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EUROPE HOUSE REVIEW

THE FIRST TURKS IN AMERICA PROJECT AND ITS POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following report is a special Europe House review of "The First Turks in America" project, which recently got underway. The information used in this article came from a variety of resources and includes some of our own observations while in Turkey. Our special thanks go out to Sedat İşçi, of Ege University in İzmir; John J. Grabowski of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio; and Rıza Küçükkoçlu, the General Secretary of Yeditepe University in İstanbul, for their tireless efforts and professional expertise during our mission to Turkey. We are also grateful for the sponsorship and warm hospitality received from individuals and organizations in the Turkish public and private sector. In this context we want to express our special appreciation to the State Ministry for Relations with Turks Living Abroad, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Turkish Military Forces and Turkish Airlines (THY).

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Europe House Review

The First Turks in America Project and its Potential Applications in the European Union

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TURKISH HOSPITALITY STARTS WHEN YOU BOARD TURKISH AIRLINES

It is like turning the clock back to what airline service used to be. The service is friendly, complimented by a never-ending supply of food during the eleven-hour flight from New York to İstanbul.

Immigrants going from Turkey to America certainly did not have such comfortable means of transportation as we did.

This review is about the project, "The First Turks in America" and the country they left behind. These were courageous immigrants, who through hard work and sacrifice, brought prosperity to themselves, the United States and the other nations they settled in.

From the perspective of Europe House we were also specifically interested as to the potential applications of this project in the European Union.

THE FIRST TURKS IN AMERICA PROJECT



The joint Turkish-American "First Turks in America" project got underway on May 2002, when John J. Grabowski of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and Sedat İşçi of Ege University in İzmir, Turkey, laid the groundwork to researching the history of the first Turkish immigrants to the United States. Both İşçi and Grabowski had been pursuing the topic individually until a meeting at a cultural studies seminar in İzmir, Turkey, brought them together. Their work soon gained the attention of the Turkish media and by the summer of 2002 a series of newspaper articles and television interviews widely publicize and popularized the project in Turkey. İşçi brought the project to the attention of Rıza Küçüköğlü, the General Secretary of Yeditepe University in İstanbul and Yeditepe's rector, Professor Dr. Ahmet Serpil, got Yeditepe to adopt the project. A few months later in November 2002, the Turkish Council on Higher Education (YÖK) also gave its approval to the project.

A special symposium on the topic of early Turkish immigration that was held at the İstanbul Yeditepe University in January 2003 brought further attention to the project. Attended by academics, Turkish governmental and military officials, and by many of the grandchildren and families of early Turkish immigrants, the symposium served to further strengthen the project's popularity in Turkey.

In May 2003, General Secretary Küçüköğlü and Sedat İşçi, visited the United States where they toured several of the communities that had been the centers of early Turkish immigration. They also met with governmental and university officials, including the Turkish ambassador to the United States and top administrators at Case Western Reserve University, which serves as the American center for the project.

The "First Turks in America" project, ironically, comes at a time, in which continued immigration to America and the European Union is vigorously debated on both sides of the Atlantic. Americans find that their immigrant roots are what makes them truly American. In the European Union there is controversy about immigration. Right wing political elements are calling for restrictions on immigration, and especially so when it



The "First Turks in America" project coordinators from left to right, Sedat İşçi, Rıza Küçüköğlü, John Grabowski, Diane Grabowski

concerns Muslim immigrants. The Catholic Church is basically using the same argument in more diplomatic terms. Repeatedly the Pope has appealed to European policy makers that the new drafted European Union constitution should affirm Europe's ties to Christianity. Economic experts are saying that reducing or stopping the flow of immigrants to Europe, which already has a declining birthrate, would turn the European Union into a third-rate economic and political entity within 25 years.

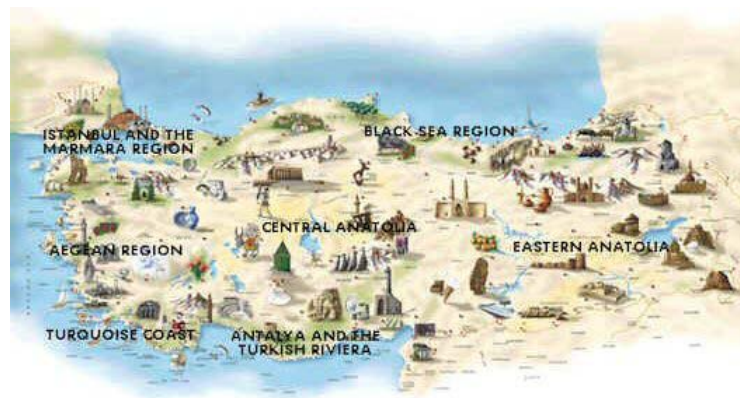
TURKS LEAVING THEIR COUNTRY LEAVE PART OF THEIR SOUL BEHIND

Turks believe that when you leave your country you leave part of your soul behind. During our journey through Turkey we tried to make that connection with the soul the immigrants left behind.

When you go to Turkey it is good to remember that Turkey's landmass is located at a point where the three continents making up the old world, Asia, Africa and Europe, are closest to each other, straddling the point where Europe and Asia meet. Turkey shares borders on the European Continent with Greece and Bulgaria. To the northeast Turkey borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Iraq. In the south Turkey borders with Syria. This cultural ambivalence gives them an automatic position of authority as a conduit of ideas between the West and the East. It also isolates them in the sense that both the East and the West are not sure to whom they belong.

Turkey is not only geographically interesting, but is also considered an archeological paradise.

Turkey's landscape is inseparable from its culture, say the tourist brochures, a statement we found to be true. It has been a home to civilizations for as long as 9,000 years ago. The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, a must-see museum, has on display one of the first agrarian villages in the world, dating back to 7000 years B.C.



The country is divided into seven regions: the Black Sea region, the Marmara region, the Aegean, the Mediterranean, Central Anatolia, and the East and Southeast Anatolia regions. The uneven North Anatolian terrain running along the Black Sea resembles a narrow but long belt. The landmass of this region covers approximately one sixth of Turkey.

The Marmara region covers an area surrounding the Sea of Marmara and includes the entire European part of Turkey, as well as the northwest of the Anatolian plain. Even though this region is the smallest of the regions in Turkey after the Southeast Anatolia region, it has the highest population density of all the regions. The most important peak in the region is Uludağ (2,543 meters), which also is a major winter sports and tourist center. The Anatolian part of the region has fertile plains running from east to west.

The Aegean region extends from the Aegean coast to the inner parts of western Anatolia. There are significant differences between the coastal areas and those inland, in terms of both geographical features and economic and social aspects. In general, the mountains in this region go right to the sea coast, while the plains run from east to west.

In the Mediterranean region, located in the south of Turkey, the Eastern and Central Taurus Mountains start right behind the coastline. The Amanos Mountain range are also in this region.

The Central Anatolian region is exactly in the middle of Turkey and gives the appearance of being less mountainous compared with the other regions. The main peaks of the region are Karadağ, Karacadağ, Hasandağ and Erciyes (3,917 meters). Because of its geographical location, the area of Anatolia has always taken a central place in Turkish history and has been the launching area of many great civilizations. It has also been a major center of commerce because of its land connections to three continents and seas surrounding it on three sides.

EVERY MOMENT BRINGS A NEW SENSATION



“Each of these regions has so much to see that a visitor should either come and live in Turkey or come back to Turkey on a yearly basis”, says Selami Karaibrahimgil, Tourism Office Director at the Ministry of Tourism in Ankara.

Our visit concentrated on intensively combing through the areas in and around İstanbul, Ankara, Cappadocia, and İzmir. This, combined with the discussions we had with government, military and local officials, and going over long distances from “point a to b” in a bus, kept us on the go from dawn to deep into the night, sometimes even into early morning. No one complained, in fact, the esprit de corps, even got better as the days went by.

Every moment brought us a new adventure: the bustling cosmopolitan city of İstanbul, with its more than 12 million inhabitants; the glistening Bosphorus and the imposing structure of the Hagia Sophia; the abundance of delightful, inexpensive restaurants at Beyoğlu;



• Istanbul

We will also never forget the solemn and emotional moments at the Anıtkabir Memorial, where Atatürk has been laid to rest; the war museum; the huge civil servant community in Ankara;



The group at the Anıtkabir Memorial in Ankara, where Atatürk has been laid to rest

or the imposing sandstone formations in Cappadocia;

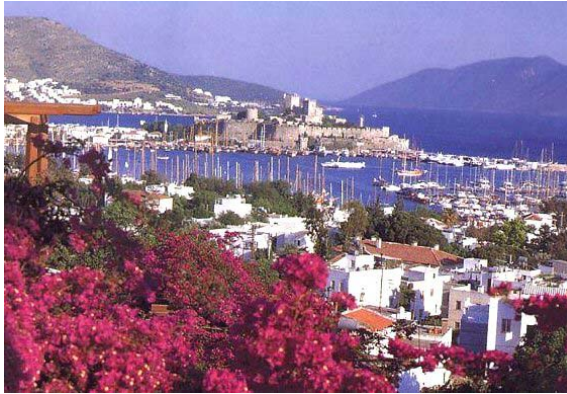


the very relaxed and laid-back atmosphere in İzmir;



• İzmir, Alsancak

the Bodrum Castle;



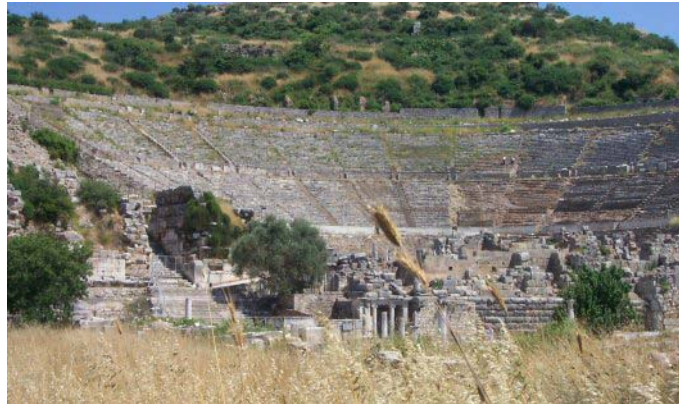
• Bodrum

silhouettes of villages, accentuated by slim and gracious minarets;



• A village in Central Anatolia

and Ephesus, one of the major landmarks for Christianity, and its link to the seven churches, as described by the disciple John, in the Book of Revelations in the Bible.



• Ephesus

TURKEY – THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE



The prime minister and the head of the Turkish Government is Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

- Turkey is a democracy with universal suffrage starting at the age of 18
- Administratively it is divided into 81 provinces and has a legal system derived from various European continental legal systems.
- It has an executive branch with a chief of state. Turkey's President Ahmet Necdet Sezer has been in office since May 16, 2000
- The National Assembly elects the President for a seven-year term; the last elections were held the 3rd of November, 2002, with the next elections scheduled for May 2007. Both the prime minister and deputy prime ministers are appointed by the President
- A National Security Council including representatives from all branches of the military serves as an advisory body to the President and the cabinet. The Council of Ministers is appointed by the President on the nomination of the prime Minister.
- The legislative branch includes: the unicameral Grand National Assembly of Turkey or Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi with 550 seats. Members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

- The judicial branch is composed of a Constitutional Court where the judges are appointed by the President and a Court of Appeals with the judges being elected by the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors.

During our visit to Ankara we had the pleasure of meeting with Professor Dr. Mehmet Aydın, State Minister for Relations with Turks Living Abroad.



A VIBRANT BUT FRAGILE ECONOMY

While in Turkey, we asked several people including a number of bankers, if they agreed with the latest economic report on Turkey published by the CIA. The report is available on the Internet. Most of them said that in essence the report was correct. The report follows below:

“Turkey’s dynamic economy is a complex mix of modern industry and commerce along with a traditional agriculture sector that in 2001 still accounted for 40% of employment. It has a strong and rapidly growing private sector, yet the state still plays a major role in basic industry, banking, transport, and communication. The most important industry - and largest export - is textiles and clothing, which is almost entirely in private hands. In recent years the economic situation has been marked by erratic economic growth and serious imbalances. Real GNP growth has exceeded 6% in many years, but this strong expansion has been interrupted by sharp declines in output in 1994, 1999, and 2001. Meanwhile the public sector fiscal deficit has regularly exceeded 10% of GDP - due in large part to the huge burden of interest payments, which in 2001 accounted for more than 50% of central government spending - while inflation has remained in the high double digit range. Perhaps because of these problems, foreign direct investment in Turkey remains low - less than \$1 billion annually. In late 2000 and early 2001 a growing trade deficit and serious weaknesses in the banking sector plunged the economy into crisis - forcing Ankara to float the lira and pushing the country into recession. Results in 2002 were much better, because of strong financial support from the IMF and tighter fiscal policy. Continued slow global growth and serious political tensions in the Middle East cast a shadow over growth prospects for 2003.”

As we traveled through the country we saw very rich and very poor people. Obviously that statement is only relative to our own perceptions of wealth and poverty, but we never saw people in Turkey who were undernourished. The latter is probably the best barometer of Turkey’s economic health, unfortunately the World Bank and the CIA do not measure the state of a nation’s economy by physical appearances and real human needs.

SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

The first thing you notice when you arrive at Turkey's brand-new Atatürk airport is that you have arrived in a big modern and bustling country. There are 68 million people in Turkey. Immigration and customs move along efficiently, and before you know it you are out on the street ready to take a very inexpensive taxi ride to your hotel. The next major revelation comes when you look out of your hotel window at the City of İstanbul and see the Bosphorus.



• Bosphorus

You remember vaguely from your geography classes that this river you are looking at divides the European and Asian continents. Just that notion gives İstanbul a special mystique. Its size in reference to area covering both banks of the Bosphorus and its population of 12 million inhabitants is another impressively overwhelming experience.

AVERAGE AGE IS UNDER 30

Turkey has a population that is young at heart and dynamic, with an average age below 30. Every young woman or man we spoke to seems confident about the future of Turkey, but they also complained that education should be made more affordable and available to everyone. The younger student population does not seem to agree with many of its elders that there is an open, uncontrolled move towards fundamentalism. "If that would really happen", said a graduate political science student, "most of us who supported this present government, would go into the streets to protest and we would bring them down." These are exciting times in Turkey. People are far more conscious of what is happening around them." Fehmi Koru, a leading columnist for one of İstanbul's largest papers seems to agree. He said in a recent interview with US News & World Report that what we are seeing in Turkey today might be the beginning of a new era. "In some ways, what is really going on is a small revolution in Turkey. Not only does the AKP (the government ruling party) have Islamic roots, but it also draws much of its leadership ranks and strength from Anatolia, Turkey's poorer and less educated heartland. The masses will govern themselves, not the elites governing the masses," says Koru. As to Turkey's membership in the European Union, we have seen statistics that show more than 70% of Turkey's population in support of Turkey becoming part of the Union. Turkey's historically close relationship with the US has become troubled following the US invasion of Iraq, and the US open support for the establishment of a Kurdish enclave around the oil-rich town of Kirkuk in Iraq has also not been helpful to improving the relationship between the two long-time allies.

TURKEY IS A SAFE AND FRIENDLY PLACE

Remarkable to all of us while traveling through Turkey, was how safe one feels, especially when you are one who is used to life in a US metropolitan area. We walked, took taxis, had dinner, and shopped at all times of the day. At no point did we ever feel threatened or insecure. Why is that so? It seems that the Turks have historically always put great trust in their army to guarantee, not only that the country remains secular, but also that it remains secure. As to crime, it seems the Turks take off the gloves when it comes to catching, prosecuting and punishing criminals, drug dealers and addicts. Unfortunately, many of the Turks' most-wanted criminals have now set up shop in other parts of Europe, with less strict laws against crime.

MOSQUES, SYNAGOGUE'S, AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES



Another thing that caught the attention of many of us was hearing the chants of praise to Allah (God), which comes 5 times a day from loudspeakers on the mosques. One of the Christian members in our group commented to the effect and said; "what impressed me as a Christian was the multi-faith atmosphere in Turkey, with its strong Christian heritage, its variety of denominations, and the number of synagogues, and churches scattered throughout the country. This

certainly is a strong point for Turkey to protect its tradition of secularism.

A STRONG AND INDEPENDENT FREE MEDIA

"Turkey is proud of its free and independent media," says Mehmet Soysal, head of the TGRT Radio and TV Corporation News service, when we met him at his office in İstanbul. By last count Turkey had 16 AM, 107 FM and 6 short wave stations, 635 TV stations and numerous national, regional and local publications. There also are more than 50 Internet service providers and 3 million Internet users. Turkish media is said to usually have more detailed news about the situation in the Middle East than the US press. Most of these news reports are available on the Internet.



THE MILITARY OCCUPIES A SPECIAL PLACE IN TURKEY



General Çetin Doğan, 1st Army commander of the Selimiye Garrison and Rick Morren, Chairman of Europe House

We also were honored with an invitation as lunch guests of General Çetin Doğan, 1st Army commander and also commander of the Selimiye Garrison in İstanbul. These barracks also house the famous Florence Nightingale Museum. While in İzmir we were the guests of General Hurşit Tolon, the Aegean military commander of the Turkish 3rd army. During these two luncheons we had open discussions about the importance of the Turkish military in the Turkish society and the many positive changes that are taking place in this relationship.

TURKISH FOOD ALONE IS WORTH A TRIP TO TURKEY

A whole separate article could be dedicated to Turkish cuisine. We had so much varied and good food on this trip, that most of us have been spoiled for life. The Turkish Tourist Office says this glorious cuisine was not an accident, but rather the result of three elements: a nurturing environment, the imperial kitchen and a long social tradition of good food. Early historical documents also show that the basic structure of Turkish food was already there during the Nomadic period and in the first settled Turkish States of Asia. All we can say is go to Turkey and experience it, or try and get invited to a Turkish home, and if that does materialize, get a Turkish cookbook and try to make it yourself. One final note, Turkish food is non-fattening food. Along with grains, olive oil, yogurt, lamb, beef, fish, vegetables are consumed in large quantities in the Turkish diet.



TURKEY IS UNDERGOING A CULTURAL EXPLOSION



Miss Universe 2002 Azra Akin

Turkey is in the cultural spotlight these days. Not only did it recently win the Miss Universe beauty pageant title, it also placed first in the European Song festival.

During our stay in Turkey we were invited by General Çetin Doğan, and Yeditepe University for an impressive show of dance and music called Hürrem Sultan, including a performance of the Makro dance group with the Mehteran (Janissary Band).

TURKISH IMAGE ABROAD

Unfortunately we found that Turkey still does not have the image abroad it deserves. We believe this simply comes from the fact that Turkey has never really marketed the country aggressively on a variety of fronts. Turkey usually loses out against sophisticated and well-funded Greek, Armenian and Kurdish PR campaigns, mainly directed at smearing Turkey's image in the world. More so, it has hurt Turkey in its quest for membership in the EU. Change seems to be on the way with the Erdoğan government. Their presence as a serious, no-nonsense government has done a lot of good at projecting a more stable political image for Turkey, and this, no doubt, is making a positive impression on the ruling forces in the EU. Turkey's image abroad is also changing in a more natural multiplier way, with the yearly increasing numbers of European tourists visiting Turkey. This obviously means tourists are spreading "the good news" about Turkey on their return home. Last but not least, attracting investors also requires PR policies that give a clear projection of the laws governing business and corruption. Getting a third place in the world cup; winning the European song festival; or the Miss Universe pageant, was great for the Turkish image abroad, but showing good economic performance is what counts today in terms of image in the world. Turkey definitely is on the right track.

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING



Nick Prescott & Bill Alli

What probably impressed us all during the mission was seeing the joy of William (Bill) E. Alli, General Director of the American & Turkish Veterans Association, a second generation Turk, and Nick Prescott, his cousin, who is a third generation Turk, "connecting" with Turkey again. It was our proof that you can take the man out of the country, but not the country out of the man.

THE FIRST TURKS IN AMERICA PROJECT COMES AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT

The joint Turkish – US project comes at a very opportune moment, because it touches on a variety of very sensitive issues”, says Professor Grabowski, “because the First Turks in America project is focused on discovering the history of a little known story of immigration in America: that of the estimated 60,000 Muslim Turks, who, along with Poles, Slovenes, Italians, and dozens of other ethnic groups, came to America during the early years of the twentieth century in search of jobs, opportunity, money, and freedom. While considerable attention has been given to the movement of other ethnic groups (Greeks, Armenians, and Christian Arabs) from the Ottoman Empire to the United States during this period, very little work has been done on the movement of Ottoman Muslim Turks to the United States.

Articles by Professor Kemal Karpat of the University of Wisconsin and Talat Halman of Bilkent University provide the best scholarly overviews”, says Grabowski, “while a book by Frank Ahmed, *The Turks in America*, provides a generalized popular treatment, albeit one that points to important issues attendant to Turkish immigration”.

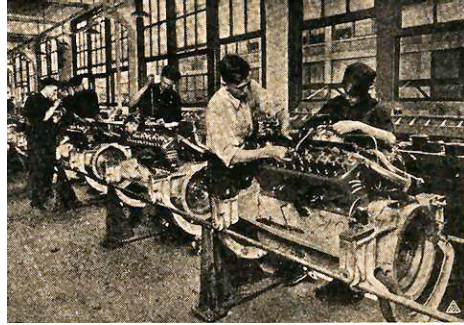
Grabowski says, “The study has important popular and scholarly ramifications. While the estimated number of ethnic Turkish immigrants to the United States is not large within the overall context of immigration during the early 1900s, this immigrant stream is still very significant as it probably constituted the first and largest group of Muslims to come to America in the years before the restriction of immigration in 1921.”

Obviously this raises important questions, which will be answered in the study. How did Muslim Turks react when they quickly moved from a society in which Islam was hegemonic to one in which Christians were the hegemonic group, and in which the negative image of the “Turk” was a staple of popular culture? What triggered Turks to make such a drastic move? What structures, if any, did they create to support their community, their beliefs, and their lifestyle in what amounted to a very strange new world?

Of particular importance given the current issues surrounding “Islam and the West,” is the question as to how Christian America reacted to this group of Muslim immigrants. Does that reaction have any bearing upon the issues that confront America and Europe today? Will the “image” of the Turk in contemporary, twenty-first century America change if it becomes widely known that Muslim Turks worked in the same factories and the railroads, or fought in the same wars with the grandparents of those who now consider themselves “ethnic” Americans?

Grabowski also finds the eventual fate of many of these immigrants equally intriguing. Most, according to the existing studies, he says, seem to have returned to Turkey. Some studies indicate that perhaps 95% returned, thus making this one of the highest immigrant return rates. It certainly raises other critical questions. Did the Turks return to Anatolia because of the strong cultural disjuncture they encountered? Was this return preplanned or did it signal a failed attempt to create an Islamic support structure within a Christian society? What role did the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 play in fostering this return? Did an evolving national, rather than an existing religious identity motivate post-1923 returnees?

DID RETURNING IMMIGRANTS INFLUENCE ATATÜRK'S VISION



The issue of returning immigrants also opens a very important hypothesis from the Turkish viewpoint, says Grabowski. Almost all the Turkish immigrants to America appear to have worked in factories or in some other aspect of the turn-of-the twentieth century industrial America. The records show that the immigrants mainly worked and earned money for home in such places as the leather

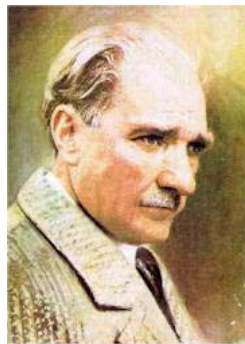
factories of Massachusetts, the railroad companies around Chicago, the steel mills of Gary, Indiana, the auto plants of Detroit, or the dye factories in Cleveland.

They experienced life in a “secular” society and generally worked a Monday through Saturday workweek. How did this experience prepare them for a return to a Turkey that was being secularized and modernized through the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk? Did they help to develop or endorse the enlightened and modern ideas and philosophies of Atatürk when they returned?

Other issues hinted at in the existing literature and some preliminary statistical analyses are equally intriguing. It appears that a substantial number of the Turks who came to America came not from Anatolia but from the Balkans. What role did the Balkan Wars therefore play in this stream of immigration? How do these Turks fit into the story of Balkan refugees discussed by historian Justin McCarthy in his works on Ottoman demography?

Preliminary research work and, in particular, the book by Frank Ahmed indicate that immigrant Turks resided in proximity to Greeks and other groups that had come from Anatolia. If this is the case it raises issues concerning inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict. Did the millets of Anatolia replicate themselves in the United States and did some pattern of interdependence occur? Or, were the evolving nationalistic conflicts of the Balkans and Anatolia reflected in immigrant community life in early twentieth century America?

ATATÜRK INVENTED THE WHEEL THAT CREATED UNITY



While traveling through Turkey we noticed a remarkable agreement among all levels of the population when it comes to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Turks might have their political differences and opinions, but they are united when it comes to expressing their loyalty to the immortal creator of the Turkish Republic.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is the person and statesman, credited with almost single-handedly creating and establishing the Republic of Turkey. He was able to change a political structure, based on civic nationalism, controlled by the ruling establishment in the Ottoman Empire, to a political base of popular nationalism, which started at the grassroots' level. By doing this, he succeeded in attracting mass support for overthrowing the existing order; beating invading European armies who

were trying to carve up Turkey, and in bringing radical and positive change to many engrained political and religious obstacles that were holding back the modernization and progress in Turkey. Atatürk was a Benjamin Franklin, de Gaulle, and Churchill wrapped up in one person. Even that qualification probably underrates this unique human being. Some politicians in Europe are now saying that Atatürk invented the wheel that the European Union needs today to move ahead because he understood that there must not be pulling in different directions to achieve unity. Just like America's famous Benjamin Franklin, who told early American historian Jared Sparks, "Yes, indeed, we must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

THE FIRST TURKS IN AMERICA PROJECT IS UNIVERSALLY APPLICABLE

The "First Turks in America" Project not only raises some very fascinating questions for Americans and Turks, but it could also be very useful to the new generation of European politicians and academics, grappling with the question of Muslim immigration into the EU. Today the European Union has one of the largest Muslim immigrant colonies in the world, which is growing by the day. This important group of Muslim immigrants, many of them Turks, can't be taken for granted as just an economic equation within the European Union. Instead, it must be examined how to make them an integral part of the society they have chosen to become a part of. Obviously this also raises many questions. Will this lead to the European Union becoming more secular? Will it mean that the present day subsidies to religious schools (Christian, Muslim and others) by local governments in Europe will be abolished? Will it imply that all immigrants need to confirm to European laws and customs and be able to speak the local language within a fixed period of time? The first reaction is to say yes to all these questions. Reason, however, dictates that it might benefit those working at overcoming obstacles in dealing with non-traditional immigration to look at past experiences. The "First Turks in America" study could therefore become an important benchmark for scholars, not only in America, but also elsewhere, on trying to solve complicated issues surrounding immigration from non-Christian nations in to Christian Countries.

The issues to be investigated in this "First Turks in America" study also allows it to transcend the simple chronicle of any particular ethnic group. While the creation of that chronicle is important, it will intersect with and enrich our understanding of the nature of power and influence in society, patterns of urbanization, the definition of ethnicity, and concepts of national identity, maintains Grabowski.

FUNDING THE TURKS IN AMERICA PROJECT

The coordinators of the project are presently talking with film and television producers in Turkey and the United States, concerning the production of a documentary film on the history of early Turkish immigration to the United States. The project directors also envision a series of annual symposia, held alternately in Turkey and the United States, in which the topic of early Turkish immigration would be examined in the broader context of American immigration. Such symposia will generate the academic debate and dialogue necessary to keep the project's research and products at the forefront of academic inquiry.

In order to fund the project, directors are currently in the final stages of drawing up a comprehensive proposal, which will shortly be available. "There is, however, an immediate need for equipment, including cameras, recorders and scanners to start the project," says John Grabowski.

CONCLUSION

EU enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen recently said in an interview with Die Welt, "In times of global conflict and uncertainty, it would be helpful for the EU to have a big Muslim country like Turkey in its corner". In comments likely further to stimulate the debate on the "wider Europe", Mr. Verheugen also said that the accession of Turkey to the EU would make Europe more of a "middle-eastern power".



Concluding, we want to stress how revealing this visit to Turkey was for us, as to the strategic importance of this country to the world in general, and Europe in particular.