established.

The main reason for the fear of division and separatism, kept alive by governments of the past and present, has always been the Kurds. Successive Kurdish rebellions reinforced this fear and turned it into a weapon in the hands of the governments to legitimize the oppression of the Kurds. In the process leading up to the establishment of the Republic and during the Republican period, the biggest rebellions were the 1921 Koçgiri uprising, the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion, the 1926–27 and 1930 Ağrı rebellions, the 1937–38 Dersim events and the PKK armed movement, which started in 1984 (Eruh and Şemdinli raids). According to official records, there have been 24 Kurdish uprisings in this period (from 1920 to the foundation of PKK). These uprisings further strengthened the Turkish state's thickest red line and its deepest anxiety concerning division of the nation. This anxiety has been the cement of nation building and national unity for a century.

Insufficient diagnosis, wrong treatment

The methods used against 'others' who disturb the central authority, rebel in order to seek their rights, demand independence, or are suspected of disrupting the national unity are fairly constant. These include severe oppression and persecution; bans from legal rights; prohibition of the others' language, culture, and beliefs; exile, condemnation to death or banishment, assimilation, extermination.

The members of the CUP, and later members of the Republican government, took over and applied these methods during the establishment of the nation-state. The treatment applied to the revolts were always the same: state violence to suppress the uprising by any means, including extermination. The ruling class knew that a homogeneous state based on unconditional Turkish sovereignty could not be achieved without solving the 'Oriental question' or the 'Eastern problem'. They were also aware that they needed to learn about the East (Kurdish regions) in order to find solutions and be able to take precautions. This need led to the preparation of dozens of Eastern Reports, starting from the first years of the Republic. From the Sheikh Said rebellion to the present, there are at least twenty official Eastern Reports prepared by commanders, general inspectors, and ministers appointed to the region, as well as reports by various political parties.

An assessment in the first report (14 September 1925), prepared after the proclamation of the Republic, reflects the mentality of the state that has survived until today. The speaker of the Parliament at the time wrote, 'The main problem in the East is the development of the idea of nationalism amongst the Kurds. [...] The issue that I attach most importance to is the proliferation of the idea of nationality among the Kurds and the emergence of a completely national revolt in the future.' Solution proposals from this and similar reports were as follows: declaration of martial law; establishing general inspectorates; increasing the power of the central government; removal of Kurds from the Kurdish region; relocation of Kurdish villages in the mountains to the plains; forced resettlement of tribes; resettlement of Turks to the Kurdish region; and elimination and Turkification of Armenian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Assyrian minorities along with Kurds.

Some of the aforementioned reports also have suggestions like eliminating the poverty of the people of the region and protecting them against tribal structures, landed elite, and sheikhs. However, the focus of all of them is Turkification of the population by changing the demographic make-up, and tying of the administrative structures to the centre, by state violence when necessary.

The Dersim massacre

The 1937–1938 Dersim massacre (official terminology: Dersim rebellion) amply mirrors the Turkish state's view of the national issue and the ideology of the Republic. Due to Dersim's geographical location, the Alevi Kızılbaş belief of the majority of its population, the Kurdish/Zaza identity and its unique socio-cultural traditions, this region remained outside the control of the central government during the Ottoman period. In the process of creating a homogeneous and centralized Turkish state, it was necessary that such a region be 'conquered'.

The region, whose name was changed to Tunceli with the Settlement Law enacted in 1935, was not against the proclamation of the Republic. On the contrary, although Dersim was in solidarity with Mustafa Kemal and did not support the religious Sheikh Said rebellion, the separatist Koçgiri rebellion, or other Kurdish nationalist rebellions, it was still subjected to a heavy-handed massacre. It was described by the authorities as 'a tumour that needed to be removed'. There was no real rebellion in the region, but rather, from time to time, tribal conflicts and small-scale uprisings against the oppression of the military police. However, the Kızılbaş, Alevi Kurdish and Zaza people did not conform to the state's 'Sunni Muslim Turk' model. In addition, the people of the region were considered 'uncivilized' and 'wild'.

In 1937 and 1938, an operation intended to discipline Dersim with great military force was launched. Some tribal chiefs, sheikhs, religious leaders, and others who took up arms were hanged and murdered. Villages were bombed and civilians, young and old, women and children were shot. Those who escaped to the caves, where they hid, were killed with gas bombs. A whole population was massacred. When it is said that 'the rivers flowed red with blood for days' it is not a myth, but a bitter truth confirmed by some civil servants and soldiers who served in the region at the time.

'Turkish soldiers and local people of Dersim region.' The picture does not only show the oppression suffered by the inhabitants of the region, but also the poverty in many rural areas during the first decades of the republican era. Wikimedia Commons.

According to official documents, more than 13 000 people were killed. According to eyewitness reports, however, more than 20 000 people were killed during the 'Disciplining of Dersim'. Some 12 000 people were exiled from the region according to official reports. Families who were separated as they had to settle in the western parts of the country, especially the Aegean region, and many children were lost to their families. The dimensions of the events were revealed in interviews with the last witnesses of the events and their children in oral history research that began to be published in the 2000s.

The words of Fevzi Çakmak, the Chief of Staff of the period and the most powerful person in the military wing of the state, summarized the view of the Republican government in a report presented in 1931: 'Dersim cannot be won by caressing it, rather the intervention of armed forces constitutes the foundation of improvement. The administration of the region should be handled like a colonial administration, and a colony administration should be established here. First, Kurdishness should be dissolved, then, gradually, the law of the Turk should be implemented.'

Turkish nationalism

The nation-building process that started in the 1910s and continued with the establishment of the Republic was designed around Sunni Muslim Turkish identity. The decisive and unchanging ideology of the Turkish state is Turkish nationalism. The tendency of Turkish nationalism to evolve into racism in the 1930s and 1940s was, on the one hand, due to the effect of economic, social, and political turmoil encountered both from within and beyond the nation – a feeling of being under threat. On the other hand, it was due to the rise of Fascism and Nazism in the surrounding world. In this period, there were allegedly no Kurds anymore, only 'ignorant Turks deceived by imperialists saying "you are Kurds".' In a report prepared by the State Planning Organization after the 27 May 1960 military coup, the phrase 'those who think they are Kurds' is used, and the leader of the coup, General Gürsel, during a visit to Diyarbakir said: 'There are no Kurds. I will spit in the face of anyone who says I am a Kurd.'

The other side of this policy of denial is the claim that no one other than a Turk has any rights in the country. Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, the first minister of justice of the Republic, said: 'Those who are not pure Turks have only one right in the Turkish homeland, which is to be a servant, to be a slave.' The Prime Minister of the time, İnönü, meanwhile said: 'Only the Turkish people has the right to demand ethnic and racial superiority in this country.' More examples of similar statements by those at the highest levels of the state can be cited.

The requirement of being of Turkish race in order to be appointed to state posts and enter military schools does not only apply to non-Muslims, but also to Kurds and other Muslim minorities. In the constitution, citizenship is defined through Turkishness, not through being from Turkey. In response to objections to and debates on this subject, it is said that the term 'Turk' does not refer to an ethnicity, but refers to the whole nation. Even this should be considered an admission that the Turkish state does not recognize any identity other than Turkishness.

The Turkish Left and Kurds

The Turkish left's view on the Kurdish issue at times is the same as that of the state's view; because the left sees the national issue as secondary, ignores ethnic identities, and instead emphasizes the feudal tribal structure and the economic backwardness of the region. Even today, for a significant part of the traditional socialist left and the nationalist left, the root of the problem is the feudal structure in the region, while the solution is class-based.

Founded in Baku in 1920, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), in line with the Comintern's (Communist International) view of the Kemalist revolution and the Republic of Turkey at that time, describes the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925 as a reactionary attempt by feudal elements and those who wanted to bring back the caliphate. *Orak Çekiç* (Hammer and Sickle), the publication of the TKP, wrote that Mustafa Kemal's People's Party had 'a tendency to not only suffocate but also destroy the feudalism and reactionary snake of the Eastern provinces.' Thus, they applauded this decision wholeheartedly and described Sheikh Said as a bandit. After the Sheikh Said rebellion, the government's repression was not only against the Kurds, but also against the communists and all other opponents. After the TKP suffered devastating blows, the attitude towards Ankara changed, now referred to as the 'Kemalist dictatorship'. In the following years, although the right of national minorities to break away from Turkey was defended in accordance with the Comintern's views, it is difficult to say that the Turkish left internalized this right.

In spite of its anti-imperialist and nationalist leanings, towards the 1970s the Turkish socialist left started to recognize the Kurdish reality, although always regarding class politics as more important than identity politics. The idea that ethnic-cultural conflict will be resolved through a socialist revolution is still influential in the now marginalized traditional Turkish left. However, with the increased importance of identity issues in the world at large; the strengthening of national consciousness amongst the Kurds; and, the PKK's initiation of an armed struggle, the awareness of the Kurdish issue has, since the 1990s, increased also in social democratic and socialist left circles.

The wavering line of the development of Kurdish politics

Since 1923, there have always been two sides to the Kurdish and minority policies of the Turkish state: on the one hand, a centralist, security-based side using state violence, and, on the other, a soft power side that aims at winning the people by granting partial rights. The second side, which espouses partly decentralized policies, advocated by right-liberal politicians, has been ineffective, whereas the security-focused, strictly centralist and nationalist mentality has dominated.

Nonetheless, steps have periodically been taken towards a more conciliatory perspective. This happened at the beginning of the 50s, when the Democrat Party (DP) came to power; during Turgut Özal's presidency in the 1980s; during the 1991–92 coalition government of SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) and DYP (True Path Party); in the 1999–2004 period following the capture of Öcalan and his return to Turkey; and, finally during the 2013–2015 Kurdish initiative of the AKP. However, these efforts have confronted the state's red lines, remained inconclusive, and have ultimately resulted in more intense security policies.

Kurdish intellectuals started to organize themselves during the 1950s, yet always encountered pressure and arrests. During the second half of the 1960s, the Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Centers (DDKO, later DDKD) were set up, only to be closed by the military intervention of 12 March 1971. Movements such as Kawa, Rızgarî and Kuk, from the same period, were also under pressure during the 70s and could not establish a significant presence. Still, there was a current nourished from below, which made itself felt from time to time. The policy of intimidation and destruction that the Kurdish people and movements encountered after the military coup of 12 September 1980 also heralded the ensuing developments.

The establishment of the People's Labor Party (HEP) in 1990 can be considered a democratic step. Yet the HEP was forced to close, and the Freedom and Democracy Party (ÖZDEP), the Democracy Party (DEP), the People's Democracy Party (HADEP), the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP), the Democratic Society Party (DTP), the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), all of

which were established successively along the same lines, also suffered the same fate.

A two-sided process has been witnessed since the early 1990s. On the one hand, the intensification of the state's oppression and persecution of the Kurdish people, the implementation of the State of Emergency, the murders of paramilitary forces affiliated with the state and the military, and other illegal practices. On the other hand, a more benign attitude towards HEP and the region by the two coalition partners – Demirel's DYP and Erdal İnönü's SHP – after the 1991 elections. A different kind of hope emerged in the political arena. Demirel, expressing that all citizens are first-class citizens, proclaimed that, 'Turkey has to recognize the Kurdish reality, the Kurdish identity. Turkey has recognized the Kurdish reality, both Istanbul and Hakkari are yours.' However, the hope for peace faded due to the provocations of dark forces within the deep state on the one hand, and the spiral of violence created by the PKK's terrorist actions against civilians on the other.

The establishment of the PKK, an organization of armed struggle, and the establishment of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the organ of the democratic political struggle, are two turning points in two different periods of the century-old history of the Kurdish people's struggle for their rights. They also reflect two different styles of struggle.

The establishment of the PKK and armed struggle

After the military coup of 12 September 1980, when the PKK started an armed struggle, the Kurdish region turned into an inferno for the people. This coincides with the years when respected Kurdish leaders were put in Diyarbakır prison, which is considered one of the world's most terrible dungeons. The frequently uttered phrase 'PKK came out of Diyarbakır prison' is more than just rhetoric; it has truth to it. The Eruh and Şemdinli raids in 1984 marked the beginning of the PKK's 40 year-long armed struggle, with short interruptions.

The PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*), Kurdistan Workers' Party, was founded in Fis village of Lice sub-province in November 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan along with 21 friends. Abdullah Öcalan was a

student at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara and his ideas developed in the leftist environment of the period. The decisive influence of Öcalan's personality and thoughts on the party is important. The organization, which started to gain strength in the Siverek, Hilvan, and Ceylanpınar regions, at first aimed to establish dominance over other Kurdish movements in the region and carried out its first actions against these movements. The decision to move from individual assassinations to armed action was taken in late 1980. Guerrilla training together with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was part of a larger military mobilization, aiming for an 'independent, united, and democratic Kurdistan'. With the 1984 Eruh and Şemdinli raids, the PKK carried out its first major armed actions. The PKK, based in the Qandil region of Northern Iraq since 1986, continued its guerrilla war, while also using armed violence against civilians. In order to consolidate the party and its military wing, all opposition was eliminated and internal executions were carried out. Since the mid-1980s, Kurdish youth, both men and women, have been flocking to PKK's mountain cadres. While the Kurdish region turned into hell in the 1990s, participation in the organization accelerated.

In the early 1990s, the PKK strategy included armed violence against the civilian population, and the organization's violence increased during this period. State violence was intensified simultaneously, and the military General Staff described the period as a 'low-intensity war'. The capture of Öcalan in 1999 and his being brought to Turkey was a turning point. While Öcalan – the founder and undisputed leader of the PKK – was on trial to be hanged, he ordered that the PKK withdraw troops from Turkey and declare a cease-fire. In Öcalan's words, 'The Kurdish armed struggle is over'. However, the ceasefire period was short-lived. The state, which calculated that Öcalan's capture would weaken the organization, did not comply with the ceasefire. Provocations from both sides, as well as the HPG (PKK's military wing) engaging in sporadic clashes, started a new phase of the conflict, though not as intense as before. In this period, the military wing became stronger and the PKK's influence on the Kurdish people increased.

With Öcalan's thesis on democratic confederalism in 2005, the Kurdish movement entered a new era. Meanwhile, the AKP came to power and secret negotiations began through the National Intelligence Organization (MIT).

These negotiations bore fruit, the AKP government initiated the 'Solution Process' as of 2013, and the hope for peace grew. However, the Erdoğan government ended the peace process in the summer of 2015. In the following days, and partly influenced by the developments in Syria, PKK's Qandil troops declared democratic autonomy in some areas. This was met by unprecedented state violence in the region. Residential centers, especially in Diyarbakır's Sur region, Lice, Cizre, and Silvan were burnt down and destroyed, many people died, and a lot of violence and savagery took place. In the same period, PKK largely withdrew from Turkey, instead giving its weight to the Kurdish movement in Northern Syria (Rojava) and Northern Iraq. The struggle between PKK and the Turkish state thereby moved beyond the borders of Turkey.

Democratic Struggle and the HDP

The second turning point of the Kurdish movement was the establishment of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in October 2013. The HDP emerged from the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK, *Koma Civakên Kurdistanê*), which included various Kurdish parties, organizations, and personalities; it was the umbrella organization of Öcalan's democratic confederalism proposal. The Party was established in a political environment wherein a peaceful, democratic solution based on civil politics seemed possible. It grew quickly, entered the Parliament with 80 representatives in the 2015 elections, and became the third largest party of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Despite obstacles during the November 2015 elections, which followed the end of the Solution Process and aimed to cancel the results of the June 2015 elections, HDP again entered the Parliament as the third largest party. Under the AKP-MHP government HDP's co-chairs (Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ) as well as its elected mayors, representatives, and activists were constantly attacked, arrested, and tried for allegedly being tied to a terrorist organization. Despite this and the possibility of closure before the 2023 elections, HDP continues its struggle with an emphasis on democracy.

HDP supporters marking International Women's Day on 8 March 2017. Wikimedia Commons.

The heavy toll of forty years of war

The toll of the Kurdish war, which has moved across borders for the last 10 years, is heavy. At least fifty thousand people have lost their lives, and close to four thousand villages and hamlets have been burned and destroyed. According to estimates, more than 3.5 million people have had to migrate from the region, and seventeen thousand extrajudicial killings have occurred. The cost of the war, which was calculated at 300 billion dollars in 2010, is believed to have reached 600–700 billion dollars as a result of the military expansion into Northern Syria and Northern Iraq.

Another problem is the rise of chauvinistic Turkish nationalism and an increase in hostility towards Kurdish people among Turks under the influence of the equation 'HDP=PKK=Terror'. Since 2015, Erdoğan has partnered with Devlet Bahçeli's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), thereby yielding to fascist Turkish, ethnic nationalist, and militarist factions within the deep state. This has resulted in a deadlock for the Kurdish issue. Since the Turkish right, nationalist left, and even the main opposition parties are fed by the same ethnic nationalist source and bear the traces of the same founding ideology, the difficulties in finding a solution are considerable.

Possibilities and challenges

The now hundred-year-old Republic has not been able to solve the Kurdish issue. The problem, largely national until 2013–2014, now involves regional and global actors such as the USA, Russia, Iran and Iraq. This is due to the turbulent developments in Syria and the broader Middle East. Turkey's operations in Northern Syria (Rojava), that is, its policy of expelling and destroying the Kurdish presence from the region under the pretext of fighting terrorism, has led to a deadlock. Since there are close family and tribal ties between the Kurds of Turkey and Rojava, these operations have further distanced Turkey's Kurds from the state.

It should be emphasized that despite 40 years of suffering, the Kurdish people and the Kurdish rights movement, as represented by the HDP, do not currently have separatist intentions or policies. The 'shared life in a shared homeland' slogan of Selahattin Demirtaş, the currently imprisoned former co-chair of HDP and one of the most influential figures in the Kurdish movement, along with his aim to be a party of Turkey, express the dominant current in Kurdish politics.

Although a century has passed since its founding, the Republic still lacks the ability to bring a constructive approach to the issue. The state's red lines, which perhaps were inevitable a hundred years ago, but that seem more obsolete today, still cannot be crossed. Each time steps are taken towards a solution they encounter a repressive mindset, militarist practices, and anti-democratic oppresssion.

On the other hand, both the Kurdish movement and a democratic public opinion in favour of a peaceful solution seem to be trying to bring about a necessary mentality change alongside the lessons learned from the experiences of the last years. Despite the heavy oppression and unlawfulness of recent years, the Kurdish political movement and the Kurdish rights struggle continue to advocate for peaceful and democratic changes. They are indignant due to the discrimination they have suffered, the usurpation of their rights, the fact that their identities are not recognized, and their will not respected. Yet at the same time, they are as determined as ever to pursue their demands.

Kurds want to live freely and develop their language, culture and beliefs; they want recognition of their Kurdish identity, the passing of political rights and freedoms, and respect for their political will and human dignity. They see the

assurance of the realization of these demands in a constitution that promises equal citizenship and democratic autonomy. In other words, what they demand is a definition of citizenship based on Turkey, not Turkishness; the rights expressed in the European Charter of Local Self Government; autonomy for the local governments of the provinces of the Kurdish region in the fields of education, culture, economy, and public works; and an end to government interventions against elected local government representatives.

The slogan 'shared life in a shared homeland' reflects the longing of the masses. Recent research shows that separatist aims are not widely supported by the Kurdish people of the region. According to a survey conducted in eleven regional provinces between 29 October and 7 November 2017, the demand for independence was 12.7 per cent (Diyarbakır-based SAMER, a socio-political research centre). At the end of 2018, it was in the range of 9–10 per cent. According to research conducted in eighteen centres in twelve Kurdish provinces in March 2021, 9.9 per cent of the population called for independence and 5.1 per cent supported a federation. These rates were significantly lower in 2014, when the Solution Process was on the agenda. On the other hand, if the millions of Kurds who have left the region and settled in the metropolises are taken into account, the rate is likely even lower.

The reason that the century-old Republic has failed the Kurdish test is that the ideological red lines of the 1920s still have not been crossed. That Kurds have still not gained their rights is not due to their alleged separatism, but to the fact the real meaning of a 'shared life' in a 'shared homeland' has not been understood by the authorities. Therefore, a radical change of mindset is required to solve the problem. Will Turkey be able to achieve this change of mentality and become a democratic republic of Kurds as well as Turks? The question should not be directed to the present government only. For example, how aware is the main political opposition (CHP) of the close link between the Kurdish problem, on the one hand, and their own aim to bring democracy back – 'crown the Republic with democracy' – on the other; that is, that full democracy cannot be achieved without also solving the Kurdish problem? This question still begs an answer.

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Alevi Historiography and the Turkish Republic

HEGE MARKUSSEN

> Alevi are bound to the Republic. That is an unbreakable bond.[1]

It is June 2022 and Hasan Dede sits behind his desk in his office at the Alevi association, waiting to bless the food prepared from sacrificed sheep to be distributed among the regular visitors. We are in Ankara, talking about the importance of the city for what he claims to be the real essence of the Republic. The Republic, in Hasan Dede's understanding, is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secularist creation aiming at clearing out religion from the state apparatus and establishing religion as a matter of personal conscience. Hasan Dede's approach to the Turkish Republic is part of a narrative of collective understanding of the Alevi past, which is a result of decades of identity political efforts by Alevi associations in Turkey and in Europe. Alevi adherence to the republican principle of laicism and to the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is collectively strong, mythologised and borders on religious reverence. Developments during the hundred years of the republic deviating from this secularist legacy are understood as deterioration of the real essence of the Turkish Republic. Kemalist ideology is, in this perspective, an integral part of the Alevi worldview, visualised by the tripartite poster of the Imam Ali, the medieval saint Hacı Bektaş Veli and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk adorning the wall in Hasan Dede's office.

[1] Interview 2022-06-17 in Ankara. Hasan Dede is a pseudonym.

Images of Imam Ali, Haci Bektaş Veli and Atatürk from the wall of another Alevi association. Eline, beline, diline sahip ol *(control your hands, waist and tongue) is an Alevi saying communicating moral aspects of living. The saying is often dedicated to the saint Hacı Bektaş Veli. Photo by the author.*

However, this Alevi narrative also conceals a variety of Alevi experiences with and within the Turkish Republic. Historically, three distinct Alevi groups that in certain periods and for various reasons have been identified as the *Alevi* may be discerned. One of these groups is the *Bektaşi*, understood as the Sufi Order Bektaşiyya and the lineages of sacred authority related to the Çelebi family in the central Anatolian town of Hacıbektaş. Another is the *Kurdish Alevi* and especially those coming from Dersim, who only make up a minority among the Alevi, but still have been a driving force in what has been called the Alevi movement in Europe. A third group is the Alevi who are historically connected to the rural Anatolian *Kızılbaş*, whose history has been most decisive for the collective understanding of the Alevi past and whom Hasan Dede's holy lineage belongs to. In this chapter, I will describe this diversity focusing on four periods

of significance for these Alevi communities' understanding of their place and role in the republic. These periods are the establishment of the republic and consequential changes through reforms and operations, the 1960s and 1970s with internal and international migration and societal polarisation leading up to the 1980 coup d'état, the 1990s revitalisation of Alevi identity as a reaction to the policies of the post-1980s, and the still ongoing reign of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

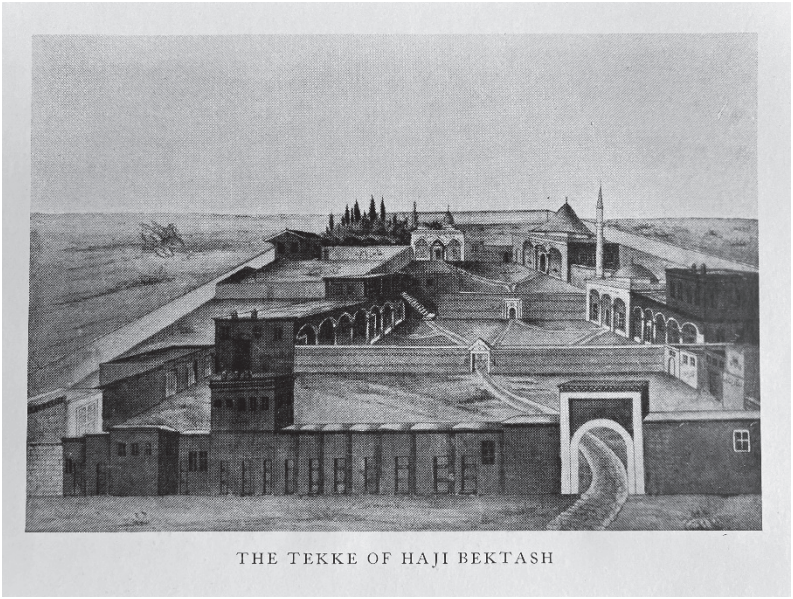
The Establishment of the Turkish Republic

A widespread narrative about the Alevi in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic tells a story of a people persecuted for their deviant religious beliefs and practices, living in rural Anatolia, legally and administratively withdrawn from the Ottoman authorities. For these communities, the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the subsequent abolition of the caliphate were part of the liberation that enabled the Alevi to go from concealment in the periphery to claiming societal visibility and religious freedom. Therefore, the Alevi supported the national struggle for an independent country as well as the Kemalist reforms implemented in the nascent republic. In this narrative, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is the saviour and the secular state he established is a proof of that. The historical sources available give a more complex picture of the relations between the various Alevi groups as well as their roles in, and attitudes towards, the new republic (Küçük 2001; Faroqhi 2004).

At the time of the Turkish War of Independence and the provisional government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara coexisting with the Sultanate in Istanbul (1920–1923), the Bektaşi order was still a political and social force to be reckoned with. Although it had been banned in 1826 as a part of the abolition of the Janissaries, and its *tekke*s (convents) were under the supervision of the Nakşibendi order, the Bektaşi *baba*s (religious leaders) had followers in all parts of the crumbling empire. The main *tekke* in Hacıbektaş in central Anatolia (close to Nevşehir) hosted two rival Bektaşi branches with the Çelebi leader Cemalettin Efendi claiming to be a descendent of the patron saint Hacı Bektaş Veli, and Salih Niyazi Baba representing the Babağan branch, whose

leaders claim to belong to families with genealogies back to the prophet's family, *Ehl-i Beyt*. Both the Young Turk nationalists and the anti-nationalists working for the survival of the sultanate and caliphate, visited the main *tekke* to gain popular support for their causes. They knew that a considerable part of the Alevi Kızılbaş groups of rural Anatolia were followers of these two Bektaşi branches, and they realised that it was important to gain the support of the Anatolian Alevi, as there were Kurdish Alevi groups further east seeking an independent Kurdish state. There were, however, also followers of the Bektaşi *baba*s among the Kurdish Alevi in Dersim. Both Cemalettin Efendi and Salih Niyazi Baba supported the nationalists and mobilised people and resources for the national cause. The rural Alevi population also attracted interest from the Istanbul government which sent Sunni teachers to gradually convert them. Moreover, there had been American missionaries in the area for a long time reporting that the Alevi were easily convertible and already almost Christian (compared to the Sunni Muslims) (Karakaya-Stump 2004; Kieser 2001).

Mustafa Kemal (later to be given the surname Atatürk) had good relations with both Cemalettin Efendi and Salih Niyazi Baba. This is evident from several letters from Mustafa Kemal addressed to the leaders of the Hacıbektaş *tekke*. He visited the *tekke* on 23 December 1919 and, according to travel accounts from his entourage, they were entertained as guests and given a banquet. It is by some Alevi believed that the banquet was in fact a *cem* ritual in which Mustafa Kemal was initiated into the order and that there were multiple links between Bektaşi teachings and the nationalism that he represented. The topics of the conversations during the visit are still a matter of speculations. Some Alevi writers claim that Mustafa Kemal and Cemalettin Efendi conducted secret meetings where they discussed the abolition of the caliphate and the secular tenets of the coming republic. Historical documents only confirm that they met, that Mustafa Kemal, not yet (openly) suggesting the abolition of the caliphate, was there for securing popular support for the National Pact, and that he noticed the rivalry and contentions between the two Bektaşi leaders and wished for reconciliation for their support for the national cause to be more powerful. It was also clear from a letter Mustafa Kemal sent to the *tekke* in June 1919, prior to his visit, that he expected Cemalettin Efendi to mediate between the nationalists, the Kızılbaş Alevi in Anatolia, and the Kurdish Alevi in Dersim.



The tekke in Hacıbektaş in the early twentieth century. Image from Hasluck 1929.

Cemalettin Efendi was not a bystander of the political developments during the years leading up to the establishment of the republic. He was one of three Bektaşi members of parliament in the first National Assembly and its Second Vice-President. He remained in parliament until his death in 1922, although due to ill health he never joined any of the meetings. He sent letters, which were read out loud during the meetings. In addition, there were four Alevi members of parliament from Dersim, one from Erzincan, one from Kars and a Babağan Bektaşi member of parliament from Denizli. After the death of Cemalettin Efendi, his successor Veliyettin Efendi continued the Çelebi support for the nationalists and issued a declaration in the political newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* on 5 May 1922, addressing the Alevi and Bektaşi.

Although the main *tekke* in Hacıbektaş was influential in Anatolia, twelve out of approximately seventeen *tekke*s were located in Istanbul and the majority of these were opposing the nationalist movement. They were led by high-

ranking *baba*s with long time relations with the sultanate probably fearing loss of status and influence under the nationalist government. One of these Bektaşi was Kiraz Hamdi Pasha, a prominent anti-nationalist listed as number one among one hundred and fifty personae non grata (*Yüzellilikler*), who were excluded from the amnesty within the frame of the General Amnesty Protocol attached to the Treaty of Lausanne. Bektaşi opposition to the nationalist government increased with the ban on Sufi Orders (*tarikat*) issued under Law 677 on 30 November 1925 (on how Sufi orders survived in the republic despite this ban, see Atacan's article). The ban was a part of the secularisation measures eventually to be inscribed in the Constitution in 1937 – a secularisation of society that took the form of a struggle over symbols and suppression of competing (religious) networks. Bektaşi *baba*s continued their work clandestinely and some, like the Babağan leader Salih Niyazi Baba, moved to the main Bektaşi *tekke* in Tirana, Albania.

Negative consequences of the republican reforms and the politics of the early republic for Alevi and Bektaşi communities are seldom mentioned in contemporary Alevi historiography. To imply that Atatürk himself was involved in repressive measures directed towards Alevi and Bektaşi is controversial. One example of this is the Dersim operation in 1937–1938, when the Turkish armed forces killed thousands of civilians and drove a larger number into displacement. Whether Atatürk was informed or not about the actions of the armed forces is debated among the Alevi and if he was, the operation is not understood as an attack on the Alevi and their religious and cultural traditions per se, but rather an inter-vention against civilizational backwardness and tribal opposition.

Migration and societal polarisation: 1960–1980

Hasan Dede moved with his family from the rural vicinity of Sivas to Ankara in the 1950s and settled in a *gecekondu* area predominantly populated by Alevi families. In time, a couple of cousins from the village moved in with them and both he and his brother married from the village. Although of holy descent (*ocakzade*), his family was not wealthy, and his father combined the practice of religious leadership (*dedelik*) with odd jobs and made sure that his sons received

secondary education. In the 1960s and 1970s, parts of their extended family settled in Germany, and although they considered migrating to Europe, Hasan Dede or his parents eventually never did.

Depopulation of rural Anatolia began in the 1950s and continued with large scale urbanisation and international migration during the 1960s and 1970s. There were both push and pull factors in play, as the rural countryside could not compete with towns and cities in Turkey and Europe when it came to meeting the demand for labour and educational opportunities. Chain migration was prevalent to the urban *gecekondu*s and to European cities, and remittances and travels economically and socially tied together villages and urban areas in Turkey and Europe. As Alevi in the urban areas in fear of repression and stigmatisation often held their identities to themselves, they were dependent on these ties also for the maintenance of their religious and cultural practices. During the 1960s, the Alevi as a group nevertheless became publicly visible in the political sphere. One of the reasons for this was the contentions around the state's idea to develop a Department of Denominations (*Mezhepler Müdürlüğü*) within the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). In 1963, this generated protests from the conservative right-wing press refusing the idea that Alevism was a denomination and accusing the state of bringing '*mum söndu* into the mosques' (Şener & İlknur 1995, cited in Massicard 2005, 119).[2] The same year witnessed the first Alevi public mobilisation through three newspaper declarations by Alevi students in Ankara and Istanbul. In the following public debates Alevism was legitimised by Turkishness and the role of the Alevi in the nation through their devotion to Kemalism. This was cultivated even by active Alevi of Kurdish background with the consequence that Kurdish Alevism remained publicly invisible. In fact, this seems to have been one of the reasons behind the development of the idea of establishing a Department of Denominations – to dissolve manifestations of Kurdish identity through the Turkification of the Alevi. The year after the student declarations, and in the midst of the public debates on the nature of Alevism, the Hacıbektaş *tekke* reopened newly renovated as a museum. It was the result of eager political lobbying from Bektaşi circles and the opening

[2] *Mum söndu* means "the light went out" and refers to a widely spread rumour of Alevi engaging in sexual activities in their *cem* rituals.

ceremony constituted the first Alevi public festival in Hacıbektaş – a tradition that has continued until today.

Politically, the Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Atatürk, has enjoyed massive support from Alevi during the course of the republic and has also been a channel for political careers for many people of Alevi background. In 1966, the establishment of the Unity Party (Birlik Partisi, BP) was the first attempt to form a platform for raising Alevi issues in the Turkish Parliament. Among the driving forces was the Çelebi Bektaşi (after the Surname Law of 1934 called the Ulusoy family) and it gained support mainly from Turkish Alevi and typical CHP supporters. The Unity Party existed until the 1980 coup d'état, but only with a limited number of deputies in Parliament.

In the political and societal left-right wing polarisation in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s, Alevi were firmly positioned in leftist politics. On the one hand, a great number of Alevi, both Kurdish and Turkish, were active socialists and communists during these decades. On the other hand, non-Alevi leftists also considered Alevism as a favourable ground for leftist ideas and separatism, and used it accordingly.[3] Incidents understood as parts of the state breakdown on the political left during the 1970s, accumulating in the coup d'état in 1980, are central aspects of contemporary Alevi historiography. It is, for example, not uncommon to find photographs of the famous leftist trio, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnan and Deniz Gezmiş executed in Ulucanlar prison in Ankara in 1972, decorating walls in Alevi associations. A deeper wound in the collective Alevi identity is what has gone down in Alevi history as the Maraş massacre. In December 1978, more than hundred leftists and Alevi were killed in the city of Kahramanmaraş in what seems to have been an ultranationalist action with law enforcements as passive bystanders. A considerable number of survivors of this attack fled the country to Europe and some of them settled in Sweden. In Germany, the Maraş massacre spurred Alevis to organise in cities like Berlin and Hamburg – although not publicly as Alevi.

[3] One example of leftist revolutionaries using Alevism as an ideological canopy is Esat Korkmaz, a revolutionary, who later, in the 1990s and 2000s devoted his life to research and teaching the history and nature of Alevism to Alevi.

The rise of identity politics in the 1990s

With the landslide victory of the Motherland Party (ANAP) in 1983, considerable changes in the structure of the Turkish state and society were implemented. Turkishness was redefined within the framework of 'the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis', creating opportunity structures for the first mobilization of Islam in Turkish politics. For the Alevi, this meant mandatory confessional Sunni religious education in schools, of which they have, without success, repeatedly tried to be exempted from. The gradual increase of political Islam in public and political visibility, also spurred the organization of the Alevi outside of the political left that had been wiped out by the 1980 coup d´état. As such, the 1990s have been characterised as a decade of wide-ranging public revitalisation of Alevi identity – an Alevi renaissance.

In 1989, Alevi students organised a public Alevi Culture Week at the University of Hamburg and distributed an Alevi declaration demanding legal and public recognition for Alevi in Germany and Turkey. These actions have been considered the start of the European Alevi mobilisation. The year after, a similar declaration was published by Alevi and other intellectuals in the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* in Turkey. The differences between the Alevi declarations in 1963 and the ones in 1989/1990, and the reasons that the latter turned out to be the starting point of a comprehensive Alevi mobilization, may be traced to the transnational nature of the later calls and the clear quest for public visibility that they entailed. It might also be related to the fact that it was only in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s when international research communities became aware of the existence of the Alevi minority in Turkey and Europe.[4]

It was, however, after the Sivas arson attack on 2 July 1993, that the public Alevi visibility peaked through numerous establishments of Alevi associations and foundations in Turkey and Europe, the mushrooming of publications on Alevi history, religion and culture, as well as an increasing number of public

[4] The first large international conference with leading scholars in Alevi and Bektaşi studies was held in Strasbourg 1986. Many more were to follow, like the international symposium in Berlin 1995 and the international Alevi Identity workshop at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul in 1998.

festivals and manifestations. In the Sivas arson attack, also called the Sivas massacre, thirty-three Alevi cultural workers and leftist intellectuals attending a public festival in the city, died when the hotel they stayed in was set on fire by an enraged mob in front of thousands of onlookers, inactive law enforcement and live television broadcast. In reaction to this incident Turkish and Kurdish Alevi united under a collective Alevi identity, downplaying internal religious, cultural and historical differences, in the name of cooperation and fight against the Sunni Islamification of the Turkish state and society. The 1990s was also a decade when Islamist political parties won unprecedented electoral gains and self-proclaimed protectors of Kemalism (such as the military and the CHP political establishment) approached Alevi as allies and further fuelled the secular-Islamist divide. With such an enemy to fight against, the Alevi public image homogenised and internal critical discussions were downplayed. A quote from a conversation with a leading Alevi in 1994, in a publication by Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi (2003, 67) illustrates the situation well: 'Of course not all of us are fans of Kemalism and Atatürk. But now it is not the time of critical discussions. We have first to push back the Islamist reaction (*irtica*), then we can turn to the problem of Kemalism.'

The reign of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)

I asked Hasan Dede in his office in Ankara: 'I assume Ankara will be central next year in the celebrations of the hundred years of Republic. Are you planning any celebrations or activities here at the association?' Hasan Dede shook his head, looked down on his desk and answered with a sad smile 'No, that's Erdoğan's thing. There is not much to celebrate. He, and his like-minded, have destroyed the Republic. And by the way, 2023 is also the anniversary of the Sivas massacre – 30 years!'

If there is anything that the various Alevi communities in Turkey and in Europe agree on, it is the opposition to the current leadership of Turkey. Although there were some mild optimisms in the beginning of the AKP's second term of office, with the Democratic Openings and the Alevi workshops, most

Alevi associations and foundations are now in agreement that these initiatives led nowhere and was not designed to solve conflicts or facilitate cooperation towards Alevi-Sunni equality. The process of the Alevi Opening, where some Alevi associations were invited to the workshops and others not, and where some considered cooperation with the state as a plausible way forward towards equal citizenship rights and others not, deepened already existing splits between various Alevi associations and foundations.

Preparations for Sivas commemoration in another Alevi association. Photo by the author.

In the party-political field, a change occurred with the establishment of the leftist Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) in 2012, and its rise in the 2014 and 2018 elections. Support for the HDP among Alevi rose from 7 to 16 per cent between June 2015 and June 2018 and even Turkish Alevi have been supportive of what is generally considered the latest in a long line of Kurdish parties. The imprisonment of the party chairs, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ,

socialist policies, and a focus on minority and human rights seems to be aspects that have cleared the way for the support of Turkish Alevi.[5] There is since 2021 a pending court case for the closure of HDP, with the consequence that the party had to run for parliamentary elections in May 2023 under a different name (*Yeşil Sol Parti*, Green Left Party). In the end, AKP won 268 of the seats and the main opposition party, CHP, heavily supported by Alevis, won only 169 seats. The leaders of HDP, and several other parties in opposition to AKP, openly supported the CHP politician Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in challenging Tayyip Erdoğan in the presidencial election held at the same time. Being of Kurdish Alevi (Dersimli) background (and for the fact that he is representing CHP), Kılıçdaroğlu was supported by the Alevi in both Turkey and Europe. With the result of 48 against Erdoğan's 52 per cent, Kılıçdaroğlu lost the elections and the Alevi communities prepare for five more years of AKP rule in a highly polarised society.

During the 2000s and 2010s, the academic study of Alevi and Alevism has evolved into its own field – Alevi studies, with considerable focus on the developments in the European Alevi movement. In addition, a sub-field has emerged, that of Kurdish Alevi studies, highlighting the Alevi history and nature of Dersimli religion and culture. One might say that as various Alevi communities unite in their opposition to the AKP and the current Turkish state, the academic field of Alevi studies becomes more diversified, leaving room for multiple ways of being, experiencing and living Aleviness.

Living the republican history in Turkey today

In Hasan Dedes's association, many of the members and visitors hail from the city of Sivas and its rural vicinity. In June 2022, as in most other Alevi associations and foundations around the country, preparations were made to travel to Sivas for the 2 July annual commemoration of the arson attack. They know that the local law enforcement will prevent them from laying flowers on the doorstep of the old Madımak hotel, now renovated into a culture and science

[5] Interviews with Turkish Alevi in Ankara in October and November 2022.

centre with a sole memory corner to commemorate the victims. They also know that the commemoration procession from the Alevi populated Alibaba district to the hotel will be heavily directed and guarded by police. In the association in Ankara, banderols with the pictures of the victims were spread all over the meeting room and in the ceremonial room (the *cem evi*) a team of documentary filmmakers from Germany was interviewing family members of some of the people who lost their lives in the fire. 'This is also part of the history of the Turkish Republic', I said. Hasan Dede lifted his arms and shoulders in a gesture of desolation: 'The history of a Republic deprived of its essence', he said and looked towards the door as if to signal that our conversation was over.

Although central, it is not only through the commemoration of the arson attack that Alevi are living and re-living the course of history of the Turkish Republic. As the republic reaches its hundredth anniversary, there seems to be a renewed interest in Alevi and Bektaşi by the Turkish state. In August 2022, Erdogan visited Hacıbektaş for the 750-year anniversary of the death of the saint Haci Bektaş Veli. Later, in November 2022, a Presidency of Alevi-Bektaşi Culture and Cemevi was established within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the aim of coordinating services in the *cem evi*s, conduct scientific research and provide what is called 'suitable environments' for the production and dissemination of knowledge on Alevi-Bektaşism (Çelikbaş 2022). These initiatives are not welcomed by the general Alevi population, as they are understood as indications of a future increase in control of the Alevi communities. Instead, they demand equal access to resources to run the *cem evi*s, without state control of the activities. Rivalry in the knowledge production on Alevism between the Turkish state and various Alevi and Bektaşi communities is nothing new, and there has for the last decade been a noticeable increase in research publications on Alevism from Sunni state actors. Not only does this widen the gap between the Alevi collective and the Islamic and authoritarian state, but also causes tensions between Alevi groups related to how they react to these state initiatives. The future inner critical debates on Alevi ideologies that was discussed with a leading Alevi in 1994 (see quote above) seem far away as Alevi communities feel threatened and surrounded by the Islamist politics they hate so much.

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How Sufi Orders Have Survived in Modern Turkey

FULYA ATACAN

Sufi orders such as the Mevleviye, Kadiriye, Halvetiye, Sünbüliye, Naqshbandiya and their sub-branches were widespread forms of living Islam in the Ottoman Empire. Like in many other parts of the Muslim world these *tarikat*s were integrated parts of social, political, and economic life. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Sufi orders were mainly autonomous institutions, but, by mid-nineteenth century the Ottoman state, as an extension of its reform policies, tried to bring the Sufi orders under its full inspection and control. At the beginning of the twentieth century discussions of the need for reform of the Sufi orders continued, the purpose of which was to distinguish authentic (*sahih*) from imitated (*sahte*) *tarikat*s. Due to an alleged degeneration of the *tekke*s, discussions were also held in the Parliament, which ventured the possibility of closing them (Ocak 2005; Gündüz 1984; Kara 1980; Işık 2015).

In 1925, two years after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, *tarikat*s were banned. This prohibition did not stop *tarikat* activities, however, but undermined their legitimacy in the new socio-political system. It is widely claimed that *tarikat*s, and particularly the Naqshbandi, constituted an opposition against the Republican modernization project. Although some of the Naqshbandi groups openly rejected the new socio-political system, many just turned silent, and still others became an integrated part of the new system. In spite of its aim to establish a new order, the ruling elite had to deal with the existing socio-cultural structure, something local Kemalists were aware of. They

formed alliances with different groups, and in this sense were not exclusive. As long as ethnic or religious groups did not openly challenge or revolt against the new system, the republican leaders preferred a policy of co-optation. The Turkish state and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) offered stability and order after long years of war during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, something which rendered the new regime recognition among the *tarikat*s as a Muslim Turkish state, in spite of the fact that it also brought hardships and repression.

The ban of the *tarikat*s has been criticised, because such practices, carried out in the name of laicism, created a trauma with incurable effects on the people. This narrative has mostly been used by Islamist intellectuals to justify their own worldview and political preferences. The story is not necessarily told in the same manner by other social groups or individuals. As a matter of fact, the narrative of alleged traumatization is a relatively new one, bolstered by intellectuals and politicians who have reinterpreted history in order to justify their own positions (see e.g. Fazıl 1990; Albayrak 1989). However, ordinary members of the *tarikat*s and, it also seems, most of their leaders have not considered the early republic as a breach from the *tarikat* tradition, but rather as a kind of adjustment period. In fact, the *tarikat*s developed certain survival strategies, through which they were reproduced to suit the changing socio-political structure. During this process they also formed new alliances with different political actors, which took the edge off their troubles.

Socio-political change looks different when watched from a general perspective compared to how it is experienced from an individual point of view. In the following, I will analyse the development of Sufi Islam in Turkey by focusing on the interaction between these two levels: the social and the individual. I will start with a Naqshbandi group and its relationship to the Kemalist elite of the 1930s and 1950s. Then follows an analysis of the subsequent period and how urbanization and multi-party politics affected the Sufi orders.

The Naqshbandi and the Kemalist regime

During the War of Independence many sheikhs and *tarikat* members supported Mustafa Kemal and the nationalists (Kara 2002, 81–87, 91–97; 1980, 212–226). After independence the Sultanate and the Caliphate were abrogated (1 November 1922 and 3 March 1924 respectively)[1] and the office of *Şeyh-ül İslam* and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations were replaced by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, attached to the Prime Ministry. The old *medrese* system was closed down and substituted by a secular system of education. On 8 April 1924, sharia courts were abolished and later the Swiss civil code was adopted.[2]

In spite of these secularizing reforms Islam was still accepted as Turkey's official religion (1924 Constitution, Article 2) and parliament (*meclis*) was charged with applying the Islamic Law (Article 26). Even if these articles were in conflict with Article 3 (sovereignty belongs to people) and Article 4 (parliament is the only and real representative of the people) they were accepted by Mustafa Kemal, who, however, planned to remove them 'at the most convenient time.' Thus, these articles were removed in 1928, but the principle of secularism was not added to the constitution until 1937 (Tarhanlı 1883, 18f).

A severe ban on Sufi *tarikat*s was promulgated after the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925. Sheikh Said was a Kurdish Naqshbandi leader. The rebellion was motivated by ethnic nationalist sentiments (see Oya Baydar's article), but during the revolt religious language and networks were used in order to mobilize the masses.[3] Another important religious uprising occurred in Menemen, in the western part of Anatolia, on 23 December 1930. Naqshbandi dervish Mehmed declared himself *mehdi* (divinely guided) and with a group of disciples he demanded that sharia be proclaimed the legal code in Turkey. A small group of soldiers headed by army officer Kubilay tried to suppress them. In the turmoil dervish Mehmed's disciples killed two guards and beheaded Kubilay. Dervish

[1] For the reaction of the people against the abrogation of the Caliphate and the reaction of the Kemalist regime against them, see Tunçay 1981, 80–84.
[2] About all these legal changes, see Jäschke 1972.
[3] Concerning this period and the Sheikh Said rebellion, see Tunçay 1981, 127–137; van Bruinessen 1992, 265–299.

Mehmed's uprising was suppressed. Many people were arrested, among whom 34 were hanged and 41 sentenced to imprisonment. M. Esad Erbili, another Naqshbandi sheikh who lived in Istanbul, was accused of collaboration with dervish Mehmet and was also sentenced to jail (Tunçay 1981, 293–295; Kara 1980, 185–189).

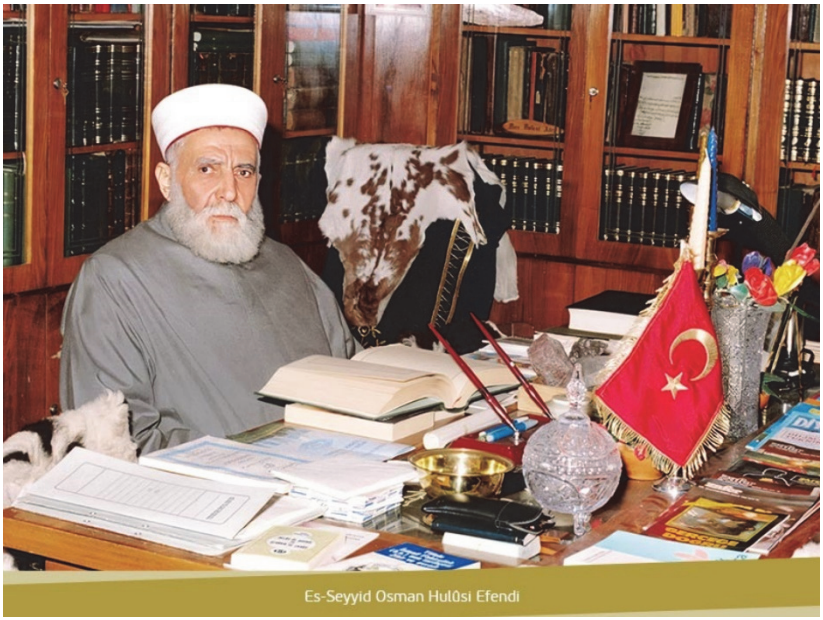
These dramatic events and ensuing persecutions did not stop other Sufi sheikhs from pursuing their religious activities. Osman Hulusi Ateş of the Naqshbandi order and his sheikh Ehramcızade İsmail Hakkı Toprak (d.1969), active around Sivas and neighbouring cities, were such examples (Atacan 1999a). The latter was born in Sivas in 1880 and received his education in a *rüşdiye* (secular secondary school) and in Şifaiyye Medresesi (theological school) in Sivas. After his graduation Ehramcızade worked as a clerk in the local court in Tokat, where he met his sheikh Mustafa Haki Efendi (1856/57–1925), and was chosen sheikh in 1925, the year that the *tarikat*s were banned. During the Republican period, he first worked as a clerk in the post office and later in the Turkish State Salt, Liquor and Tobacco Monopoly.

Ehramcızade had retained the *tarikat* network and managed to maintain it. He regularly visited his disciples in other towns and villages and received them in Sivas. The group continued to practice their Naqshbandi belief. None of the disciples severely criticized the ban of the Sufi orders. One of them said: 'All right, they closed down the *tekke*s but we did not have one. We always performed our *zikr* in the mosque, and mosques were open. They just closed down some buildings but not *tarikat*s.'[4] Muhittin Tütüncü, a close friend of Hulusi Ateş, and, after Ehramcızade's death, the first to grant him an oath of allegiance (*biat*), said: 'Why do you ask questions about that period? It passed away. It is over anyway. We maintained our *tarikat* network. There is no need to discuss it.'[5] The prohibitions did not restrain them from practicing their belief, in spite of the fact that the oppression of gendarme was also widespread in rural areas. But they invented their own methods of avoiding persecution, like putting younger

[4] The data was collected in June and July 1997 and anonymous quotes refer to members of the group.
[5] Interview with Muhittin Tütüncü, 5 July 1997.

students on guard by the windows in order to watch the coming of gendarme (Kara 2000, 36, 175–178).

The fundamental relationship within the *tarikat* is that between the sheikh/*mürşid* (leader/teacher) and the *mürid* (disciple/pupil). This personal, face to face relation can be sustained without a formal institution. With rituals it was different. In the case of Ehramcızade, his house turned into a kind of *tekke*. His disciples visited him in his house and met other disciples there. He also had a room on the upper floor of an old caravansary in the main shopping district of Sivas, where he received his disciples during daytime. The disciples, including Osman Hulusi Ateş and his brother, continued to learn from him.



Osman Hulusi Ateş (1914–1990). Image reproduced from the website of the vakıf *named after him, hulusiefendivakfi.org.tr, with kind permission.*

In the case of Darende, where Osman Hulisi Ateş lived and later became the sheikh of this group, there was no need for a *tekke*, the reason being that there was a mosque associated with this group. The group continued their *zikr* in the mosque right before the early morning prayer, without being stopped. As a matter of fact, the ban did not affect their *zikr* practices. Another important ritual was to go to *Sahra*, which means to go to the countryside. The sheikh would take the decision and the disciples implement it. In the countryside, they cook and eat two different courses and drink tea, recite poems and practice silent *zikr*. They claimed that they had always been able to go to *Sahra* without any difficulty. Thus, the group adjusted itself without great difficulties to the new political system and were able to maintain its existence in this context, much because they relied on their local networks and steered free of politics.

Since the very beginning of the Republic, the ruling party, CHP, organized inspectors, who regularly reported to the party headquarters. However, in spite of the fact that Ehramcızade's *tarikat* was active in Sivas and neighbouring cities, their activities were not reported. Therefore, it seems that the *tarikat*s either successfully concealed themselves, or, that the party hesitated to antagonize them as long as they were not involved in politics or opposition.

Religion, state and nationalism

The Naqshbandi group around Ehramcızade and after him, Hulusi Efendi, was not against the modernization project of the Kemalist elite per se. They actually supported this project. Hulusi Efendi, for example, did not hesitate to wear a hat (Western style, as decreed in 1925), participate in national commemoration ceremonies or attend the opening ceremony of the first bank in the town. Even if the new order affected their daily life, they carried on with their religious practices as if nothing had happened. At this point, their understanding of the state played a crucial role. They believed that – in spite of what was being done to them – also this polity must be respected. Because, they reasoned, 'we may have some bad governments or administrators, but we cannot live without the state, this is our motherland. The state is ours and it is the Turkish state.' This

loyalty to the state is quite widespread among the religious orders. Their loyalty to the state has also been closely connected to their nationalist attitudes.

The group members often emphasized their Turkish origin as well as their leader Hulusi Efendi's love for Turks. Islam is seen as an ethical code for one's daily life. It prevents conflict and develops harmony in society. 'Being a Turk is the most honourable position one can get and Turks have played a leading role in the history of Islam so they must keep this honour.' Islam is interpreted in a holistic manner and this interpretation harmonizes well with the notion of society as an organic whole. Ethnicity and religion are two important components of this conceptualization. The perception of the Turkish nation as a homogenous whole consisting of Turks naturally does not tolerate any ethnic differences. Instead, Islam is considered as a unifying and harmonizing force. Islam is the religion of Turks – a matter of fact that cannot be changed by any means. Such an approach excludes members of other beliefs and leads to the domination of Sunni Islam.

Official Turkish nationalism emphasized common citizenship and ethnic belonging. Religion was excluded from the nationalist discourse, but it has always been used to bolster secular state policies. In practice, Islam has been acknowledged as the religion of Turkish people. When the Kemalist elite talked about the Turkish nation, they implied a nation of Muslims. The terms Turk and Muslim were used interchangeably – a definition that has excluded people with Christian or other non-Muslim faiths. However, other aspects also have to be considered when defining a Muslim. Historically, it is a well-known fact that the Ottoman Empire officially practiced Sunni Islam and prosecuted Alevi and Shia groups several times. With the establishment of the Directory of Religious Affairs in 1924, the new Republic has continued this practice. Members of Alevi Islam have not been prosecuted, but neither have they been recognized as true Muslims. Even their existence is denied. Tensions between the Sunni and Alevi are still alive in particularly the central and eastern parts of Anatolia (see Hege Markussen's article).

Hulisi Efendi was one of the important local actors for the penetration of Republican values into rural areas. İbrahim İpekçi, who belongs to the local elite of Malatya – his father was the mayor of Malatya between 1928 and 1930 – has said that Hulusi Efendi was perceived as an enlightened religious person close to

the CHP.[6] İpekçi himself was active in CHP and was vice-mayor between 1957 and 1965. His brother, Asım İpekçi, was also active in the local branch of CHP. He also worked in the Malatya municipality. The İpekçis, a big landowner family, had a considerable influence among their sharecroppers. Most of the family members have migrated to the big cities, but were quite powerful in local politics until the end of the 1960s and particularly during the single party period. It is known that during the election periods, while the CHP prepared the election lists in Malatya, Asım and İbrahim İpekçi were consulted about the candidates.[7]

Abdülkadir Arat, who is a close friend of İbrahim İpekçi and one of the CHP administrators in Malatya at that time, said in an interview:

> Hulusi Efendi was a very enlightened religious person. Every time I went to Darende, I visited him. He helped us on many matters. I wish we had thousands of imams like him; then Turkey would have been a different country. We would not have had any fanatics.[8]

Arat was generally known as the supporter of CHP until the end of the 1970s. In a local magazine, published in Ankara for people from Malatya, Hulusi Efendi was defined as 'a real religious man and a real *Atatürkçü* (supporter of Atatürk). He is always against religious fanaticism' (Özen 1970, 15).

It seems that support for CHP among the imams and religious leaders was quite widespread. Another local imam, Mehmet Kara (Kutuz Hoca), also indicates that most of the religious experts in his village (Black Sea region) were supporters of CHP and some of them even served as village representatives in the party. On the other hand, members of the Democrat Party (1950–1960) were believed to be of doubtful morality, spending state revenues for their own purposes, and being incompetent administrators.

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[6] The father of İbrahim İpekçi, whose name was also İbrahim İpekçi, died in 1930 and the İpekçi family is locally known as Hacı Abdioğulları.

[7] Interview with İbrahim İpekçi, 30 June 1997.

[8] Interview with Abdülkadir Arat, 1 July 1997. During this and other interviews Reha İpekçi, who is the son of İbrahim İpekçi, accompanied me. I am grateful to the İpekçi family and particularly Reha İpekçi for their help.

Loyalty to the state was the key factor for these sheikhs in their relation to the new Republic. This allegiance not only kept them within the system, but also made them potential partners for the state. Therefore, they have been active promoters of the Kemalist modernization project in their local contexts, and it would be difficult to consider them as opponents to the new Kemalist Republic. They might have had certain reservations, but they never systematically criticized or organized a movement to radically change the existing regime. They preferred the role of companion to that of being an opponent.

As companions, the sheikhs have played an important role in the penetration of Kemalist values into rural areas. They believed in Turkish nationalism and supported the establishment of Turkish identity. Their attitude was in line with the paternalistic, authoritarian state and helped justifying this sort of political regime in the eyes of their disciples. This also shows the willingness of the Kemalist rule to use every means in order to reach its aims.

Today some group members deny the previous role of companionship of their sheikhs. Instead, they talk about oppression. However, what is done is rather a re-writing of the past in order to justify these members' current situation. This can be interpreted as a new form of resistance that did not exist before. There is no doubt that oppression, in some cases even physical oppression, was experienced by these groups. But, like under any authoritarian regime, these groups found different ways to deal with the regime by developing new survival strategies. It seems that the authoritarian regime had a good deal of information related to what was going on in these groups, but they were tolerated as long as they did not constitute a real threat to the regime itself. Followers of these religious groups were aware of the surveillance. Still, they continued their activities, fully aware of their delicate position in the legal and political system of the Republic. So, it would be difficult to argue that *tarikat*s, and particularly the Naqshbandi, formed an opposition against the modernization project or to claim that the Kemalist elite excluded certain groups, particularly *tarikat*s, in their nation-building process. There were some Naqshbandi who openly rejected the new socio-political system, but there were other groups ready to join in. The existing socio-political structure and the nationalism promoted by the Kemalist elite made the alliance between the local

Kemalist elite and the *tarikat*s possible. Many sheikhs simply preferred companionship with the state during the 1930s and 40s.

Urbanisation, multi-party system, party politics

The situation in big cities was not much different from that of towns and villages. Many Sufi groups and their sheikhs either continued their religious practices with extreme caution, or just stopped practicing, which meant they disappeared in the process. No doubt, the Sufi orders also differed concerning their class status. For example, the Mevlevi in İstanbul often came from the upper strata, while the Kadiri were known for having sheikhs and followers from lower strata. Such class differences inevitably affected practices and attitudes.

The migration since the 1960s from villages to big cities has played a significant role in the change of *tarikat* organizations and practices. Patterned on their traditional values and forms of interaction earlier peasants have developed survival strategies based on clientelism. In this context, *tarikat*s have reproduced themselves as vital social security mechanisms mainly for the migrants. These religious networks have in different ways answered to the needs of the migrants. Thus, migrants have utilized different networks like kinship and *hemşerilik*, (being from the same place) to meet their basic needs such as housing and work. If one bears in mind that most of the first-generation migrants worked as unskilled labour, artisans and/or small businessmen in the big cities, it is easier to understand why it is difficult to abandon these networks. In that context, the *tarikat* serves as an important social security mechanism with roots in their places of origin (Atacan 1999b, 91–97).

During the 1960s and 70s the *tarikat*s developed new mechanisms to reach out to the social and political resources of the urban environments. On the one hand, the general socio-political change has affected their members' educational and occupational structure. During that process, members achieving better education and means have helped improving the general material standing of their respective orders. On the other hand, the multi-party system has provided new opportunities. The sheikhs have used these occasions not only to strengthen

their own authority and resources, but also to solve their problem of legitimacy in the political system.

Although the Sufi orders have retained their informal structure of spiritual stages and ranks (*makam*, *derece*), the ban drove them to develop alternative, legal organizations in Turkey. In the 1960s some of them formed voluntary associations and particularly after the 1980's they established a large number of *vakıf*s, which, however, are different from traditional Ottoman *vakıf*s. The new endowments were established within a system of secular laws. Alongside the endowments, publishing houses and later radio and TV channels were established in order to disseminate their worldview and compete with not only the secular ideas and ideologies, but also with the other Islamic groups and *tarikat*s. These organizations have generated new semi-professionalized strata, which do not necessarily consist of the most advanced disciples in the spiritual sense. And, during the AKP rule, many Sufi orders and their members have established their own private schools, universities and hospitals. The Menzil Naqshbandi group has established BİLTEK schools and, EMSEY hospitals. Current Minister of Health, Fahrettin Koca, who is known as the member of İskenderpaşa Naqshbandi group, is the founder of the Medipol University and hospitals.

Sufi groups hold human resources which can be mobilized by political parties for elections. Since 1950 and the beginning of multi-party politics, the *tarikat*s have mainly mobilized their members in favour of right-wing parties. One particular Naqshbandi-Halidi group, the Gümüşhanevi branch, played the major role in the establishment of the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP) in 1970. Many politicians, ministers and prime ministers were members of this particular *tarikat*, such as Necmettin Erbakan, leader of MNP, the subsequent National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), and the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) (all National View or *Milli Görüş* parties). Also, Turgut Özal, leader of the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) and the president of Turkey 1989–93 belonged to this branch of the Naqshbandi order.

Undeniably, AKP has helped many religious groups to reach out to public assets. The party's neo-liberal (privatization) policies have created innumerable opportunities for religious entrepreneurs to thrive in business and wealth. Under

AKP, *tarikat*s have entered into partnerships with state institutions, for example in educational institutions via endowments and associations.

Conclusion

Today, a hundred years after the establishment of Turkish Republic, Sufi orders are still a disputed subject. Even if nobody would deny their existence, their formally illegal position always keeps them in a delicate balance. Their political and economic position contains a potential for tensions extending to different social and political groups.

Over the century, Sufi orders have found different ways to deal with the regime's oppression and have developed various survival strategies. Urbanization and the multi-party system have played a crucial role. With their loose networks, Sufi orders have adopted new ways of recruiting people, of communication and of interpreting hidden knowledge. Actually, contested Sufi groups have developed different survival strategies in order to maintain and expand their religious networks. Many of them have adjusted themselves to the new multi-party system and developed strong patronage relations with different political parties and have thus become a part of the political structure of Turkey. It seems that their loyalty to the state has made the Sufi orders potential partners for the state actors and has facilitated the penetration of Turkish nationalism into society. Over the century the organizational structure of the Sufi orders was also constructed so as to address new legal regulations. These new institutions, informally attached to *tarikat*s, have empowered them to satisfy the needs of different social groups and in turn to bargain with the political regime.

Sufi orders have showed a remarkable ability to adapt themselves to the changing socio-political structure of Turkey. They have been flexible enough to cooperate with any political party. Thus, all political parties, from the CHP to the AKP, have worked with them without hesitation. It seems that this form of Islamic institutions will continue to fulfil the changing needs of the people and form new coalitions with several political and/or state actors also during the twenty-first century.

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The Christian Minorities of Turkey

Hoping for the Best, Fearing the Worst

SVANTE LUNDGREN

The demographic change in Turkey for its Christian minorities has been dramatic. When the republic was founded in 1923, there were several hundreds of thousands of Christian Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians/Syriacs (*süryani*). Today, the total number of Christians is estimated to be less than 100,000, i.e., one per mille of the population.

The demographic collapse, however, happened before that. The Armenian genocide in 1915–16 and the population exchange with Greece in 1923 reduced the number of Christians in the Turkish part of the Ottoman Empire dramatically. Before these events, an estimated 20 per cent of the population there were Christians (Keyder 1987, 79).

When the Republic was founded, those Christians who remained had experienced their coreligionists being killed and expelled from the country in huge numbers. Most of those who remained in 1923 were living in Constantinople (in 1926 officially renamed Istanbul), which had been less affected by these events than other parts of the country.

Thus, the start of the Republican era was difficult for the country's Christians, to put it mildly. And it would continue so. After all that had happened in the turbulent years during and after the First World War, the Christians were fearing the return of these sad times. And they were to experience many times a lack of equality with the majority population in the Republic.

Discrimination and persecution

The Republic was based on an idea of Turkishness, in which Muslim Turks were the norm, the 'real citizens' or 'first-class citizens'. Non-Turkish Muslims, for example Kurds, were second-class citizens, expected to assimilate. Non-Muslims were third-class citizens as it was difficult to assimilate them (Ince 2012, 40f).[1] As non-Muslims, Christians were regularly victims of different discriminatory acts, which included harassment by state authorities and local population, expropriation of property belonging to Christians, and bureaucratic obstacles for religious and educational institutions (Bardakci et al. 2017, 143).

Behind the discriminatory measure was a state policy aiming at Turkifying the country's minorities. When a new Surname Law (*Soyadı Kanunu*) was adopted in 1934, it forced all citizens to take Turkish names (Ince 2012, 61). Traditional Armenian names, ending with -ian, and Pontic Greek names, ending with -ides, disappeared from Turkey.

During the Second World War a special wealth tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) was introduced, officially to raise funds for the country's defence and to curb wartime profiteering but in reality also to inflict financial damage on Turkey's non-Muslim minorities. Non-Muslims were taxed up to ten times heavier than Muslims, a fact which aimed to speed up the Turkification of the economy. Başak Ince (2012, 75; see also 73–77) states that the reason for the tax was 'the elimination of minorities from the economy, and the replacement of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie by its Turkish counterpart'.

The discrimination experienced by the Christians of Turkey sometimes escalated to violence. The most severe of the violent incidents during this period was the September pogrom in 1955, which has been compared to the *Kristallnacht* in Germany in 1938. Rumours that the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki, situated in the building where Mustafa Kemal was born, had been bombed, triggered a violent attack by a Muslim mob primarily against the Greeks of Istanbul. It was later found out that the bomb in Thessaloniki had been planted by the Turkish usher of the consulate. The attack caused several deaths (the exact number is unknown), hundreds of women and boys were

[1] Ince (2012, 59) also calls non-Muslims '"unwanted citizens" of the Republic'.

raped, men were forcefully circumcised, and a huge number of Greek-owned shops and businesses was destroyed (de Zayas 2007).

Behind this attack was an increased tension between Turks and Greeks because of the development in Cyprus. Every time the dispute between the Turkish and the Greek inhabitants of the island escalated, there were repercussions in Turkey. After bloody fights in Cyprus in December 1963 and January 1964, tensions grew in Turkey. In the town of Midyat, populated by both Turks and Assyrians/Syriacs, there was a huge demonstration by the town's Turks in which threats against the Christians were presented. I have talked with Assyrians/Syriacs who experienced this. They say that they had no idea of what was happening in Cyprus, but all of a sudden they were going to pay a price for what Christians there had done (Bargello 2015, 62–67, 77–81). Similar things happened ten years later when there again was a crisis in Cyprus, this time triggering a Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation of the northern part of the island.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, the number of Greeks and Assyrians/Syriacs diminished. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was widespread optimism that the process with a Turkish membership in the European Union would result in democratisation and growing respect for minorities. Some statements by the new strong man, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, were received very positively (Bardakci et al. 2017, 25–53). Eventually, the turn towards more authoritarian rule put an end to this optimism.[2]

The shadow of 1915

The largest Christian community in Turkey is the Armenians. After the genocide in 1915–16 and the end of the First World War, many Armenians who had survived tried to return to their homes in Anatolia and Cilicia. As a result of the advances of the Nationalist movement and the withdrawal of French troops,

[2] Grigoriadis 2021 argues that this backlash has affected the Kurds and Alevis, but not so much the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, as their Ottoman-style status as *dhimmis* and as a *millet* gives them some advantages in an AKP-ruled Turkey, in which there is a certain nostalgia for its Ottoman past.

most of the Armenians there left for Syria and Lebanon in the early 1920's. When the Republic was founded, what remained were small, scattered communities in Anatolia, and a larger one in Istanbul. Eventually, the Armenian community in Turkey was concentrated to Istanbul. Today, their number is estimated to something between 40,000 and 70,000 (Bardakci et al. 2017, 135). There are also many citizens of Armenia living, often illegally, in Turkey, but their number is difficult to estimate. Despite all difficulties, the Armenian community in Istanbul is vibrant with dozens of churches, 19 schools, several newspapers, and other institutions (Bardakci et al. 2017, 152).

The Armenians of Turkey were in a delicate situation. Their decision to live in the country where so many had been killed was questioned by Armenians in the diaspora. The Istanbul Armenians often found it necessary to publicly defend the actions of the Turkish government; such defence was seen as a case of Stockholm syndrome. Things got even more difficult during the last decades of the twentieth century, because of the activities of the Lebanon-based terrorist organisation ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), which killed Turkish diplomats in many countries, and the military coup in 1980, which saw an intensified Turkish nationalism. In general, the community was very withdrawn and held a low profile in the Turkish society.[3]

This changed when Hrant Dink in 1996 started the weekly magazine *Agos*. It was bilingual (Armenian and Turkish), therefore reaching other persons than those within the Armenian community. It openly discussed sensitive topics, including the genocide. Dink was critical not only of the Turkish government, but also of the Armenian diaspora, which he found deeply anti-Turkish. In his opinion, the primary task was not to pressure Turkey to recognise the genocide, but to work for the democratisation of the country.[4]

Dink was taken to court several times for his statements. In January 2007, a 16-year-old nationalist killed him on the street. His death triggered a strong response; more than 100,000 individuals took to the street on his funeral with

[3] That this attitude still exists is shown by the fact that when a comprehensive questionnaire study was made among Alevis, Armenians, and Assyrians/Syriacs in Turkey in 2011–15, there was widespread hesitation or direct hostility towards participating in it among Armenians (Bardakci et al. 2017, 134).

[4] On Dink, see Çandar 2017. A collection of his articles and speeches is Dink 2014.

slogans like 'We are all Armenians'. *Agos* and the Hrant Dink Foundation (*Hrant Dink Vakfi*) continue his work (see URLs in references).

The early 2000's saw a positive development, in which Turkish civil society but also part of the political elite opened to discuss the Armenian experience. Kurdish parties and politicians made brave statements apologizing for the Kurdish participation in the genocide, and in the city of Diyarbakir, the Surp Giragos church, the biggest Armenian church in the Middle East, was renovated. The leftist party HDP has evolved to be not only a pro-Kurdish, but also a pro-minority party. Garo Paylan, its Armenian member of parliament (2015–23), has in many ways taken the role that Hrant Dink earlier had as an outspoken promoter of Armenian interests.[5]

The first decade of the new century also saw a new interest in the so-called hidden Armenians (see Hadjian 2018). During the genocide many Armenian women and girls survived by marrying a Muslim. Often their children knew nothing about their mother's original identity. In 2004, Fethiye Çetin, Hrant Dink's lawyer, published a book about her grandmother, who very late in life revealed that she was born Armenian, but had married a Turk and hidden her Armenian identity (Çetin 2004). The book inspired many others to look for possible Armenian roots. It has been estimated that as many as two million individuals in Turkey today might have Armenian origins, many of them without knowing about it (Çetin 2004, ix).

The vanishing Greeks

The same year as the Republic was founded saw the great population exchange between Greece and Turkey. More than one million Greeks of Turkey had to move to Greece, and about 400,000 Turks of Greece to Turkey. Who was a Greek and a Turk respectively was decided by religion. All members of the Greek Orthodox Church were considered Greeks, also those who spoke no Greek at

[5] In April 2021, Ümit Özdağ, a Nationalist politician, stated that when time is right Paylan will 'experience a Talaat Pasha experience'. Talaat Pasha was one of the organisers of the Armenian genocide ("Ümit Özdağ ile Garo Paylan arasında 'Talat Paşa' polemiği").

all, only Turkish. Similarly, all Muslims of Greece, also the Greek-speaking, were considered Turks (Clark 2006).

The Greeks of Istanbul and the Turks of Thrace were exempted from the population exchange. Thus, about 100,000 Greeks were left in the city they continued to call Constantinople. Subsequent events, especially the September pogrom in 1955, have dramatically reduced their numbers. In 1964, the Turkish authorities expelled 12,000 Greek citizens who lived in Istanbul; an additional 20,000 Greeks with Turkish citizenship also left (Grigoriadis 2021, 743). Today, only a few thousand, maybe as few as 1,500, Greek Orthodox remain in the country.

Despite the marginal size of the Orthodox community, Turkey remains an important country in the Orthodox world as the Ecumenical Patriarch has his seat in Istanbul. After its victory in the war against Greece 1919–22, Turkey wanted to expel the patriarch, but Western powers managed to persuade Mustafa Kemal that this would create very strong reactions. Instead, Turkish authorities decided that the person who will be elected patriarch must be a born Turkish citizen. With so few Greeks left in the country, it will be more and more difficult to find any eligible candidate in the future.

Another source of discontent for the Greek Orthodox is the fact that the Theological Seminary on the island of Halki (Heybeliada) was forced to close in 1971. Many Western leaders have demanded that the seminary shall reopen, but despite indications to that effect from Turkish leaders, including Erdoğan, it remains closed.

Yet another source of discontent is the existence of a so-called 'Independent Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate', established by an Orthodox priest, Papa Eftim, who sided with the Kemalists during the Greco-Turkish war 1919–22. He claimed to represent the Turkish-speaking Orthodox, but in reality his church has consisted of his family, and a handful others. Today, this 'Patriarchate' is led by the founder's grandson, but it still controls three churches and some of the most important Greek heritage sites in Istanbul. The Ecumenical Patriarchate has asked the Turkish authorities to transfer these institutions to their rightful owner, but to no avail (Grigoriadis 2021, 750).

Silence in the Mountain of the Servants of God

Turkey's Christian Assyrian/Syriac minority has been heavily concentrated to the area in the south-eastern part of the country which they call Tur Abdin. It means Mountain of the Servants [of God], so named because of the many monasteries in the area. There are still some functioning monasteries there, but most of the Christian inhabitants have since long left for either Istanbul, or Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and other countries.

The Syriac Orthodox Deir al-Zafaran monastery in Tur Abdin. Wikimedia Commons.

Heavily victimised by the genocide in 1915, which the Assyrians/Syriacs call Seyfo (Gaunt 2006), there was still a vibrant community left when the Republic was founded. Its conditions were difficult, and in 1933 the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate, which had its seat in the Deir al-Zafaran monastery in Tur Abdin, had to move to Syria. The pressure from Kurdish tribes moving to Tur Abdin

and ugly incidents, for example in connection with the crisis in Cyprus, led to an emigration from the area in the 1970's. During the 1980's the war between the Turkish army and the PKK guerrilla found the Assyrians/Syriacs caught in the middle. This led to massive emigration and many Assyrian/Syriac villages were completely emptied of its Christian population (Bardakci et al. 2017, 172–174). The village of Mziza had more than 200 Assyrian/Syriac families in 1970, forty-two in 1980, and only eight in 2014. The village of Aynwardo had 300 Assyrian/Syriac families in 1962, 150 in 1985, and only five in 2015 (Güsten 2016, 9).

Unlike the Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, the Assyrians/Syriacs are not recognised as a religious minority. This has meant that they do not have the same cultural, religious, linguistic, and organisational rights or opportunities of development as the recognised minorities. The central monastery of Mor Gabriel, founded in 397 CE, has for many years fought several legal disputes to avoid the expropriation of some of its lands.

In 2001, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit announced that Assyrians/Syriacs who had left the country were welcome to return. This led to what has been called a renaissance in Tur Abdin, where many diaspora Assyrians/Syriacs renovated old or built new houses in their villages. Several monasteries reopened or were renovated, and the village of Kafro, who had been completely abandoned in 1995, saw many Assyrians/Syriacs from Germany and Switzerland return so that the village came to life again. This development, however, did not last. With the turn to more authoritarian rule in Turkey, with violent conflicts both inside the country and in neighbouring Syria, and as they met bureaucratic obstacles and hostility from some Muslims, the numbers of returnees stayed low. Some of them moved permanently back to Europe or spend most of their time there (Güsten 2016, 10–14).

Other developments have been more promising. At the University of Mardin, not far from Tur Abdin, there is today a chair in Syriac Studies. The Assyrian/Syriac Februniye Akyol served as the co-mayor of Mardin 2014–16. In 2019, the foundation stone was laid for a new Syriac Orthodox church in Istanbul, the first to be opened during the Republican era ("First republic-era church rises over Istanbul's Yeşilköy"). In 2016, however, it was estimated that

only 1,765 Assyrians/Syriacs were living in Tur Abdin, and about 17,000 in Istanbul (Güsten 2016, 9).

Exterior of the Saint Antuan Catholic church on Istiklal Caddesi, Istanbul. The statue depicts Saint (and Pope) John XXIII (1881–1963), who was the Vatican's envoy to Istanbul during World War II. Photo: Olof Heilo.

Catholics and Protestants

The Catholic Church today has a presence in Turkey as well. Most of its members have French or Italian background, but there are also a few Turks who have converted to Catholicism. There have been some famous incidents involving Catholic clergy: Father Andrea Santoro was killed in 2006 in Trabzon, and Bishop Luigi Padovese was killed by his driver in 2010 in southern Turkey.

Unlike many other Muslim countries, it is legal to leave Islam in Turkey, although it may have a social price for the convert. The Protestant churches are the only ones actively trying to spread the Christian faith among Turks – with limited success. It is still a strong conviction that an ethnic Turks must be a Muslim. Traditionally, the Christians in Turkey have not been Turks, but of another ethnicity.[6] In the different Protestant churches, functioning in Turkish, there are today approximately 4,000 members. Some of these churches also minister to non-Turkish groups, especially Iranians.

Although their number is small, the Protestants of Turkey have been depicted as a threat to the country. In 2001, the National Security Council labelled evangelical missionaries as the third largest threat, after the PKK and Islamic fundamentalism. The idea is that the work of these missionaries will divide the population and weaken people's ties with the Turkish state. Missionaries have been compared to crusaders and accused of being political agents for their homeland much more than religious persons. According to the anti-missionary discourse, the evangelical missionaries have three aims: to alienate the Turks from their homeland, their national identity and, finally, their state. Turkish Protestants often counter these accusations by emphasizing their Turkishness and their pride in it (Özyürek 2012).

This small minority gained some notoriety in October 2016, when the American evangelical pastor of a small church in Izmir, Andrew Brunson, was arrested, accused of espionage and of contacts with both the Gülen movement and the PKK. After intervention from the US administration, Brunson was

[6] Bernard Lewis (1961, 15) has famously stated, 'a Christian Turk is an absurdity and a contradiction in terms'.

released in October 2018 (after having been sentenced but seen as having served his time) and returned to the USA (Brunson 2019).

An incident ten years earlier had a more tragic outcome. Two Turkish converts to Protestantism as well as a German missionary were attacked by five Muslims in a Christian publishing house in Malatya. The three were tortured and murdered.[7]

A vulnerable minority

The Christian communities in Turkey differ from each other but share something essential. They are all religious minorities in a Muslim-majority country and most of them are non-Turks in a country where Turkish nationalism is emphasized. As such, they are regularly the victims of both verbal and physical attacks.

The Hrant Dink Foundation monitors hate speech in Turkish media. In its report for the year 2019, it found 5,515 examples of hate speech in national and local media, targeting 50 different groups. The most targeted groups were, in falling order, Armenians, Syrians, Greeks, Jews, Cypriot Greeks and/or Greeks of Turkey, and Christians (Hrant Dink Foundation 2020).

In September 2022, the Freedom of Belief Initiative of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee released a report about hate crimes targeting religious minorities in Turkey. The most targeted group, according to the report, was the Alevi, which is not surprising as it is also by far the biggest group. Christians, Jews, and atheists, too, were victims of hate crime (Tekin, Türay & Yıldırım 2022).

The Association of Protestant Churches annually presents a report about human rights violations. The latest report at the time of writing, concerning the year 2021, found that there was no physical attack against Protestants that year, but instead increased hate speech against them. The report acknowledges improvement when it comes to the process of gaining legal status for churches, but continuing difficulties in training the community's religious workers. Several

[7] Susanne Geske, widow of the slain German missionary, has told her story in Carswell 2015.

foreign workers were deported, denied entry, or faced problems with getting their residence permits renewed. A big problem is the difficulties in establishing places of worship for the vast majority of congregations, which do not possess historical church buildings (Association of Protestant Churches 2022).

In a comprehensive questionnaire study between 2012 and 2015, Alevis, Armenians, and Assyrians/Syriacs answered a set of questions about their view of the situation in Turkey. All three groups had a stronger minority identity than an identity as Turkish citizens. 40 per cent of Armenians and almost 90 per cent of Assyrians/Syriacs opposed mixed marriages, i.e., marrying a Muslim. Armenians and Assyrians/Syriacs had little confidence in Turks and low satisfaction with the relation to the Turkish state, whereas Alevis had more experience of discrimination and pressure to islamise than Armenians and Assyrians/Syriacs (Bardakci et al. 2017, 193–226). The scholars who made this study formulated the following conclusion: 'In any case, it is clear that in order to really improve the lives of its minorities, Turkey needs liberal democratization, not religious-conservative majoritarianism, or increasing authoritarianism' (Bardakci et al. 2017, 236).[8]

Since this was written, it is the latter that Turkey has experienced more of, a fact that makes the prospects for the country's tiny Christian minority increasingly bleak.

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Contested Notions of the Prophet Muhammad

MEHMET HAYRI KIRBAŞOĞLU

What does it mean to be a good Muslim? For an ordinary believer the answers provided by learned scholars, the *ulema*, often appear to be too abstract, complex, even ambiguous and confusing. Still, daily life demands sensible answers. The doctrine of the five pillars is widely considered a satisfactory response to such needs, supported by certain ritual traditions and rules of daily life. What is also an important faith-binding factor in people's daily lives is the admiration and love for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). However, the veneration of the founder of Islam is expressed in many different ways. It varies between groups and communities and it changes over time. The aim of this article is to explain – in a century long perspective of the modern Turkish republic – what the veneration or love for the Prophet means, and has meant, to people of different educational, social and sectarian belongings.

Ordinary Muslims

Among ordinary Muslims the relation to Muhammad is mostly emotional, rather than doctrinal. Neither is it part of a program for social, political, economic and cultural change. The most striking indicator of this emotional sensitivity is the common use of the name 'Mehmet,' the Turkish form for 'Muhammad' (Turkish spelling Muhammed). Another manifestation of this

emotional attachment is the reciting of the *salavat* (intercession for Muhammad and his family). So called *mevlid* ceremonies, long hymns about the birth and life of Muhammad read in connection to funerals, circumcision ceremonies and other sacred occasions, are also expressions of this veneration of the Prophet. Starting from the early 1990s the widely held and popular commemoration of the birth of the Prophet has been further institutionalized through the inauguration by the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and the Turkish Diyanet Foundation (TDV) of a 'Week of the Holy Birth' (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*).

It goes without saying that popular beliefs and notions about Muhammad are idealizations, far from being representations of what may be called 'the historical Muhammad.' In the course of this article recent scholarly research related to a more authentic image of Muhammad will be discussed. Yet, despite the existence of more reliable academic research, the image of Muhammad transmitted in today's Turkey is most of the time based on oral sources. However, one should keep in mind that the prevalence of oral culture is not limited to religious issues, or conceptions about Muhammad only. On the contrary, this is a rather common pattern in almost all aspects of life. The fact that the literacy rate in Turkey is as high as 97 per cent, should not mislead the observer into thinking that Turkey is a society composed of assiduous readers. Concerning reading habits, Turkey only ranks number 86 among 173 in the world (Nesli 2019). Therefore, the oral nature of religious culture in general, and that of their notions about the Prophet in particular, is not remarkable or surprising.

Muhammad has, as is the case with many prominent figures, been the object of exaltation and consecration in the eyes of his believers. However, throughout history, as a result of socio-cultural developments, the image has also undergone change from serving as a paradigm or paragon (ideal), a supernatural character, into being seen as a cosmic principle (Kırbaşoğlu n.d.). And, it should not be forgotten that Muhammad also has been the object of severe criticism, denial and even demonization. That kind of sacrilege has come from circles of non-believers or seculars, even though with some exceptions, like the politically active Marxist-Leninist theoretician, writer and publisher, Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı (1902–1971) (Kıvılcımlı 2011).

Banner with Muhammad's name in Aya Sofya. Wikimedia Commons.

Concerning the role of Muhammad in the religious life of ordinary Muslims in republican Turkey, *mevlid* ceremonies occupy an extraordinary place. *Mevlid*, which signifies the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, is comme-morated in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. The twelfth day of Rabi' al-awwal is the accepted date among most Sunni scholars, while Shias generally regard the seventeenth day of Rabi' al-awwal as the accepted date. The historical roots of this celebration goes back to the early centuries of Islam, when some of the followers began to hold sessions in which poetry and songs composed to honour Muhammad were recited and sung to the crowds. The first Muslim ruler said to officially have celebrated the birth of Muhammad is the emir Muzaffar al-Din Gökböri (d. 1233). The Ottomans declared this date an official holiday in 1588, known as the *mevlid kandili* (the candle feast for the Prophet's birthday). During these ceremonies, traditional poems about Muhammad's life are recited both in public, in mosques, and at home. The most celebrated of

these is the *mevlid* composed by Süleyman Çelebi (1351–1422), but plenty of other *mevlid*s were also written during Ottoman times.

The *mevlid* describes in heavenly terms, adorned with extraordinary narratives and myths, the birth of Muhammad, his sacred personality, and his ascension. This narrative is accompanied with music in *makam* (Ottoman melodic style) and is performed on special occasions, such as a circumcision ceremony, the return from pilgrimage, the sending off of a young man to the army for his military service, and/or on the seventh and fortieth day of someone's decease. *Mevlid* is also performed on holy nights or candle feasts (*kandil*), and is a very important part of traditional religious rituals in modern Turkey with deep roots in the Ottoman period.

The official religious institution Diyanet

A more recent development in Turkey is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet under the management of Diyanet. This has been organized in a variety of events around the whole country, and started in 1989 under the name '*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*' (Week of the Holy Birth), when it was sometimes based on the Hijri, sometime on the Gregorian calendar. A firmer regulation for the Prophet's birthday celebration was enacted in 2010, followed by renewed rulings in 2017, when the name of the week was changed to the more Ottoman/Arabic-sounding '*Mevlid-i Nebî Haftası*.' From then on, the dates were also changed, so that the celebrations always start on the twelfth day of the month of Rabi' al-awwal, and only according to the Hijri (Islamic) calendar.

Concerning the presence of Muhammad in religious ceremonies or rituals like the *mevlid*, the sermons or *khutba*s, held in connection to the Friday noon prayer represent a highly convenient occasion for bringing up Muhammad as a role model. However, contrary to what one may expect, this is not the case; that is, the Prophet is not so frequently brought up in these sermonizing discourses. Although it has been customary to read the prophetic reports (hadith, Turkish *hadis*) in Friday sermons, the number of sermons in which the Prophet is mentioned as a more tangible role model or a personality worth aiming at are very few. In fact, this state of affairs is, to a greater or lesser extent, valid for the

entire Republican period. Rather than adapting the teachings of the Prophet to the concrete, daily life realities of contemporary Turkish believers, the hadith are brought up in the sermons in the form of indistinctive and sweeping moral advice, the addressees of which are ill-defined and ambiguous, like being delivered to the void. As a matter of fact, similar concerns are also valid for the activities organized during the 'Week of the Holy Birth'. Rarely do these celebrations offer any tangible suggestions as to how the Prophet might be a source of inspiration for the believers in the face of existing problems and crises on the national, regional and global levels.

Due to the fact that the religious authorities refrain from critically addressing the concrete problems of contemporary society, they also deprive themselves and their audiences from seeing in Muhammad the vital source of inspiration for a better life that he could have been. However, to do so does not only require a more critical and rational analysis of contemporary societal problems, in a national and global perspective, it also demands a more realistic analysis of the words and deeds of the 'historical Muhammad.' Even if such an approach is not unknown to officials within Diyanet, that kind of an approach is more seriously addressed by academicians within some (not all) of the leading Turkish Faculties of Theology.

Scholarly approaches to Muhammad

The conceptualization of Muhammad differs a lot between ordinary Muslims and scholars trained in the Islamic – and other – sciences. While ordinary Muslims see Muhammad through the lenses of folk culture and an imaginary or mythological mind-set, theologians try, with the help of written sources, to overcome such imaginings and get closer to who the historical Muhammad really was. However, there are also important differences within the community of Islamic scholars themselves. An important dividing line goes between those with a more traditional-authoritarian approach; and those representing a more critical and rational attitude. The first group puts an exaggerated trust in the written records, the consequences of which are that the hadith reports used are often arbitrarily and selectively chosen. Therefore, the representations of Muhammad

originating in that kind of studies/research are every so often not remarkably more qualified than those circulating among ordinary Muslims.

However, it must also be added, that there has been considerable progress during the last thirty or forty years, much thanks to translations from contemporary literature about Muhammad, including works of some Western scholars and writers,[1] which has led to an increase of critical and scholarly works in Islamic academic institutions, a development that has also spread to wider groups among the younger, educated generations. Currently, it can therefore be said that the differentiation between the popular perceptions of the Prophet and the image prevailing in scholarly influenced circles is getting deeper and more noticeable.

However, there is still another development within Muhammad-oriented research that has to be taken into account. Here we are dealing with an approach that throughout Islam's history never really became a prevailing paradigm, but that, especially in Egypt and on the Indian subcontinent, has developed into a movement that, instead of calling attention to the study of hadith, puts special emphasis on the Koran, 'The Koran only movement.' In Turkey, which is in interaction with these developments, this movement started to gain strength in the 1970s and 80s. On the one hand, contemporary Islamic movements emphasizing the central role of the Koran; on the other hand, critical studies of Muhammad by scholars in the West; and, in addition, the Koran-centred movements among Islamic scholars gaining strength after the 1970s. Taken together, these developments have encouraged approaches towards a Koran-centred image of Muhammad also in Turkish academic circles. An inevitable result of this development was an acceleration of studies related to Muhammad, forcing written as well as oral sources to be filtered through scholarly criticism in the light of Koran and rationality.

This has encouraged the production of academic works about Muhammad, his life and personality that rely more on primary Islamic sources than on

[1] See, for example; translations of works of John Davenport, Maxime Rodenson, Montgomery Watt, Anne-Marie Delcambre, Karen Armstrong, Anne-Marie Schimmel, and Lesley Hazleton beside works of Eastern scholars and writers like Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, Nu'man al-Shibli and Muhammad Husayn Haykal.

scholarly as well as popular works from the Ottoman period. In addition to this, another important step has been taken during the last two or three decades, namely a systematic criticism of the sources commonly referred to about the life and deeds of the Prophet. Despite these achievements in critical scholarship, it is important to remember that the legendary, mythological and heavenly/divine (supra-historical) image of Muhammad continues in popular folk Islam – not least in various diverse communities and Sufi orders.

Alevi and Sufi perspectives

In spite of the fact that an overwhelming part of the Turkish population are Muslims, Turkey is still, ethnically and religiously, a very heterogeneous society. Turks, Kurds, Alevi, Sunni, people with their roots in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Arab world constitute what is today the Turkish nation. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the images of Muhammad also differ between these diverse groups. For example, in Alevi-Bektaşi circles Muhammad is more often envisioned as a supernatural and mythological figure, than what is the case among Sunni believers. However, regardless of sectarian belonging, that is, either we are considering the Sunni or the Alevi tradition, Muhammad has, by each of them, been used as a tool to justify and legitimize their own specific beliefs and rituals. This state of things also gives an idea about the reasons behind the diverse images of Muhammad, that is, how they are related to believers' sectarian belonging and therefore are far from representing a common and nation-widely agreed upon image of the Prophet's personality.

To be sure, the images of Muhammad do not only vary between Sunni and Alevi groups, there are also important differences between various Sunni groups. In that respect, the main variation is found between Sufi communities, on the one hand, and scholarly educated circles in religious institutions, on the other. However, this should not overshadow the fact that today even Sufi orders are relatively open to a more critical, less emotionally inclined approach in the studies about Muhammad. In addition, some Sunni groups have also added another and newer dimension by emphasizing the central role of the Koran as the ultimate source and reference about Muhammad, his life and mission.

Muhammad and contemporary crises

Today, the whole world stands face to face with a deep crisis: existential problems on a world-wide scale such as global warming, climate change, droughts, plunder of natural resources, shortage of food, nuclear threat, wars – including civil wars – and deepening poverty in developing countries. However, it is also true that these massive problems mostly are left to the non-Muslim world to address. Instead of asking what Muslims could do for a better future, these negative developments are, by many Muslims not only in Turkey, but all over the world, seen as nothing but signs of the Doomsday, allegedly announced by the Prophet already 1400 years ago. In this context, large numbers of Muslims reduce themselves to passive on-lookers.

However, in this conjuncture a more Koran-centred, less romantic and less mythological conception of the Prophet Muhammad has also been brought up. Is there anything Muslims could learn from the 'real, Koranic Muhammad' that could inject more energy and/or power into their own efforts, that is, that could incite also the *umma* (Muslim community) to take initiatives directed at solving the global problems?

To be sure, Muhammad has, neither among believers, nor among secular and other segments, been much of a concrete living example in modern Turkish society. This is so, not only in relation to political, economic and social, but religious issues as well. Some of the reasons behind this unconcern and ignorance are: ambiguous and deficient definitions of Sunnah (Prophetic paradigm or model) also among Islamic academics;[2] blind imitation of the Prophet in every aspect of his life without distinguishing between his prophetic mission and his life as an ordinary human being; ignoring that His religious teachings and practices belongs to different levels of obligation; exaggerated formalism (obsession with how to dress or grow a beard), as a result of blind imitation, which misses the reasons underlying His teaching and practices;[3] reducing the

[2] For a systematic attempt towards a critical study on dominant definitions of Sunna of the Prophet and a proposal for a contemporary definition of the Prophetic Sunna, see Kırbaşoğlu 2023.

[3] For a list of formalistic approaches, see Kırbaşoğlu 2023, 35–48. Insisting on using *miswak* and refusing the use of toothbrush; determining the beginning of Ramadan by observing with naked eyes; and, not sleeping before the night prayer can be added to the above examples.

Prophetic paradigm to something of concern to the individual only, thereby eliminating the societal and global dimensions of His messages.

These shortcomings are also reflected in the way current issues are approached in contemporary Turkey. One key issue is the question of democracy and liberal pluralism. Support for such values is lowest among Islamic groups and movements. Instead, support for one-man rule dominates in those circles, which may be seen as an effect of lingering veneration for the Ottoman caliphate as an institution. Turkish Muslims are not very different from Muslims of other countries, when it comes to conforming to charismatic leadership. The prevalence of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in Islamic countries can be seen as a continuation of this culture. However, just opposite to these unfortunate circumstances, one should also be aware of the fact that the Muhammadan paradigm, in fact, contains the ideal of a society based on full participation and direct democracy. The principle of *shura* (Turkish *şura*, consultation) as a rule in decision making and governance, is based on textual evidence from the Koran as well as hadith reports.

Negative, or even hostile, approaches to pluralism in many Islamic circles in Turkey has been aptly demonstrated during the last two decades of conservative, pro-Islamic rule. However, against AKP's repressive forms of government, there are many Koranic verses prescribing that Muslims should live in peace with non-Muslims, like they did with the Jewish tribes in Medina. Such a pluralistic prophetic paradigm continued to be the standard model in Islamic societies and administrations in the following centuries; the last example of which was the Ottoman Empire. However, despite this Koranic and Prophetic paradigm, it is frequently seen that Muslims living in Turkey today – not least politically active Islamists – marginalize others, that is, have serious difficulties in adopting to pluralist values.

Women have also been part of a Koranic and Prophetic vision for social change. The aim was to improve their status, which meant the elimination of rules depriving women of their basic rights and instead opening the way for them to participate in all areas of life. Unfortunately, however, instead of continuing on this path, reforms in favour of women's rights have been pushed back to levels that even lag behind what was acquired fifteen centuries ago. Because, in what other way could one make sense of expressions articulating serious reservations

about women's participation in politics, which appear among Muslims in Turkey today. The catchphrase that a woman should not be allowed as the country's president or as a judge in a criminal court is strong and widespread in today's Turkey, especially in religious communities, among Sufi orders, and Salafis.

As mentioned above, one of today's most urgent global problems is consumerism, or excessive consumption. Against that stands the ideal of a lifestyle based on simplicity, preferably voluntary simplicity (Elgin 1993). As a matter of fact, there is much to be drawn from the Koran as a founding text of Islam and the Prophetic paradigm on this question. These sources provide an open and fertile ground for the construction of a philosophy based on a 'voluntary simplicity lifestyle'. In addition to the Koran and the Sunna, there is yet another normative source, namely the inspiration generated by Sufism; however, Sufism understood as Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*), not as Sufi orders (*tarikat*), common folk-based religious circles, mostly devoid of intellectual leanings. However, in this context, it should especially be underlined that many Sufi orders in modern Turkey already have entered into a road of secular, mundane and materialistic lifestyle; a consumption culture, which in fact contradicts their basic philosophies. Based on incomes collected thanks to their symbiotic relations with the current political power, companies, holdings, media organizations and luxurious life have, in the Turkish public opinion and media, become the symbols of Sufi orders. The saying '*İnşaat Ya Rasulallah*' instead of '*Şefaat Ya Rasulallah*', that is intercession for one's construction business or industry (*inşaat*), instead of for one's salvation, has become widely used as a slogan poking fun at utterly worldly and money-oriented trends among religious people, especially some well-known Sufi orders.

What is more, modern studies show that the influence of religion on 'voluntary simplicity' values in Turkey is not as strong and decisive as one would expect. In line with such observations, it is not surprising that promoters of such modesty, for example Indian political and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi, former president of Uruguay Jose Mujica, and former president of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Ali Izetbegovic, are missing among the ruling elites, not only in Turkey, but in other Muslim countries as well. That Turkey is wanting in such examples, is a sign as good as any that important aspects of Muhammad's

role as a prophet in the Abrahamic (monotheistic) sense are not influential enough.

Muhammad between word and deed

Regarding adherence to the Prophet as a model for conduct, the records of Muslims of modern Turkey are getting worse by the day. As in many other Muslim countries, silence is ruling in the face of injustice, corruption and many other social misdeeds, while such issues as the 'Satanic verses,' or the Danish cartoon crisis, fill the streets with shouting protesters. These are but indicators of the inconsistencies and contradictions they are involved in, when they claim that they are the real venerating followers of the Prophet. These are but examples of an emotional, pretentious and hollow kind of religiosity. And, some of the reasons behind those superficial forms of belief must be looked for in the lack of an understanding of the Prophetic Sunnah, which is based on morality, especially morality based on social responsibility.

However, instead of such a compassionate understanding, a ritual-oriented and dysfunctional understanding of the prophetic messages has conquered the minds of the believers to such an extent that they are doomed to emotionality, deprived of any transformative role in the outside world. In fact, 'Muslims have lost the social dimension of their faith' as emphasized by the French philosopher Roger Garaudy. It should also be added that they have come to suffer from a loss of touch with the original teachings of the Prophet.

Conclusion: Future perspectives

In the light of the many criticisms of a century long history of popular imaginations of the Prophet Muhammad brought up in this article, what are the prospects for the future? Even if the perception of Muhammad as a mythological, legendary and supernatural persona is still prevailing, when now entering the second century of the Turkish republic, it is important to mention that serious efforts are spent in promoting an image of Muhammad that is more

in tune with the requirements and expectations of contemporary society. Within institutions such as the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University and other academic institutions around Turkey, in non-official Islamic research centres, Islamic foundations and associations, independent groups and individuals, efforts are spent to draw a more credible and realistic portrait of Muhammad – the historical and Koranic Muhammad. Considering developments in Turkey, the region and the world in general, especially developments in Islamic studies, the process of returning to such an image of Muhammad will gain momentum.

We are living in a period, where critical inquiry is growing more powerful. In addition, it should be kept in mind that Islamic studies have, since long ago, stopped being the monopoly of the Islamic world. In fact, studies carried out by non-Muslims have led to serious competition. The change may be even faster and stronger, if one considers the possible effects of the challenges directed against the authority of the traditional and conservative ulema by wider circles of scholars, that is, a 'democratization of Islamic knowledge'.

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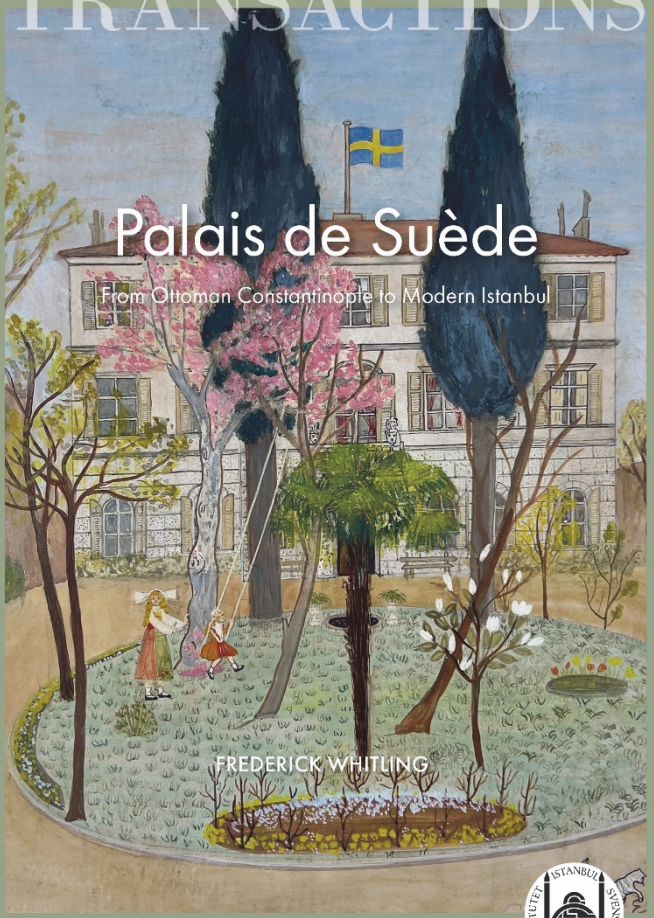
Ny publikation om svenska palatset i Istanbul

TRANSACTIONS



Palais de Suède

From Ottoman Constantinople to Modern Istanbul

FREDERICK WHITLING

SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL
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Palais de Suède

En svensk ankarplats i Turkiet och Sveriges korsväg i Istanbul

FREDERICK WHITLING

Det ”svenska palatset” i Istanbul – Palais de Suède – är den äldsta utländska fastigheten i svensk ägo och den första ambassadbyggnad som byggdes på statsägd mark utomlands, förvärvad av envoyén Gustaf Celsing 1757. 150-årsjubileet för huvudbyggnaden som i dag hyser Sveriges generalkonsulat inföll 2020–2021. Byggnaden uppfördes ursprungligen som ambassad för Sverige-Norge i Konstantinopel, då fortfarande huvudstad i det osmanska riket. Några år efter republiken Turkiets tillkomst 1923 bytte den stora staden namn. I samband med den nya statsbildningen flyttades Sveriges ambassad till den nya huvudstaden Ankara.

Den svenska tomten i Istanbul ligger strategiskt välbelägen på İstiklal Caddesi, självständighetsavenyn, den tidigare Grande Rue de Péra. Dess prominenta placering avspeglar en försvarsallians från slutet av 1730-talet som resulterade i omnämnandet av Sverige som ”Turkiets äldsta vän”. Tomten förvaltas av Statens fastighetsverk, och delas med Svenska forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul, som tillkom 1962 och flyttade in i det så kallade Dragomanhuset 1974.

I närmare trehundra år har platsen, tomten, kanaliserat svensk närvaro i Istanbul, alltsedan Gustaf Celsings inköp av tomten och den ursprungliga huvudbyggnaden 1757. I kölvattnet av Karl XII:s sejour i Osmanska riket ordnade även Celsings företrädare logi i samma stadsdel, tidigare kallad Pera, i dag Beyoğlu. Det nuvarande ”palatset” uppfördes alltså 1870. Femton år senare besökte kungaparet Oskar II och Sofia Konstantinopel, och vistades då i legationsbyggnaden som dokumenterades av den svenske fotografen Guillaume (Per Wilhelm) Berggren i ett fotoalbum som gåva till kungen.

Omslag till fotoalbum, Palais de Suède. Guillaume Berggren, gåva till Oskar II och drottning Sofia, 1885. ©Kungl. Hovstaterna.

Kung Oskar och drottning Sofias vistelse föranleddes av sonen prins Carl som insjuknade i tyfus på en resa i ”Orienten” tillsammans med sin yngre bror, prins Eugen. En sjukstuga inreddes i Palais de Suède, och Carls hälsotillstånd var så pass svajigt att kungaparet reste till den osmanska huvudstaden. Efter prinsens tillfrisknande tog delar av sällskapet igen sig på ön Prinkipo (Büyükada) i Marmarasjön. Några tidigare opublicerade fotografier från uppehållet där och i Konstantinopel offentliggörs här för första gången.

Oskar II, drottning Sofia, prins Eugen, Selim Ehrenhoff (minister), Elisabeth (Bessie) Ehrenhoff, Abdüllatif Suphi Paşa, Şeker Ahmed Ali Paşa, hovfröken Eketrä, livmedikus Westfelt (?), kammarherre Printzsköld, greve Carlo Landberg (?) och Vassilaki Kargopoulo (?), med flera, på terrassen, Palais de Suède, 1885. Foto: Guillaume Berggren. Tillagt: "H.K.H. Prins Carl sjuk i Tyfus". Fotografiet finns i två versioner; den andra, med en större grupp, är känd sedan tidigare. I Bernadottebiblioteket har denna andra version en tillagd handskriven bildtext av prins Carl: "Mina föräldrar och broder Eugen jämte uppvaktning och svenska ministerparet utanför Sv. ministerhotellet i Konstantinopel 1885, med[an] jag låg sjuk i tyfus där (i minist[.]-hotellet) C[arl]". ©Kungl. Hovstaterna.

Konstnären Anders Zorn besökte Konstantinopel och legationen samma år (1885) tillsammans med hustrun Emma under deras bröllopsresa; något senare gästade även Selma Lagerlöf Palais de Suède, som det i regel hänvisades till, just på franska. Orientalisten Johannes Kolmodin var den dåvarande svenska legationens siste dragoman (översättare) efter första världskriget. På 1960-talet passerade bland annat Gunnar Ekelöf generalkonsulatet och institutet. Poetens

närvaro uppmärksammades vid 150-årsjubileumsfirandet 2021 genom Carl Michael von Hausswolff och Cevdet Ereks ljud- och ljusinstallation "Red Dream (for Gunnar Ekelöf)".

Volymen *Palais de Suède. From Ottoman Constantinople to Modern Istanbul* har utkommit i forskningsinstitutets serie *Transactions*. Den skildrar bortåt trehundra år av Sveriges officiella och inofficiella interagerande med Turkiet. Det "svenska palatset" är ankarplatsen, korsvägen. Boken fokuserar främst på personer som har vistats där eller passerat på genomresa; på de avtryck och spår som de har lämnat efter sig. Den vänder sig till såväl en bred kulturhistoriskt intresserad allmänhet som akademiker.

Sittande, från vänster: drottning Sofia, kammarherre Printzsköld (?), prins Carl. Stående, från vänster: hovfröken Eketrä, ej namngiven person, livmedikus Westfelt, "Achmed Pasha", kammarherre Adelborg (?), syster Augusta, prins Eugen, Büyükada (Prinkipo), 1885. Tillagt, Sigyn Reimers: "Sedan H.K.H. Prins Carl tillfrisknat från Tyfus". Foto: Vassilaki Kargopoulo. ©Kungl. Hovstaterna.

Boken sändes till tryck innan Recep Tayyip Erdoğans preliminära godkännande av Sveriges ansökan till försvarsalliansen Nato i juli 2023, och utgivningen sammanfaller tidsmässigt med republiken Turkiets 100-årsjubileum.

Panorama över Konstantinopel från den svensk-norska legationen, 1885, från fotoalbum, Palais de Suède: "Vue panoramique du 2e étage". Foto: Guillaume Berggren. ©Kungl. Hovstaterna.

Contributors

Savaş Arslan is Professor of Film Design at Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir.

Fulya Atacan is Visiting Professor of Political Science at London School of Economics and Political Science.

Oya Baydar is a sociologist and writer.

Yavuz Baydar is a Chronicler with Svenska Dagbladet and the Editor of the online news site Free Turkish Press.

Murat Belge is Professor of Comparative Literature at Bilgi University, Istanbul.

Bernt Brendemoen is Professor of Turkology at the University of Oslo.

Mehmet Hayri Kırbaşoğlu is Professor emeritus at the Faculty of Theology, Ankara University.

Svante Lundgren is a Researcher in History of Religions and Jewish Studies at Lund University.

Hege Markussen is a Researcher in History of Religions, Lund University.

Simon Stjernholm is Associate Professor of the Study of Religion, University of Copenhagen.

Orhan Tekelioğlu is Professor of Cultural Sociology and Part-time Lecturer at Koç University, Istanbul.

Frederick Whitling is a writer and historian.

Elisabeth Özdalga is former Professor of Sociology at Middle East Technical University, Ankara and earlier Director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

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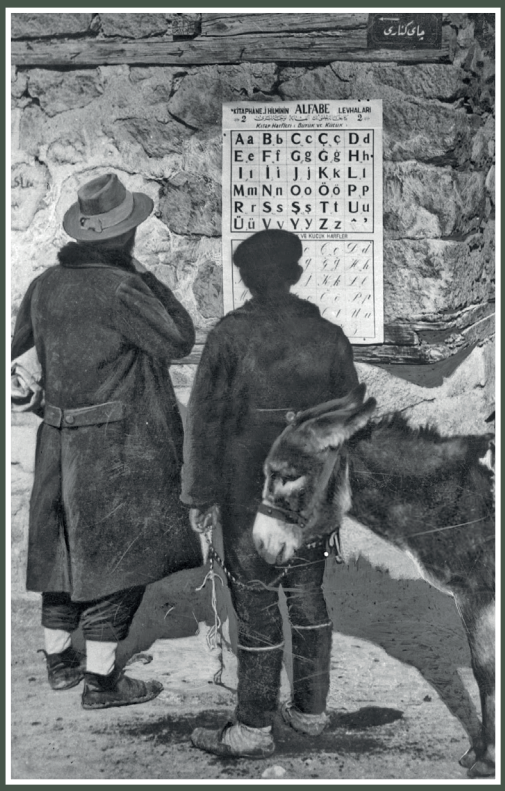
Kontaktuppgifter SFII
P.k. 125 Beyoglu
TR-344 33 Istanbul
Gatuadress: Istiklal Caddesi 247
Tünel, Istanbul
Tel: +90 212 252 41 19
E-post: info@sri.org.tr

Direktör: Olof Heilo (olof.heilo@sri.org.tr)
Vice direktör: Anders Ackfeldt (anders.ackfeldt@sri.org.tr)
Forskningssekreterare: Helin Topal (helin.topal@sri.org.tr)

Kansli i Stockholm
Skeppargatan 8
114 52 Stockholm
Tel: +46 8 662 75 70
Fax: 08-665 3133
E-post: sfii@medelhavsinstituten.se
Kanslist: Johnny Gustafsson (johnny.gustafsson@sri.org.tr)



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