

ATATÜRK

by Andrew Mango, London: John Murray, 1999, pp. xii, 666

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An account of Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the founder and first president of the Turkish Republic, written from outside the Turkish world is very welcome - though in this case, long immersion in the study of Turkish history and politics entitles the British savant, Andrew Mango, to honorary membership. Mango joined the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1947 and was for fourteen years in charge of broadcasts in Turkish. He retired in 1986 as Head of South European and French Language Services. He has since been engaged full-time in the study of Turkish affairs. The former publisher of Turkey Confidential, a monthly newsletter on Turkish questions, Mango visits Turkey several times a year. He lectures and writes fluently in Turkish. Atatürk is a mature work of scholarship, crafted over many years. It is a splendid culmination of Mango's long interest in Turkey.

This vintage study admirably addresses the needs of English-speaking readers for whom it is primarily written, but it also has value for all those interested in the deeds of the last great Turk on the world stage. Its outstanding characteristics are its balanced sympathy for its subject and its astute empathy, which is no small accomplishment, for Atatürk is no easy topic for a biographer. The book, however, is not only a biography but also a political history of modern Turkey.

The volume is organised both chronologically and thematically. It is divided into five parts and twenty-nine chapters. Part One provides relevant details about Atatürk's family, educational background and formative years. Part Two investigates the place of the Tripolitanian, Balkan and the First World Wars in the Turkish leader's career and examines their impact on him. Part Three deals with the battles of the Turkish War of Independence, relates developments leading up to the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty and points out the special significance of this legal instrument to Turkey's future. Part Four treats the proclamation of the Republic and the subsequent launching of Westernising reforms. Attention is also concentrated on the maintenance of law and order in the country. Part Five discusses the economic and foreign policies of the Turkish leadership. Finally, the author gives a summary of observations and conclusions about the various aspects of Atatürk's personality and works.

The analysis of each of the above themes is well documented, for Mango has explored in depth the voluminous official speeches, statements, circulars and telegrams of Atatürk. Apposite references to contemporary books and articles complement this use of government publications. Yet, the adopted approach is not entirely satisfactory. Unfortunately Turkish Presidential and General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies Directorate's archives, the proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and papers of the Republican People's Party, as well as pertinent foreign archival material are not utilised. Curiously, the writer does not appear to have used important Atatürk biographies in French and German, with the sole exception of Alexandre Jevakhoff's *Kemal Atatürk: Les Chemins de l'Occident* (Paris, 1989).

Mango's reflective life-sized portrait is based largely on published Turkish sources, which until now have never been adequately checked, compared and collated. Mango is fully conversant with the large secondary literature on Atatürk and the views of recent admirers and detractors. The author is at the same time well acquainted with Turkish biographers' works on Atatürk and thoughtfully compares his own interpretations with theirs. The investigation suggests creative ways of analysing existing information to provide insights enabling readers to better comprehend the life and times of one of the greatest figures of the twentieth century. Here is by far the most thorough scrutiny of Atatürk in the English language and an absorbing biography in its own right. It is written in a fine and straightforward style, with touches of humour but no sentimentality. Although long (666 pages) the narrative is always lucid.

Mango ably looks at the range of Atatürk's activities and accomplishments in all its variety - soldier, diplomat, politician and statesman. The resulting evaluations are not in themselves particularly novel but their tone is judicious and considered. The author brings out the extraordinary feats of Atatürk's career. He stresses that few could have predicted the extent of the Turkish army's victory over the Greeks in 1922 and the ensuing diplomatic triumph at Lausanne the following year. Besides Atatürk, Mango paints lively and spirited sketches of Turkish statesmen and military commanders of the period: İsmet İnönü, Fevzi Çakmak, Rauf Orbay, Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Refet Bele. For those who are familiar with the story, very little is new in the book; it goes over well-trodden ground and is mostly based on earlier scholarship. However, the author challenges, elucidates, and contextualises his sources and the reader is offered a wealth of original ideas and reinterpretations. The tome is also very readable and is packed with details, some edifying, some less so, but none spurious. The writer is inevitably controversial and polemical in many of his assumptions.

This is a stimulating and provocative work. While Mango's assessments of Atatürk may not be fully accepted in all quarters, it is safe to say that they will become a central feature of scholarly debate and that this book will take its place as an imperative source for all future studies of this great statesman. Mango has written an unusually penetrating book and has done so with erudition and zest, even if the possible explanations for Atatürk's success in foreign policy, such as the signing of the Montreux Straits Convention which enabled the re-establishment of Turkish sovereignty over the Straits and the inclusion of Hatay within Turkey, might be probed further. Why he acted as he did, principled or pragmatic, requires closer attention. The survey also makes no attempt to examine the special links between domestic and foreign policy.

The book includes a selected bibliography, a detailed index, useful biographical notes, maps, chronology, though not prints, cartoons, charts and documents, as appendices. Copious footnotes supply invaluable bibliographical information. An appealing assortment of illustrations enhances the volume, as does its dust jacket. The photographs are sufficiently fascinating to cause one to regret that more were not included. The tome is handsomely printed. This reviewer did not find a single typo.

The few careless factual errors pertaining to the positions, surnames, dates and places that creep into the text are insignificant. For instance, Hasan Rıza Soyak, Secretary-General of the Presidency, was not appointed representative of the Turkish community in the Sanjak of İskenderun (Hatay), but Atatürk charged him with following up the affairs of that district in Ankara (p.507); Atatürk's aide-de-camp's surname was Gürer and not Gürler (pp.162 and 177); the first genuinely free elections in the history of the republic were not held on 2 May but 14 May 1950 (p. 531); the Bedirhan family was not paramount in Diyarbakır but in the Bitlis area (p. 249); and so on. My corrections of a number of minor and imprecise details do not, however, detract from the book nor vitiate my earlier praise. They should not obscure the important fact that this inquiry gives the clearest view yet of Atatürk's entire life. Mango, whose admiration for Atatürk is obvious, has convincingly given the life and achievements of this remarkable statesman a new human dimension. To Mango's credit, he has not followed the general trend of depicting him in mythic proportions. After reading this perceptive book, one has a better understanding of his character and his overwhelming dedication to the progress and welfare of the Turkish nation.

Mango should be commended for undertaking a reassessment of Atatürk in a vivid and analytical fashion. There are numerous works on Atatürk in Turkish, English and other languages, but none to

my knowledge approaches this major personage with such a steady eye and gift for interpretation. Certain points of judgement aside, his inquiry is informative, fair-minded and enlightening. The author has produced a sophisticated assessment which is sympathetic but not sycophantic, critical on occasion but not iconoclastic and one which is a useful addition to Atatürk studies. No serious student of Turkish history of this period should ignore Mango's outstanding book. This is in all respects an excellent reference work that should be on the shelf of every decent library. This capable study is well worth reading. The book makes demands on the reader, but it repays the effort in full measure. The work is authoritative and indispensable, but it is not the last word on the subject. No doubt much more remains to be said and written about the creator of modern Turkey.

AFGHAN BUZKASHI:

POWER GAMES AND GAMESMEN

By Sreedhar and Mahendra Ved, Vols. I-II, Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2000.

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Buzkashi is a Persian word denoting a traditional winter game played in Central Asia and in northern Afghanistan by Turkic peoples (chiefly the Uzbeks and Turkmens). The Turks call it ulaq (from oqlak, kid) since hundreds of horsemen struggle with each other to catch a kid or a calf. At the end of the combat-like game, he who manages to grab and take the calf off the field of play is the winner. The authors of the two-volume work explain in the Introduction that Buzkashi is synonymous with what is happening in and around Afghanistan today. Sreedhar, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, and Mahendra Ved, Deputy Chief of bureau of the Times of India, argue that in the Buzkashi external powers are playing in the region, Afghanistan is itself the contested calf.

The number of players in the game multiplied after the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the first volume has individual chapters giving detailed information about the most important players, such as the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, Ahmad Shah Masood, the drug trail, pipelines, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China and the Central Asian republics. The role of the US, as a great power, in the Afghan conflict is well elucidated in various chapters. This volume illustrates with well-gathered facts and data that the Taliban is a mere creation of Pakistan, which wanted to install its client state in Kabul. This volume gives a lot of statistical information about the large number of Pakistani soldiers and officers who fought alongside Taliban forces in various battles in Afghanistan, especially in the capture of Kabul. The volume also discloses how the US oil company, Unocal, was drawn into financing Pakistani engineered plots in favour of the Taliban and how the US retreated from its wholehearted aid to Pakistani schemes for the Taliban after Osama bin Laden's alleged bombings of US installations. The volume in general attempts to prove Pakistan's massive involvement in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The second volume is a collection of reference material relevant to the study of the twenty-one year old war in Afghanistan. The first chapter gives English-language translations of Russian analysts' profiles of several internal leaders: Mohammad Omar of the Taliban, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ahmad Shah Masood. The second chapter consists of texts of various interviews with Taliban leaders. Other chapters furnish UN and others' official documents and resolutions about the grave human rights violations in Afghanistan, arms dealing, drug trafficking, and gas and oil pipeline projects. The ninth chapter brings together several newspaper articles and press releases on the intense debate among various political parties in

Pakistan about Pakistan's Afghanistan policy. The subsequent chapters present newspaper clippings regarding the role of China, the United States, India, Osama bin Laden and UN resolutions.

The two-volume book compiled by two Indian writers assembles a large amount of information about the dreadful war in Afghanistan. Any scholar who wishes to study the last two decades of Afghan developments, should not overlook this significant work.

1878 CYPRUS DISPUTE AND THE OTTOMAN-BRITISH AGREEMENT

Hand Over of the Island to England

by Dr Rıfat Uçarol, Lefkoşa, 2000, pp.175

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By virtue of its geopolitical and strategic location, Cyprus has played an important role in international relations throughout history. It has been subjected to many invasions and, as such, its name has consistently been associated with 'question'.

The strategic position of Cyprus also activated the interest of the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the sixteenth century and, with the Ottoman conquest of the island in 1570, Venetian rule ended.

The Ottoman Empire's direct sovereignty over Cyprus lasted 308 years from 1570. The Istanbul government, in line with developments at that juncture in world history, had to cede the island to the British, subject to certain conditions.

Britain, which had initially wanted Cyprus as a military base, exercised sovereignty over the island from 1878 until 1960. In the 1950s, when Cyprus again became an international issue, Britain accepted independence for the island and, in 1960, on the formal establishment of a Cypriot state, Britain withdrew. To correctly analyse the Cyprus question, which still confronts us as an international issue, we have to look into its historical roots and characteristics; advancing views without a knowledge of history will not shed light on that history.

This book endeavours to serve this purpose and it looks into the Ottoman's transfer of the island to Britain, which can be considered the beginning of the Cyprus Question, as we know it today. In this book, Dr Uçarol deals with the developments of 1878 in detail, drawing on official documents. The book consists of an introduction, and four chapters. In the introduction, the period of Ottoman rule (1570-1878) and developments concerning the order established during this period are briefly examined.

The first chapter is devoted to the political developments that led to the appearance of the Cyprus Question.

The second chapter covers Britain's colonialism: its Eastern Mediterranean policy and the importance of Cyprus within this policy; its initiatives to settle on the island and, in this connection,

its diplomatic activities vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire; the Ottoman Empire's policy towards Great Britain; developments in the defence alliance between the two states; and the conditions under which the island was transferred.

The third chapter examines how the transfer of Cyprus to Britain was enacted, how the population of the island reacted to British rule and efforts to put into effect the idea of enosis (union of Cyprus with Greece).

The fourth chapter deals with problems arising from the British administration's regulations and practices in governing Cyprus and disputes arising from the implementation of the defence alliance.

This book, which studies the evolution process and causes of the Cyprus conflict in meticulous detail, is one of the rare academic works that specifically deal with that period. As such, it is important as a basic source for those who wish to obtain information on the historical realities underlying the Cyprus question and for those who want to conduct research on the issue.

At the conclusion of this work, which has been prepared using domestic and foreign material as well as the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives, there are copies of 18 documents. Simplified versions of these documents have also been used in the text.

The Istanbul University Faculty of Literature originally published this book in 1978. A second edition was published 20 years later after reviewing and revising the first edition and adding appendices. It is now being presented to the readers in English translation by Rüstem's Ltd.