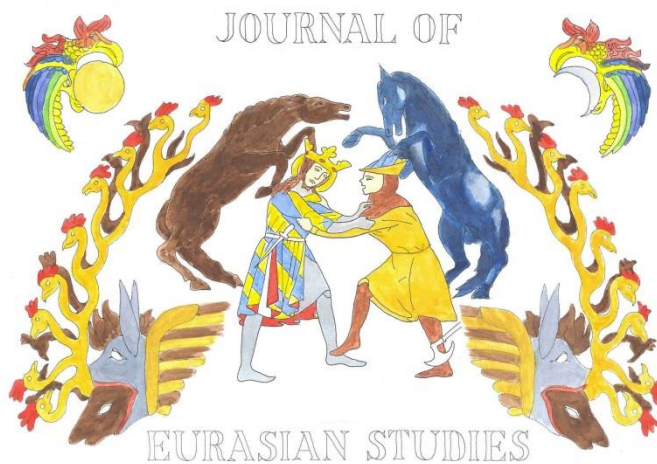


JOURNAL OF EURASIAN STUDIES

Journal of the Gábor Bálint de Szentkatolna Society

Founded: 2009.

Internet: www.federatio.org/joes.html



Volume V., Issue 2. / April — June 2013

ISSN 1877-4199

Publisher

Foundation 'Stichting MIKES INTERNATIONAL', established in The Hague, Holland.

Account: Postbank rek.nr. 7528240

Registered: Stichtingenregister: S 41158447 Kamer van Koophandel en Fabrieken Den Haag

Distribution

The periodical can be downloaded from the following Internet-address:

<http://www.federatio.org/joes.html>

If you wish to subscribe to the email mailing list, you can do it by sending an email to the following address:

mikes_int-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

The publisher has no financial sources. It is supported by many in the form of voluntary work and gifts. We kindly appreciate your gifts.

Address

The Editors and the Publisher can be contacted at the following addresses:

Email: mikes_int@federatio.org

Postal address: P.O. Box 10249, 2501 HE, Den Haag, Holland

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ISSN 1877-4199

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3. References must be uniform and clear (the author(s) should follow consistently a particular pattern, like Chicago style, or Harvard style),
4. Author(s) must take all care to develop their ideas on their own; there should be no cases of plagiarism,
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6. The article can be written in any language. In case it is written in a language other than English, an English summary of at least A4 length is required,
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DEAR READER,

A MAN WITH MANY MISSIONS

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Matthew 7:8

With at least dozens of recordings for almost every piece of western classical music one might think that we are living in an era of both cultural luxury and boredom. Luckily nothing can be further from the truth. For some time distinguished musicians devote their time and talent to unearthing fully or partially forgotten treasures of the western and eastern musical traditions and they are continuously succeeding to delight us with new gems. A prominent figure in this endeavor is Cecilia Bartoli. In the fall of 2012 we could witness the launch of her project entitled *MISSION*. It is a major public rediscovery — with many world premiere recordings on CD of selected pieces — of the Baroque composer Agostino Steffani's (1654-1728) rich œuvre.

Bartoli's interest in the Baroque music is not recent; of her deep involvement with this era of western music let suffice to mention Händel's *SEMELE* on DVD, the CD *OPERA PROIBITA* and the CD/DVD *SACRIFICIUM*. The selection of Händel, Scarlatti and Caldara opera arias on the *Opera Proibita* CD constitutes in my view one of the highest peaks in Cecilia Bartoli's career, though this CD is a little bit underestimated. People at Decca probably sensed that and therefore the next project entitled *Sacrificium*, dedicated to the great castrato arias, was launched with a lavish package: the main CD was supplemented with a beautiful booklet, bonus CD and a DVD-version of the music, recorded at the Royal Palace of Caserta in Italy.

The extraordinary public response to this packaging established the blueprint for the packaging of the project *Mission*. The similarly beautiful booklet provides a wealth of background information on Steffani, an extremely versatile figure with many missions: composer, diplomat, spy, priest, missionary, and who knows what else. Born in Italy but spending most of his life in the North (especially in Germanic lands) accounts heavily for the fact that his work is relatively unknown: for the Italian music historians he went far away and the Germans consider him an Italian. And that is quite a pity! Listening to the CD and/or watching the DVD/Blue-ray one is propelled into the seventh heaven. One can simply wonder how this beauty could lay mostly unnoticed. This is also revealed by the fact that 19 tracks of the 25 are world premiere recordings on CD.

An extra dimension and aesthetic joy is provided by the film recorded at the Château de Versailles in which a large selection of the CD-material is presented with video material. Inside and outside the Château Cecilia Bartoli (*La Musica*) sings in the company of the countertenor Philippe Jaroussky (*L'Amoroso*), the choir of the Swiss Radio and Television, and the I Barocchisti playing on period instruments. These instruments provide not only superb authentic sounding music but also please the

eye. Personally I enjoyed tremendously the enthusiastic and vivid musical direction of Diego Fasolis. The music is interspersed with personal recounts of Steffani (played by Franck Delage), available both in English and in French.

To make the launch of the *Mission* package complete a new book of the well-known crime fiction writer Donna Leon was released, entitled *THE JEWELS OF PARADISE*. In this volume Donna Leon tells the life journey of Agostino Steffani using a contemporary crime story as wrapper, similar in style to that of her 22 volumes counting Commissario Brunetti series. Venice serves again as background and the author's considerable knowledge of Baroque music provides for a nice blend of music history and intriguing crime fiction.

Next to *Opera Proibita* Cecilia Bartoli achieved another peak in her career with *Mission*. We can be grateful to her for this gem. Let us hope that this project will spark further recordings and releases of Agostino Steffani's work.

Flórián Farkas

Editor-in-Chief

The Hague, June 30, 2013

HISTORY

ARADI, Éva

About the Territory of Magna Hungaria

This essay was written on the base of the researches of V.A. Ivanov, a Russian archeologist. He conducted excavations on the territory between the river Kama and both sides of the Ural mountains and in North-West Kazakhstan as well, from the 1970s until 1984. He published a book about the archeological finds in 1984 in Ufa.¹ He has a chapter in his book about the ancient Hungarians, its title is: "Poiski legendarnom stranü Magyar" (Researches about the Legendary Country of the Magyars).² He means with this title the famous Magna Hungaria.

I compared the article of the Russian archeologist with my own researches about this subject and I compiled this essay.

The author and his archeologist colleagues made excavations on many sites of the above-mentioned territory. He calls the Hungarians in different names: "Madjar, Venger, Turk" in his chapter and digged up their burial-grounds and tumuli on both sides of the Ural. Ivanov mentioned the previous excavations made by the Russian Halikov and the Hungarian archeologist István Erdélyi. He also appreciated to the researches of the Hungarian scholar Gyula László.³ According to Ivanov the ancient country of the Hungarians: *Magna Hungaria* was not on the bank of the river Volga but further to the east and *friar Julianus* did not meet the Hungarian speaking people in the town called *Bulgar* but along the river *Byelaya* (white) in the province *Bolshe-Tigani*, in the town *Bilyar*. This fact was mentioned in an article of the Hungarian academician István Fodor, too.⁴



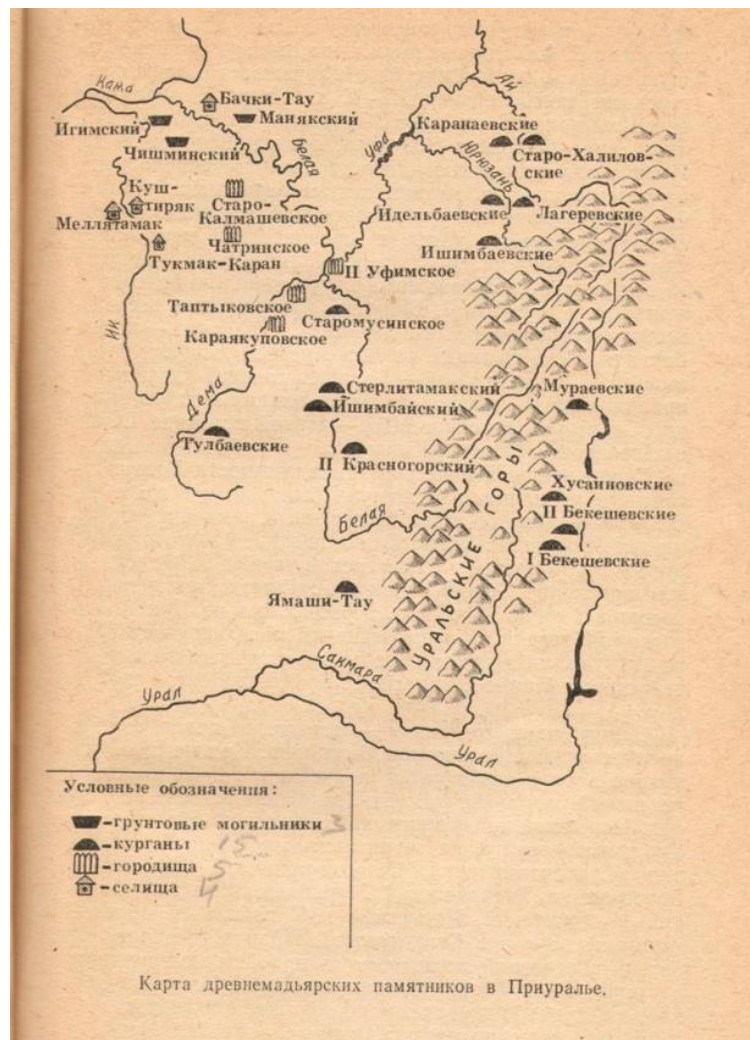
¹ Ivanov, V.A.: "Putjami sztyepnüh kocsevij" (On the Road of the Nomads from the Steppe), Bashkir Publishing House, Ufa, 1984.

² Ivanov: *ibid.* pp.38-75.

³ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.39.

⁴ Fodor, István: „Magyar történettudomány az ezredfordulón” (Hungarian History in the Millenium), 2010, Budapest, Zoll, edited by Gecsényi, Lajos, pp.91-98.

Ivanov illustrated by a map the Hungarian graves and tumulus excavated by his team on both sides of the Ural.⁵ The graves were from the 8th century A.D.

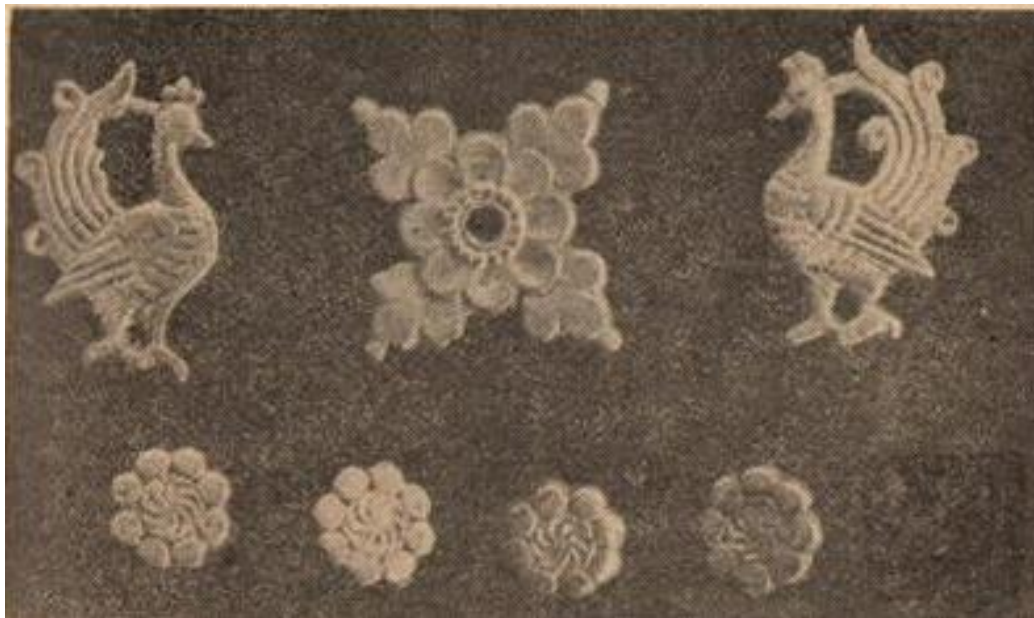


The tumuli on the eastern side of the Ural are richer than those of the western side. The names of the places where the tumuli and graves were excavated are the following: Murajevsko, Bekeshevsko I. and Bekeshevsko II.⁶

Ivanov's conclusion that Magna Hungaria was not near the town Bulgar and along the river Volga is based on the simple fact that they did not find any ancient Hungarian grave there, while in Bolshe-Tigani and in the South Ural they excavated hundreds of Magyar graves. The author presented the different finds on figures in his essay:

⁵ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.42., and the map from Fodor, István' essay, *ibid.* p..94.

⁶ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 42.



They were excavated from the North (Bolshe-Tigani) and from the South (South Ural) but the pattern of the finds – mainly ceramic pots – proves that they belonged to the same culture, the same people. Besides the pots there were many silver pendants and medals, most of them in the South Uralian graves. These ornaments show Turk influence from the Altai and Siberia. In the graves there are many silver items. Even the bridles, the curbs and the blinkers of the horses were inlaid with silver pieces. In one of the tumuli in South Ural a unic pendant was found; most probably it was fixed on one of the blinkers of a horse. It is the figure of a warrior:



⁷ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.47.

⁸ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.48.

The figure wears exactly the same felt clothes and boots as the Kushan kings on their coins in ancient Bactria and India (they ruled these territories between the 1st - 4th centuries A.D.) And the small figure has a necklace, too – most probably also made of silver – this was a royal sign of the Indoscythian kings and the Western Mahakshatrapas as it is represented on the statue of King Chastana in the Museum of Mathura, India.

The only difference between the two representations is that the head of the Magyar figure is framed in a tulip flower. This was a typical Inner-Asian motive; the tulip was not known in India in ancient times. Later, from about the 10th century this flower became a design on some Indian embroideries and stone carvings. It is still used in the westernmost province of India: *Kutch*. Some tribes of this province originating from the Indoscythians are using this motive.⁹



The statue of Mahakshatrapa Chastana, Mathura, India

⁹ Aradi, Éva: "Indoszkíták" (Indoscythians), Hun-Idea, 2012, Budapest, p. 128.

¹⁰ Aradi, Éva: "Indoszkíták" (Indoscythians), Hun-Idea, 2012, Budapest, p.81.

Ivanov mentioned in his book that most of the finds were made of silver but only the so-called breast plate decorations of horses were produced of bronze as they should have been loud enough to call the attention of the warriors in the battles.

On the base of the excavated skeletons the Hungarian Gyula László and the Russian Halikov reconstructed the clothes and the appearance of the ancient Hungarians. Women had silver earrings¹¹ and men had silver buckles of belt¹² and even the blinkers of the horses proved the high level of their craftsmanship:



According to Ivanov these motives show an Inner Asian influence and they were characteristic to the ancient Hungarian art from the territory of the Altai to the Carpathian Mountains and from the North-Caucasus to the river Kama.¹³ He criticized the researches of the previous scholars because they disregarded the results of history, archeology and anthropology. The Hungarians are related to the Turks both in their origin and culture.¹⁴

Ivanov similarly to the statement of S.P. Tolstov, the famous Russian archeologist, declared the Hungarian relationship with the Bashkirs.¹⁵ Tolstov excavated the Bashkir territories and the ancient Choresm in the 1930s and 1940s.

¹¹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.63.

¹² Ivanov: *ibid.* p.64.

¹³ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.52.

¹⁴ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.52.

¹⁵ Tolstov, S.P.: "Po sledam drevnye-chorezmiskoj civilizacii" (The Ancient Choresm), translated by János Balázs, published by Turan Printing and Bindery, USA. p.78 and p. 247.

The ancient Hungarians had good relations with the Turks of Imenkovo. They lived along the left bank of the river Byelaya. The motives of the pots found in the tumulus of Bekeshevsko are Turk and the silver harnesses of the horses excavated in the province Alexeyevsko show an Inner Asian influence. The same is true for the thin plates on the eyes of one of the dead warrior's skull.¹⁶ Besides the good relationship with the Turks, the Hungarians had close connections with the Ugrian tribes, too. They lived near to each other and they had similar way of life.¹⁷

In the graves of the territory between the rivers Volga and Kama the Hungarian corpses were laid with their heads turning to the west, while the Ugrian corpses' heads turning to the north. The archeologists found some animal remains next to the skeletons, not only horse bones but lamb bones, too. These animals were most probably sacrificed for ritual purpose. The horse-sacrifice was an Inner-Asian tradition, the ancient Aryans practiced it in India, it was called *ashvamedha* in Sanskrit.¹⁸

The Hungarian graves of the 7th and 8th centuries found in both the territories of Bolshe-Tigani and South Ural and their finds prove the fact that the Hungarian race existed there until the beginning of the 9th century. The coins in their graves were originated from the 8th century.¹⁹

At that time the Bulgarian State along the river Volga was established. Their cemetery in Bolshe-Tarhansko existed for about one hundred years but even this period was sufficient for the burial of the many graves there. The materials in the graves are mixed but presumable the corpses of the ancient Hungarians were buried there in 17 percent. This is proved by the horse burials, the horse-hides and the linear pottery characteristic of the Hungarians.²⁰ The Bulgarians were a more developed nation culturally and socially; in their state many villages were built and the initial stage of feudalism came into being.

In one of the Hungarian tumuli the archeologists excavated many corpses with finds. Fortunately this tumulus was not robbed. In the centre of the tumulus a warrior was laid with his horse skeleton, with sabre, purse covered plate inlaid with silver fittings and his belt buckles were made of silver, too. His wife was buried on his left side richly decorated with silver jewels. The man was most probably an army commander. On his other side there were buried ten men; near to the commander were the wealthy warriors, followed by the poorer men's corpses. The same happened with his wife's skeleton. To her right side were the well-to-do women, followed by the poorer ones. It seems that in the Hungarian tribes the material and social distinction appeared already in the 8th century.²¹

It was impossible to tell whether the persons – warriors and their wives – died a natural death or according to the Scythian and Hun traditions they had to die with the leader. In India the Indoscythians introduced the custom of the widow's suicide after the death of her husband.²²

¹⁶ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 42.

¹⁷ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 58.

¹⁸ Bongard-Levin, G.M. – Grantovskij, E.A.: „From Scythia to India” Gondolat, Budapest, 1981, p.118.

¹⁹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 42.

²⁰ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 60.

²¹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 62.

²² Aradi, Éva: *ibid.* p. 136.

According to the historian *Procopius* the rich Hephtalite men gathered their friends and shared their wealth with them, but when the rich men died these friends buried themselves in their graves alive.²³

In the above mentioned Hungarian graves the number of the finds also revealed the social differences between the dead persons. In the 9th century there were changes in the Hungarian society. But only one-fifth of the graves of this era could be analysed because the others were robbed in ancient times. In the remaining graves were mainly partial horse burials with skulls, horse-hides and horse legs.²⁴

Ivanov and his colleagues examined the tumuli and graves in connection with the percentage of the rich, poor and middle-class dead persons. The rich persons' graves were of 23 percent and the poor ones' were of 13 percent. In the graves of the rich men their belts, and the blinkers, the curbs and saddles of the horses were made of leather and the harnesses were decorated with silver. In the graves of the poor men the finds were few. In the centre of the tumuli were the graves of the rich people, they were followed by the children's coffins then the common persons' corpses; on the edge of the tumuli were the graves of the servants.²⁵

It was a custom of the equestrian people to take prisoners of war, first of all the women and children who remained in their settlements but the raiders did not kill them; they became their servants. If they were the relatives of wealthy warriors, they were exchanged by paying ransom. Some of the prisoners were sold at the slave-markets.²⁶ The kidnaping of the Hungarian women and children happened at the first war with the Pechenegs in *Levedia* where the Magyars were the neighbours of the strong *Pecheneg Khanate*. The Hungarians lost the battle and when they returned to their settlement, it was empty; the rear-guards of the enemy carried off their families. Most probably the legend of *Hunor* and *Magor* and their soldiers took place at that time: they robbed the daughters of the Alan prince *Dul* and the soldiers carried off the escorts of the princesses. Though according to the Hungarian chroniclers this event had occurred earlier but as the Alans lived on the northern side of the Caucasus only from the 7th century, the Hunor-Magor legend could have originated in the 9th century.

The Hungarians lost the first battle against the Pechenegs but later in the territory between the river Dnieper and the Carpathian Mountains (in Hungarian *Etelköz*, in Russian *Atelkuza*) the Magyars won. So the opinion of some historians that the Hungarians were running from their enemy to the Carpathian Basin is not true. It was a well-prepared *military operation* (Harmatta, Bakay) to occupy the homeland.²⁷

Later on the Hungarians settled the remaining Pechenegs in some parts of the Carpathian Basin meaning that they were not a strong enemy any more. Their settlements in Hungary are kept in the personal names of their descendants and in some geographical names, too.

²³ Procopius: "The Persian War", tr. by H.B.Dewing, Vol.1. Haward University Press, p.6.

²⁴ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.64.

²⁵ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.65.

²⁶ Ivanov: *ibid.* p.68.

²⁷ Bakay, Kornél: „Kik vagyunk? Honnan jöttünk?” Who are we? Where did we come from?) Püski kiadó, 2004, Budapest, p. 97. (here the author mentions J. Harmatta's opinion, too).

Ivanov mentioned in his book that he and his colleagues found much more Hungarian graves on both sides of the Ural than those of in Hungary from the period of the land-conquest.

The graves and tumuli were situated mainly in two places: in the territory of North-West Kazakhstan (Bashkiria), e.g. in *Staro-Halikovsko* and far in the South: in *Husainov*, *Murakayevsk*, *Karanayevo* and *Bekeshevsko*.²⁸ As Ivanov was sure that the ancient Hungarians lived in both territories, he believes that the Magyars had *summer and winter settlements*.²⁹ This is a Scythian tradition, too. The Kushans and the Hephtalites had their *summer settlement* in *Kabul* (at that time in the ancient land of Bactria) and their *winter settlement* was in *Mathura*, India.

The finds were more in the South; according to Ivanov the Hungarian tribes lived there for a longer period. He and his team visited the Bashkir province in the end of April 1981 near to the place where the Hungarians had lived. The territory was deeply snow-covered, so they could not excavate there. In September of the same year the team returned to the Bashkir land; the weather was pleasant, the fields were green. This was the summer settlement of the Magyars; they lived there probably from May to September. They had rich grazing land along the rivers with plenty of water, which helped them to raise their animals. These rivers are the following: *Byelaya*, *Ufa*, *Taniupa*, *Ika*, *Ay* and the *Ashlikul* Lake.

When the summer quarter of the eastern Hungarians became very cold and the fields were covered with snow, they moved to the South Ural; this was their winter settlement.

According to the well-known archeologist, *Pletnieva*, the Hungarians were in the second phase of nomadization in the 8th century. She knew the history of the nomadic peoples well and she divided their development periods into three phases.³⁰

1. *First phase*: The tribes lived in camps, first of all in their *yurts*, they were stock-breeders, their only aim was to find grazing-lands and the whole nation was on the move.
2. *Second phase*: The nomadic nation is unified, partly settled down but they are not yet engaged in agriculture; they have summer and winter settlements. Simple villages are established.
3. *Third phase*: They are already settled, the towns of the steppe are surrounded by villages; they are engaged in agriculture and the nomad state comes into being. They have their leaders, their unity is disintegrated; the khan, the army-commanders, the aristocracy and the clergy (shamans) appear. This phase already is the beginning of feudalism.

The Hungarians were in the end of the second phase and near to the third one when they lived in their territory between the river Kama and the Ural Mountains. The archeologists found many tumuli and graves on their southern settlements; altogether 170, but in Bolshe-Tigani alone more than 100.

The homogeneous culture, religion and language were formed in this phase of the nomadic development.³¹

²⁸ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 65.

²⁹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 65.

³⁰ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 66.

³¹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 67.

The social structure is important, too. The society of the ancient Hungarians was a *democracy of warriors*. It was a patriarchal society based on the warriors' community. The warriors fought the defence wars as well as the battles of occupying a new land. The prisoners of war could get free if they took part in further battles of the Hungarians. If they fought bravely they could rise even to a higher rank. But the real power was in the hand of the aristocracy established by ancient right. The khans were chosen from them and those khans who held the sacred powers too strengthened their influence among the people even more.³²

In the first phase of nomadization the whole nation took part in wars. In the second phase only the warriors, neither the women, nor the elderly or ill persons, the children and the very poor men. According to the excavations the others, even the teenager boys were warriors. Ivanov raised the question whether the ancient Hungarian women could fight in the battles like the Scythian amazons.³³ The female skeletons excavated were damaged; there were some rings, bracelets, earrings and sometimes harnesses and fragments of weapons. But these finds are few; it is not possible to verify if the ancient Hungarian women fought together with the men. Further excavations are necessary, first of all in Hungary.

Besides the social structure, the analysis of the religion and culture of the ancient Hungarians is important, too.

Their religion was not homogeneous in this phase. Most probably Christianity was partly adopted among them. The archeologists excavated a bronze amulet from one grave. It was a figure of a man holding an unrecognizable object in his hand (may be a cross).³⁴ In an other grave there was a simple medal made of silver, showing a man with his hands lifting up to the sky; it could have been a Christian symbol. But in most graves the different portrayals of horses were common, e.g. a standing figure of a horse, a horse-head, several bronze horses. According to the Russian archeologist *Pletnieva* these horse portrayals appeared with other nomadic peoples – the Alans and the Bulgarians – and they were the symbols of the Sun. They were the earthly forms of these peoples' supreme deity: Tengri Khan, the "Lord of Heaven".³⁵ The culture of the ancient Hungarians was strongly influenced by the Turk peoples; they were the believers of Tengri and the Sun, so most probably these horses were celestial ones.

Their craftsmanship was advanced and decorative, for example in the grave of a woman there was a silver horse figure put together with thin plates; it shows the influence of the Scythian art. But the influence of the Alan and Iranian art could be traced, too. In the 7th – 8th centuries the following peoples lived along the river Kama: *Alans, Bulgarians, Hungarians* and *Khazars*; they were of Turk origin, except the Alans. The decoration of the horse blinkers were made of silver or bronze show the Inner-Asian influence in the art of the Magyars. The archeologists excavated many *silver finds* in their graves. Among

³² Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 68.

³³ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 68.

³⁴ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 69.

³⁵ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 69.

the Bolshe-Tigani finds there were some wolf figures, similarly to the Sarmatian art. The aristocracy wanted to prove its ancient origin with these mythical animal figures.³⁶

The food of the ancient Magyars were millet, horse-meat, mares' milk and its products.

The Hungarians got into the third phase of nomadization in the second half of the 9th century, when they moved towards the Carpathian Basin. It was followed by the permanent settlement and later the foundation of the state.

The question occurs: why did the Magyars move towards the west? The answer according to Ivanov is: *the changing of the climate*.³⁷ When the Hungarians stayed in the South Ural, in their neighbourhood a Turk state was established: *Khazaria*. While the historians knew many facts about this state, the archeologists excavated only few finds in their territory. Khazaria had two enemies during the first half of the 9th century: prince *Svyatoslav* of Kiev and the *Caspian Sea*. In the 9th century the upper part of the two big rivers flowing into the Caspian Sea: the Volga and the Ural were flooded by extreme rains and melting snow according to geographical researches.³⁸ The sea level increased towards the south and it overflowed a big part of the Khazar territory destroying the archeological finds. At that time the place between the lower part of the rivers Volga and Oka became a marshland where nothing could be produced and it was full of insects. The peoples of the steppe were running to the west or to the south. The change of climate urged the Hungarians to escape from their South-Uralian place. Archeological finds did not remain about their movement but we have written historical source: *Constantine Porphyrogenitus* wrote about them in his book: "*De Administrando Imperio*" (The Administration of the Empire).³⁹

But later, at the end of the 19th century near to the city of *Voronezh* the archeologists excavated an ancient Magyar grave: a skeleton with horse-bones and horse harnesses inlaid with the above-mentioned typically Hungarian silver decoration.

Hence the movement of the Hungarians through this place is true. Finally in his essay Ivanov is summerizing his researches and he states that the Hungarians moved from *Levedia* (the territory of the left side of the river Don, near to the present-day city Voronezh) to *Etelköz* (the territory between the river Dnieper and the Carpathian Mountains) and from there they occupied the Carpathian Basin from two directions.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 70.

³⁷ Ivanov: *ibid.* pp. 71-72

³⁸ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 72.

³⁹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus: "*De Administrando Imperio*" tr. by J.H. Jenkins, Washington, D.C., 1967, Dumbarton Oak Center for Byzantine Studies publ.

⁴⁰ Ivanov's map, *ibid.* p. 71.



The movement of the Hungarians from South-Ural towards the Carpathian Basin

He did not write in details about the Khazars, he quotes from Constantinus Porphyrogenitus that the Hungarians stayed in Khazaria only for three years.⁴¹

Note:

I have some remarks regarding the researches of the Russian archeologist. I do not think that the Hungarians were only in the second phase of nomadization in the 8th – 9th centuries A.D. True that they did not have permanent dwellings and towns but their craftsmanship and culture were well-developed. The archeological finds were of silver and bronze, even the harnesses and trappings of the horses were made of silver, they were rich enough. The fact that they were poorer than their ancestors, the Huns proves the theory that in every nation's history there are "ups and downs".

When the Huns occupied a huge territory of Eurasia and Atilla was called "Rex Hunosz, Medosz, Gothosz, Danosz"⁴², it meant that he ruled the territory from the Caspian Sea (Medea) to the North-West Europe (Denmark). Those were their glorious days. But after Atilla's death the Huns lost their battles and were scattered in different places in Eurasia (e.g. in the Caucasus, Scythia Minor, Inner-Asia).

⁴¹ Ivanov: *ibid.* p. 74.

⁴² Thuróczy, János: „A magyarok krónikája” (The Chronicle of the Hungarians), Osiris publication, 2001, Budapest, p.38.

For centuries they had to reorganize themselves. But when their successors, the Hungarians stayed in the territory of today's North-West Kazakhstan, between the river Kama and the Ural Mountains, they were most probably in the third phase of nomadization. After only a hundred years they already stayed in Khazaria,⁴³ helping the Khazars in their war against the Bulgarians and in the second half of the 9th century they moved to *Levedia*, organized their army and tribes and raised on the shield their ruling prince: *Álmos*.

The fact that they had summer and winter settlements in the territory of Kazakhstan and along the South Ural Mountains does not prove their low stage of cultural development. Atilla also had his summer settlement near the river Tisza in the Carpathian Basin. According to *Priscus* Atilla received the foreign delegates (Greeks, Romans, and Goths) there.⁴⁴

And his winter settlement was near to the *Danube* north of the Roman Fort and town of Aquincum. It was a beautiful palace made of wood.

It was a custom of the Scythian and post-Scythian peoples to have summer and winter settlements (e.g. the Kushans and the Hephtalites).

The fact that the Magyar could control the territory between the rivers Dnieper and Prut (Etelköz) proves their strength. From there they organized the above mentioned "Carpathian military operation"⁴⁵ and reoccupied the Carpathian Basin. It would have been impossible if they were an underdeveloped nation.

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⁴³ Bakay, Kornél: *ibid.* p. 88.

⁴⁴ Bakay, Kornél: *ibid.* p. 20.

⁴⁵ Bakay, Kornél: *ibid.* p. 97.

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BÉRCZI, Szaniszló

Pict-Scythian Scottish Art¹

In Eurasia the traces of the Scythian art can be discovered over a wide horizon. Scotland is the Northern part of the British Island, and it is a small part of Western-Eurasia. During the violent history of Scotland next to the Celts and Vikings several other peoples took part in molding the modern Scottish population. Considering the old Scottish ornamental art we observe that they have a remarkable thread which traces back to the Scythians. This line of art has been preserved in stone sculpturing. Those large tombstones which can be found scattered all over the Scottish landscape in the number of hundreds are witnesses of the Scythian traditions that had been woven by other ancient communities into the texture of traditions and artistic representations of Scotland.



Fig. 1. The front cover of the coloring booklet 'Pikt-Scythian Art' exhibits the double symbolism of the Pikt-Scythian tombstones: one from Christianity (cross, Daniel with the Lions), and one from the ancient Eurasian Scythian culture (animal fight scenes).

¹ Example issue from the Coloring Booklet Series of Eurasian Arts No. 27, with the drawings of the author. It can be downloaded from the following address: <http://www.federatio.org/tkte.html>

The oldest tombstones are inhabited by great number of animal figures and horse riding men. The cavaliers fight, hunt and shepherd animals mounted with bow and spear. So the tombstones are the heritages of herdsmen peoples and the richness of the symbols and animal fight scenes refer to a community which had been impregnated all Eurasian societies by its culture. These martial, migrating cavalier peoples were called Scythians in Western-Eurasia, and Xiongnu (Hun) in Eastern-Eurasia. Here in Scotland their name was the Pikt, probably given them by the Romans.



Fig. 2. The back cover of the booklet 'Pikt-Scythian Art' exhibits the hunting symbolism of the Pikt-Scythian tombstones: on left side the two brothers follow the magic deer.

The Romans appeared in the British Island during the last centuries before Christ. Their fights against the northern Pikt tribes (who were probably painted in order to have magic forces in wars) were demonstrated by the walls built against them in the Scottish Highlands. The Romans could not defeat them.

The Anglo-Saxonian Chronicle mentions the Scythian origin of the Pikts as follows: "In the British Island there were five native peoples: the English, the Welsh, the Scottish, the Pikt and the Latinhe Pikts arrived from Scythia on long ships and landed in northern parts of Ireland. Later they moved to the northern parts of Scotland. They took Christianity, gradually, during the times of Saint Columba, in the 500 hundreds A.D."

The cultures of peoples who inhabit the British Islands and Ireland today had their origins from various communities. Probably the most ancient of them were the Celts, but Vikings were also frequently (century by century) invading the shoreline villages. Several Danish, Norwegian and Normann invasions are mentioned on the exhibitions of the Dublin National History Museum. The Viking art is also rich in animal fight scenes, as we could see in other booklets of our series, the Viking Art, and we also refer to beautiful Pikt-Scythian stone sculpturing in the Celtic Art booklet, too. But in the tombstone art of the Pikt-Scythians even more archaic features can be discovered.

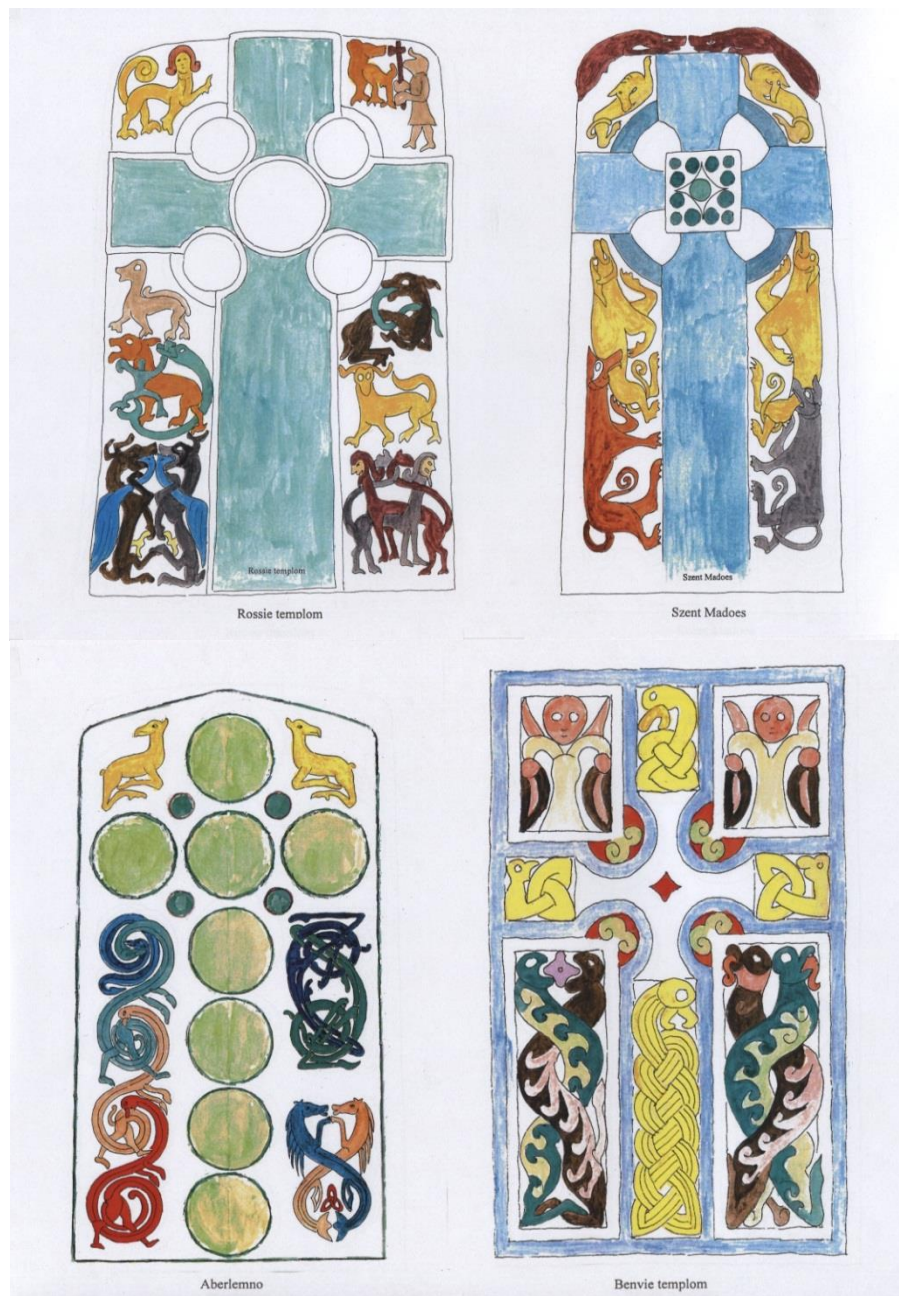


Fig. 3. Four Pikt-Scythian tombstones with painted animal fight scenes. Upper row left: Rossie Church, right: Saint Madoes Church, lower row left: Aberlemno Church, right: Benvie Church.

The tombstones we meet here in this booklet can be found in Northern Scotland. We can follow them on the backside map. Some of them are standing out there in the fields today, like as Aberlemno, or Hilton of Cadboll, the best known ones carved on both sides. On one side there are fight scenarios, on the other one the ancient symbols are arranged around the Cross of Christ.

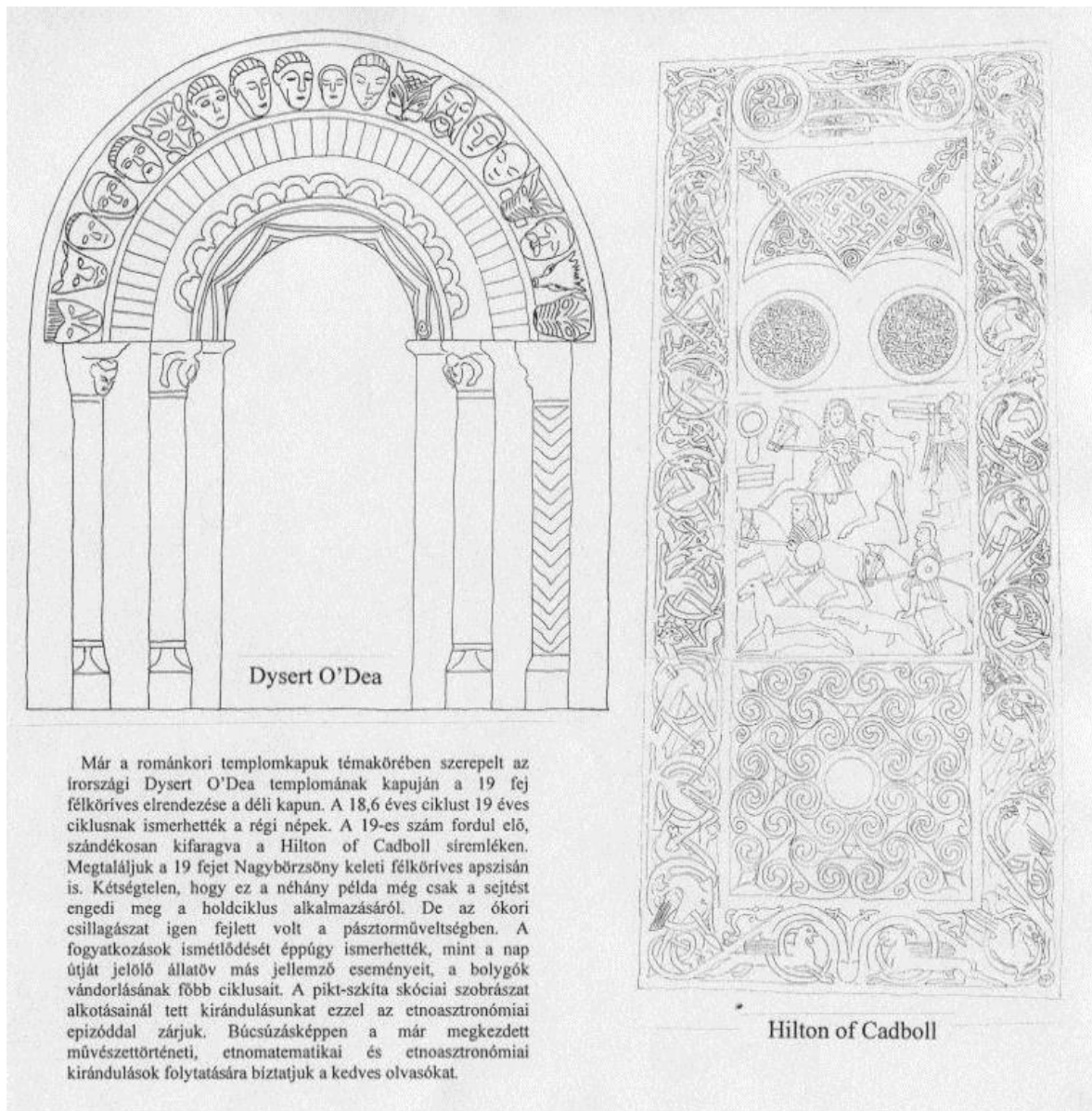


Fig. 4. Celtic Romanesque doorway in Ireland and Pikt-Scythian tombstone at Hilton of Cadboll: both with the astronomical symbolic number of 19. Left, on Dysert O'Dea doorway the number of heads circulating the tympanon, on the right the encircled animal surrounding the central mirrors exhibit the number 19, the number of the years of the node of the lunar orbit rotating on the ecliptic.

We set out in our Eurasian art series to investigate the mathematical aspects of the artistic heritage of ancient peoples. Such mathematical characteristics were found in the symmetry patterns of the ornamental parts of the sculptured tombstones. We show here the Hilton of Cadboll patterns, and some details of Nigg, which are not simple structures, frequently using the *pgg* type and the *cm* type symmetry patterns.

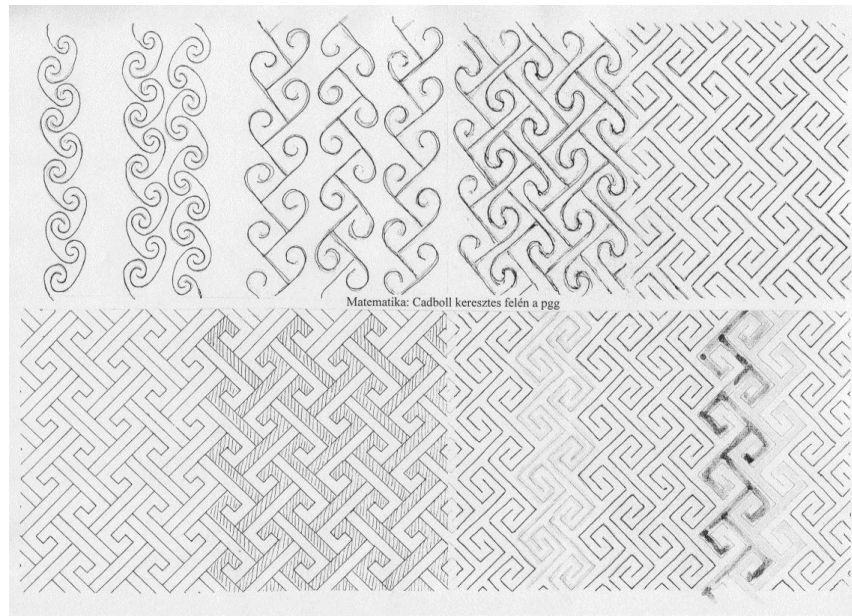


Fig. 5. The “genetics” of the *pgg* whirl-chain like pattern, through its doubled form to the *pgg* pattern on Pikt-Scythian tombstone at Hilton of Cadboll.

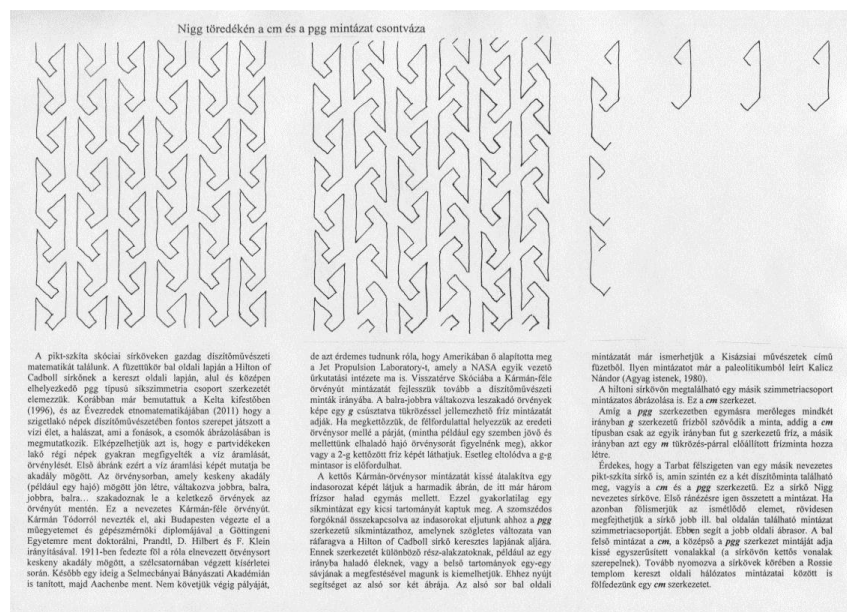


Fig. 6. The “genetics” of the *pgg* and *cm* patterns, on Pikt-Scythian tombstone at Niggs.

The relations of *pgg* with the whirl-series behind an obstacle were also analysed, allowing the implication that there were sailing men among the artists. Sailors made always good observations. It may be not occasional that based on observations and supplanted with analysis the scientists of the British Islands later gave two geniuses in concept-summerizing science, as physics: Newton and Maxwell. Newton was an Englishman, and Maxwell was Scottish.



Fig. 7. It is a great pleasure for young students to color the animal populated chadwick tombstone figures, like the one shown here by Lelle Peták.

By thumbing and coloring this booklet you meet with the far away Scythian-Piktish world where extraordinary knowledge had been preserved in their arts, both in ideas, and in structural science, expressed in the carved stone patterns and ornamentations. I wish an exciting time to the readers during their adventures in this ancient Scottish world.

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DREISZIGER, Nándor

The Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin, ca. 895-900: The Controversies Continue

ABSTRACT

The collapse of communist rule in 1989 brought political freedom to Hungary's people but it also resulted in the rise of other problems: globalization, a weakening of the social safety net, and growing economic and social insecurity. The lot of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring states also failed to improve substantially. Many Hungarians were left confused and disappointed — and abandoned by the West. Under these circumstances Hungarians were attracted to writers who told them that they were different from Europeans and that they had distinguished historical roots. This paper traces the evolution of Hungarian opinions about Magyar origins in recent decades. In doing so it describes the ideas of 1. the Turanists (who place an emphasis on the Hungarians' Asian roots), 2. the autochthonists (who believe that Hungarians are the ancient inhabitants of their present homeland), 3. the critics of establishment academics (who are also dissatisfied with traditionalist explanations of the Hungarian past), and 4. the reactions of the country's mainstream scholars to these developments. The paper also offers suggestions as to which of these diverse interpretations of the past might be the most logical explanation of Hungarian ethnogenesis.

Keywords: Hungarian ethnogenesis; Hungarian conquest; Hungarian origins; Hungarian historiography; Turanism in Hungary.

In his massive history of Hungary, Sir Bryan Cartledge, British Ambassador to Budapest in the early 1980s, remarked that while other nations have myths that celebrate the gods and heroes of the past, Hungarians are engrossed with their origins. "Finding themselves on a cultural island in the centre of Europe," he writes, "speaking a language incomprehensible to their ... neighbours, [they] are fascinated by the question of how they came to be there in the first place."¹ Indeed, Hungarian preoccupation with origins has not abated — in fact in recent times it has only intensified. This has happened despite the vast amount of research that has been invested in the subject over the generations.

¹ Sir Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3.

Throughout the centuries Hungarians, or Magyars as they call themselves, have asked many questions regarding their past. Where was their ancient homeland? Do they have any relatives? How did they survive over the millennia in a culturally alien environment? Such questions are still being asked but in recent years the Magyars in search of their true past have focused mainly on two riddles: who were their ancestors and when did they arrive in their present-day Carpathian homeland?

This paper will offer a brief discussion of the replies that have been provided in Hungary to these questions. It will also suggest that some of the answers produced are based more on emotions — and in some cases even on political considerations — than on any new evidence that has emerged on the subject in recent years.

Neo-Turanism

The first point that should be made in connection with this question of the Hungarians' ancestors is that the people of Hungary consider themselves to be the descendants of the nomadic tribes that conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century. As to the question who these nomadic tribes were, the traditional answer has been that they, at least the majority of the tribes that took part in the conquest, were made up of people who spoke the Magyar language. A corollary of this theory is an explanation that, at the time of the Hungarian conquest, the Carpathian Basin was almost devoid of population. As we shall see later in this paper, both of these assumptions are highly questionable, but very few people in Hungary ever contested them.²

Who then were these Magyar-speaking nomadic tribes that made up the bulk of the conquerors, and where did they come from? Traditional historiography has placed their ancient homeland in various parts of what now is European Russia, with some historians being inclined to point to the lands west of the Urals and others to the east of them, and still others to both, depending on what time period is being considered. Independent scholars have pointed to many other possible ancient homelands but mainstream academics tended to be rather conservative in this respect. In recent years however, there has been an increasing tendency, even among some professional historians in Hungary to place the ancient homeland of the Hungarians further east, sometimes into the very heart of the Eurasian continent.

This explanation of the Hungarian past harks back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Hungary's first Turanian movement was born. The members of this movement espoused the need for co-operation among Turanian, i.e. Turkic and Uralic peoples, in the face of the growing influence of Pan-Slavism. After the dismemberment of historic Hungary in the post-World War I peace settlement Hungarian disillusionment with the West contributed to the popularity of the Turanian movement — as well as to the increased emphasis placed on the Central- or Inner-Asian origins of Hungarians.

By the mid-20th century public enthusiasm in Hungary for Turanism abated, although the idea survived in the writings of great many post-World War II émigrés who continued to seek the ancient Hungarian homeland in Mesopotamia and other parts of Central Asia. In recent decades however, the

² For a traditional outline of Hungarian pre-history see *ibid.*, p. 4. A more detailed account can be found in László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary* (Budapest: Atlantisz, 1999), 33-46.

Hungarian public's increasing disappointment with the globalization and westernization that followed the regime change of 1989, saw the re-emergence of Turanism in Hungary. Once again Hungarian culture is increasingly seen as being linked to the cultures of the east and the ancient homeland of Hungarians is again being sought in Asia.

One of the most prolific neo-Turanian authors in post-1989 Hungary was István Kiszely (1932-2012). Kiszely was a physical anthropologist by training but by the 1970s he was regularly teaching a course on Hungarian ancient history at Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University. He also took on many public roles, had part-time appointments at other institutions, was a regular guest on TV shows and even became involved in municipal politics. Toward the end of his life he became principal of the King Attila College, co-founded by Hungary's far-right Jobbik party, also known as the movement for a better Hungary. He was dismissed from this position however when it became public knowledge that throughout much of the Kádár era he had been an informer for Hungary's secret police apparatus.³

Ever since his interest had been aroused by Hungarian ancient history, Kiszely kept producing one book after another relating to the subject. In these books he told Hungarians not only that their past was linked more to Asia than Europe, but also that this past was more distinguished than those of other European nations. He also argued that for generations, Hungary's establishment historians have spread lies about the Hungarian past. Kiszely proclaimed that Hungarians were not only culturally but also anatomically different from Europeans — and that in the past they had been even more distinguishable than they were at the present. Kiszely's books were immensely popular in Hungary.⁴

Still other neo-Turanists turned not so much to locating ancient Magyar homelands in Asia but to finding Asian peoples they could declare to be the Hungarians' close relatives. In this respect one group of researchers has gone so far as to identify a people living in present-day Central Asia as probable close relatives of the Hungarians. The story of this development goes back to the 1960s when a physical anthropologist by the name of T. Toth, on a visit to the Soviet Union, "discovered" a clan in Kazakhstan called the Madijars and concluded that these people were Magyars. Decades later another Hungarian traveller, M. Benkő, visited the region and again declared this clan to be a relative of the Hungarian nation. In September of 2006 anthropologist András Zsolt Bíró with a small team went to visit the Madijars again — and this time they were greeted enthusiastically by the locals (who must have remembered the previous Hungarian visitors) as "long-lost" relatives.⁵

During their 2006 trip Bíró and the members of his team managed to obtain y-DNA samples from a group of Madijar men and eventually compared the results with the y-DNA of another rather small group of Hungarian men. On the basis of this evidence Bíró and his associates came up with the conclusion that genetic evidence also supported their conclusion about the relatedness of Madijars and Magyars; and they went further: they suggested that the ancient homeland of Hungarians must have

³ [http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiszely_Istv%C3%A1n_\(antropol%C3%B3gus\)](http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiszely_Istv%C3%A1n_(antropol%C3%B3gus))

⁴ On the subject see Nándor Dreisziger, "Misinformation, Disinformation or Pseudo-science? István Kiszely's Quest for a Glorious Hungarian Past," *Hungarian Studies Review* 39, 1-2 (2012): 137-146.

⁵ One critic of Bíró and his associates has pointed out that the team keeps referring to this clan not by their real name, Madijars, but by a name they gave them: Madjars. Cs[anád] Bálint, "Some Problems in Genetic Research on Hungarian Ethnogenesis," *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61 (2010): 283-294.

been the same as the present homeland of the Madijars, that is, Central Asia. Following this “discovery” Bíró and his associates embarked on the establishment of a movement to celebrate Turanism. The prime focus of this undertaking is a biannual international conference they organize on the steppe-lands of the Great Hungarian Plain where delegations from a dozen Central Asian countries (and one from as far as Mongolia) gather and celebrate their ancient cultures and common origins. The gathering is known as Kurultáj (from the Turkish word *kurultay* = gathering).

The Autochthonous School

A very different vision of the Hungarian past is presented by another group of people who are preoccupied with the subject of Magyar origins. According to the members of this school the ancient homeland of Hungarians was not in Asia as the Turanists maintain, and not even in easternmost Europe as the traditionalists would have it, but was right where Hungarians live today.

This view of the Hungarian past is not entirely new. One of its most earnest advocates used to be Lajos Kiss of Marjalak (1887-1972). Despite his humble origins Marjalaki, as he is usually referred to in Hungary, got himself a good education, wrote a few school textbooks, and by the mid-1920s was involved in archaeological explorations. In 1930 he published his findings that were in near-total conflict with existing theories of the Hungarian conquest. His overall message was that the ancestors of the Hungarians were not the nomadic tribes that arrived in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century but the people who had been living there for centuries. In particular Marjalaki argued that, rather than being a desolate, de-populated land in 895, the Carpathian Basin was a densely populated place whose inhabitants were settled agriculturalist, fishers, and tenders of animals. He wrote that these people “had changed masters so many times that they never even thought of resisting [the new] conquerors. Their masters of the time were not of their people, and [the struggle for their land] was not their business but that of the people who ruled them....” With the new conquerors these people just exchanged one ruling elite for another and they continued their life as settled peoples in the service of their new political-military masters. As evidence of the claim that the land was densely populated at the end of the 9th century Marjalaki cited the work of the chronicler Anonymus according to which Prince Árpád, the leader of the conquerors, in numerous instances gave one or another member of his entourage villages and land as reward, together with their inhabitants. Marjalaki added that Anonymus also remarked in his chronicle that in post-conquest Hungary peasants spoke a different language than the conquerors.⁶

In recent decades the idea of Hungarians being the autochthonous peoples of the Carpathian Basin has taken on a new life. Encouraged by the writings of a few non-Hungarian researchers who decided to dabble in Hungarian proto-history, volume after volume — and TV interview after TV interview — saw the light of day regarding the subject. The new exponents of the autochthonous view of Hungarian origins added a twist to Marjalaki’s theory: they claimed that in the distant past, some of the ancestors of the Hungarians had moved to the east and, at the end of the 9th century they returned, under their leader

⁶ Marjalaki’s article originally appeared in the periodical *Nyugat* [West]. An electronic version of it can be found on the website: <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00022/00492/15257.htm> . Some enthusiasts of this autochthonous explanation of the Hungarian past also cite the works of a contemporary of Marjalaki, Adorján Magyar (1887-1978). Most of his often fantastic (in the sense of too hard to believe) writings are available at http://yamaguchy.netfirms.com/magyar_a/adorjan_index.html

Prince Árpád, and “liberated” their relatives living in the Carpathian Basin from foreign oppression. Thus the unity of the Hungarian nation was re-established. The writer who took the history of the ancient Hungarian homeland furthest back in time is the Italian Michelangelo Naddeo whose reconstruction of the Hungarian ancient past is based in large part on archaeological evidence. Naddeo’s message is similar to Kiszely’s: Hungarians have a proud past, a rich heritage — their ancestors spread art and culture throughout Europe and northern Asia long before other peoples, such as the Indo-Europeans, achieved similar cultural levels.⁷

A Few Academic Dissidents

Throughout the decades that neo-Turanism and the autochthonous school of Hungarian pre-history flowered in Hungary there was a modest movement of scholars who took on their country’s academic establishment, especially regarding the questions of 1, when the ancestors of today’s Hungarians settled in their present homeland and 2, who the conquerors of the Carpathian Basin of 895-fame had been.

The founder of this movement is widely considered to have been Gyula László (1910-1998), an archaeologist, historian and artist. After working for various institutions including Hungary’s National Museum, he joined the faculty of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and taught archaeology and history. His archaeological work, more precisely his examination of 7th to 10th century graveyards, led him to a new interpretation of Hungarian ethnogenesis. The evidence he found, rather than reinforcing in him the idea that the ancestors of Hungarians arrived in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century, suggested to him that the majority of them had settled there during the so-called late-Avar age of Central European history. Thus was born the so-called “dual conquest” theory of Hungarian ethnogenesis.⁸

By the mid-1990s László had come to the conclusion that the Hungarians of the 10th and 11th centuries, and the population of present-day Hungary, were not the descendants of Prince Árpád and his warriors, but overwhelmingly the progeny of the peoples who had settled in the Carpathian Basin in the late-Avar

⁷ For information concerning Naddeo’s theory see for example the websites <http://www.fullexta.hu/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2539> and <http://www.cakravartin.com/archives/interview-with-michelangelo-naddeo>. The also Italian Mario Alinei (1926-) came to similar conclusions although he limited his estimate as to when the Hungarians’ ancestors settled in the Carpathian Basin to the 9th century B.C. See his book *Ősi kapocs: A magyar-etruszk nyelvrokonság* [Ancient link: The Hungarian-Etruscan linguistic relatedness], trans. Krisztián Puskár (Budapest: Allprint, 2005), a Hungarian edition of the author’s *Etrusco: Una forma arcaica di ungherese* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003). The American writer Grover S. Krantz took time from his sasquatch studies to write his *Geographical Development of European Languages* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 1988). In this work Krantz pronounced Magyar as one of Europe’s oldest languages.

⁸ For the original formulation of his theory see his book: *A „kettős honfoglalás”* [Dual conquest] (Budapest: Magvető, 1978). For the later version: “Életem egyik fele, a régészet” [One half of my life, archaeology] Akadémiai beszélgetések, 17 April 1997, <http://www.mmakademia.hu/ab/3/303.php> (accessed 13/12/2010). In this essay László declares that the “... the Hungarians of the Middle Ages and the Hungarians of today are on the whole not the progeny of Árpád’s conquerors but the direct descendants of the earlier Onogur, late-Avar people.” See also his brief article: “A szlávok régészeti kutatása hazánkban” [The archaeological search for Slavs in our homeland] http://betiltva.com/files/laszlo_szlavok_hazankban.php 23 September 1997. In this article László concludes: “... a mai magyar népesség voltaképpen egyenes folytatása a késő-avarkor (nagyreszt ugyancsak magyar) népességének...” [Today’s Hungarian population is basically the direct continuation of the (mainly also Hungarian) population of the late-Avar age].

era. One circumstance that reinforced his new interpretation of the “Hungarian conquest” was the fact that his study of contemporary cemeteries suggested that the subject peoples of 10th century Hungary outnumbered to a great extent the newly-arrived conquerors. The ancestors of the Hungarians lived in large villages — and in their cemeteries there could be found their graves by the thousands, while in the same cemeteries the graves of the newly-arrived conquerors numbered a few dozens. When 20 members of the elite lived among 2,000 of their subjects, László asked, who assimilated whom? With this subtle change in László’s argument the term “dual conquest” acquired a different meaning.

László died in 1998 and the task of defining this amended version of the “dual conquest” theory was assumed by a younger colleague of his, János Makkay (1933-). The new definition went something like this: in the second half of the first millennium A.D. two important events took place in the Carpathian Basin that determined the future course of Hungarian ethnogenesis. The first of these was the arrival, long before the 9th century, of the ancestors of the Hungarians, a development that established the demographic basis of the future Hungarian nation. The second event was the conquest in 895 of the Carpathian Basin by a group of nomadic tribes under Prince Árpád — whose descendants later created a centralized feudal kingdom that still later transmuted into the modern nation state of Hungary.

In his publications on the subject Makkay repeated, refined and added to László’s arguments. Concerning linguistic evidence Makkay argued for example that Slavic loan-words in Hungarian were acquired by Magyar agriculturalists who had co-habited with Slavic settlers for centuries in the Carpathian Basin. He pointed out that many words in Hungarian describing organized religion are of South Slavic origin. According to him, these words entered the Magyar language in the Carpathian Basin, as the result of the interaction over the centuries of the Hungarians with Christian Slavs there. Had Hungarians not been living in the Carpathian Basin at that time but only after 895, their exposure to Christianity would have come only around the year 1000 when Hungary’s rulers invited missionaries mainly from the German world to convert the descendants of the nomads who conquered the Carpathian Basin a century earlier. In that case words describing organized religious life in the Hungarian language would have been German and not Slavic.⁹

Less than a decade after the appearance of Makkay’s works on the amended theory of the “dual conquest” another of Hungary’s academics dealing with Hungarian ethnogenesis published a book that took issue with the dominant theory of the “conquest.” This was Gábor Vékony (1944-2004) who spent most of his career teaching at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Through his researches Vékony came to the conclusion that the ancestors of Hungarians did not come to the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century but most likely in the second half of the 7th, or possibly as early as the 5th. And Vékony went further. According to him the nomadic tribes that conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century were not Hungarian. They spoke Turkic languages which their descendants lost when they

⁹ János Makkay, “Embertannal kapcsolatos adatok a ‘kettős honfoglalás’ vitájához” [Anthropological data concerning the debate about the ‘dual conquest’], *Anthropologiai Közlemények*, 35 (1993): 213-219; also, the same author’s *A magyarság keletkezése* [The dating of Hungarians] (Szolnok: Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Múzeum, 1994) 2nd revised and expanded edition, pp. 157-158.

were assimilated by the masses of Hungarians the conquerors had found living in this part of Central Europe. Vékony told all this in a book he published shortly before his death in 2004.¹⁰

Just two years after the appearance of Vékony's monograph, another book surfaced in Hungary that questioned the traditional interpretation of the story of Hungarian ethnogenesis. The book's author was the veteran historian Péter Király whose arguments against the traditional interpretation of the Hungarian conquest were based largely on the examination of Central and West European medieval written sources. After studying the latter for more than half-a-century, Király came to the conclusion that the ancestors of the Hungarians probably started to settle in the Carpathian Basin long before the so-called Hungarian conquest. Among other things Király cited pre-895 documents from monasteries in what are now Germany, France, Austria and Switzerland. Apparently many of these references are to a people named Ungri, Ungari, Vungri, Hungri, Ungarus and Hungarius suggesting that 1. the members of Christian Europe's religious establishment were aware of a people in the Carpathian Basin with such names, and 2. individuals from this region of Europe had moved west either to join monastic houses or as peasants and tradesmen who took up residence in villages adjacent to monasteries. On the basis of his researches Király concluded that the ancestors of Hungarians must have started to settle in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 6th century.¹¹

Király suggested that the arrival of the Hungarians' ancestors started in the late-6th century while Vékony remarked that perhaps they had come in the times of the Hun assault on the Roman Empire in the 5th. One Hungarian academic of the second half of the 20th century, Dezső Simonyi, went so far as to say that they might have pre-dated the Huns.¹² This view was endorsed by still another prominent Hungarian academic, Pál Lipták (1914-2000), a physical anthropologist. After having been buffeted during World War II and its turbulent aftermath from being a soldier, then a P.O.W. in the Soviet Union, and then holding various jobs in the Hungary of the 1950s, in 1960 he joined the faculty of what now is the University of Szeged, from where he retired twenty years later. His views on Hungarian ethnogenesis put him into a school of his own and are outlined in a monograph he published soon after retirement. Through a study of the anatomy of the occupants of Conquest-era graves, Lipták came to the conclusion that the majority of the people who conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century were different anatomically from the people who lived there at the time, and also from the people who live there at the present. That is, the majority of the conquerors were not related to Hungarians. The real ancestors of the Hungarians, Lipták argued, had settled in the Carpathian Basin in "several waves", from the early 5th century on to the end of the 9th century. The ancestors of the

¹⁰ *Magyar őstörténet — Magyar honfoglalás* (Budapest: Nap Kiadó, 2002). For a review of this book see my essay: "The Székelys: Ancestors of Today's Hungarians? A New Twist to Magyar Prehistory," *Hungarian Studies Review* 36, 1-2 (2009): 153-169. <http://www.hungarianstudies.org/HSR2009.pdf>

¹¹ Péter Király, *A honalapítás vitás eseményei: A kalandozások és a honfoglalás éve* [The disputed events of the establishment of a homeland: The marauding expeditions and the year of the conquest] (Nyíregyháza: Nyíregyházi Főiskola, 2006), especially pp. 146-163 and 214. For a review of this book, by Erzsébet Zelliger, see <http://www.szabir.com/blog/hozzaszolas-kiraly-peter/>

¹² Dezső Simonyi, "A pannoniai bolgárok és a magyarság kialakulása" [The Bulgars of Pannonia and the ethnogenesis of Hungarians] in *Tanulmányok a bolgár-magyar kapcsolatokról a bolgár állam megalapításának 1300. évfordulójára* [Studies in the field of Bulgarian-Hungarian relations on the 1,300th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian state], ed. Čavdar Dobrev, Péter Juhász and Petar Miätev (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), 71-88. See also the same author's "Die Bulgaren des 5. Jahrhunderts im Karpatbecken" *Acta Archaeologica Hungariae* 10 (1959): 227-250.

Hungarians, their tribes or tribal fragments, “entered the Carpathian Basin, together with the fifth-century Bulgars and, even more likely, during the 250 years of Avar rule.” Who were the nomads who conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century? Lipták also gives an answer to this question: they were the “overlords... characterized by a significant ethnic component of Turkic... origin...”¹³

The Defenders of Academic Orthodoxy

How do establishment historians react to this multifaceted onslaught against their teachings? It would not be an oversimplification if we said that they ignore it.¹⁴ In a massive survey of Hungarian historiography Ignác Romsics, the doyen of Hungary’s historical establishment, devoted only a short paragraph to the major controversies related to the Hungarian conquest.¹⁵ Romsics’s discussion of this issue is confined largely to Gyula László’s theory of the “dual conquest” and glosses over the fact that in his old age László refined his theory as a result of which it can no longer be described as a hypothesis referring to the arrival of the Hungarians in their present homeland in two waves, the first in the 670s and the second in the 890s. Romsics doesn’t even mention the works of most other academic dissidents such as János Makkay, Dezső Simonyi, Gábor Vékony and Péter Király. He refers to Pál Lipták, but not to his theory of the “several waves” origin of Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian Basin.¹⁶

Political Implications

At this point we may ask the question: are there any political implications of these debates about Hungarian origins in post-communist Hungary? To begin to answer this question we might point out that the school of historiography that we called the “academic dissidents” has virtually no influence in Hungarian public life today. Three or four decades ago Gyula László had a substantial following, but

¹³ Pál Lipták, *Avars and Ancient Hungarians* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983), 160 (see also p. 30). Lipták goes on to explain the archaeological and anatomical differences between occupants of graves in post-conquest Hungary, of the conquerors and the common people, the latter of which he deems to be “ethnically Hungarian.” *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161. For a succinct overview of Lipták’s ideas see “A finnugor népek antropológiája [The anthropology of the Finno-Ugric peoples] in *Uráli népek: nyelvrokonaink kultúrája és hagyományai* [Uralic peoples: the culture and traditions of our linguistic relatives], ed. Péter Hajdú (Budapest: Corvina, 1975): 129-137.

¹⁴ Among the exceptions is Csanád Bálint’s above-cited questioning of A. Zs. Bíró and his theory of Madjar-Magyar relatedness. See note 5 above.

¹⁵ This is in contrast to the historiographical work of Romanian historian Lucian Boia, most of which deals with writings on Romanian origins. Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European U. P., 2001).

¹⁶ Ignác Romsics, *Clio Bűvöletében: Magyar történetírás a 19-20. században — nemzetközi kitekintéssel* [In the spell of Clio: Hungarian historiography in the 19th and 20th centuries — with international perspectives] (Budapest: Osiris, 2011), 423 (see also pp. 152-153). Romsics does mention the unconventional views of a few other Hungarian historians including Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913) who, in his book *A magyarság keletkezése és gyarapodása* [The dating of Hungarians and their demographic growth] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1895), expressed views similar to those of the young László and even Gábor Vékony. See Romsics, *Clio*, p. 154. Vámbéry’s book is on the internet: <http://mek.oszk.hu/03000/03032/index.phtml>. In his very last book (that was published posthumously) Vámbéry repeated these sentiments: *A magyarság bölcsőjénél: A magyar-török rokonság kezdete és fejlődése* [At the cradle of Hungarians: The beginning and development of the Magyar-Turkish relatedness] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1914), 118. <http://mek.oszk.hu/06900/06996/06996/pdf>.

with his death and the retirement and ageing of his disciple János Makkay the theory of the “dual conquest” — either in its original formulation or its 1990s definition — has been gradually forgotten. Makkay’s monograph and the recent books of Gábor Vékony and Péter Király, published by obscure publishers, are also hardly known by Hungary’s reading public. Lipták’s relevant book, although published by Hungary’s foremost academic press, seems also undiscovered or forgotten by both lay and academic readers. While some publishers are eager to take on any book written by such popular writer as Kiszely, Makkay seems to find it impossible to publish a newly-revised and expanded version of his volume on Hungarian ethnogenesis.¹⁷

The upholders of historical orthodoxy have also limited influence with the Hungarian public. They may have clout within academia — for example in the determination of who get academic appointments, research grants, travel money etc. — but as far as being able to influence public opinion in Hungary their power is limited. Within the academic profession however, their position is safe, since orthodoxy is far easier to defend than innovation.

The situation is entirely different in the case of the two other movements for the revision of ideas regarding Hungarian ethnogenesis. The theory of Hungarians being the autochthonous population of the Carpathian Basin has been adopted by the World Federation of Hungarians (hereafter WFH), a non-governmental organization headquartered in Budapest. The WFH publishes many books some of which deal with this subject. It also carries on much internet propaganda, most of it from the pen of its indefatigable North American Vice-President, László Botos. But the movement that has the greatest impact on public opinion in Hungary is the neo-Turanian school of Hungarian origins.

The re-emergence of Turanism in present-day Hungary is intertwined with the rise of Hungary’s far-right Jobbik party. Established in 1999 and patterned on other far-right parties in Europe, this political party shares many elements of the platforms of other right-wing parties. It has been described as being anti-establishment, anti-globalist, anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, anti-Roma and anti-Semitic. However, what distinguishes Jobbik from all other parties, including other European right-wing parties, is its anti-Western stance.¹⁸

Jobbik’s anti-Western sentiments make for an ideal political marriage between this political movement and Hungary’s neo-Turanian awakening. For a party that proclaims that Hungarians are the most western of Eurasia’s eastern peoples, Turanism offers a natural world view. Jobbik also tells the people of Hungary that they are descendants of Attila the Hun, that they are different from Europeans, and that they have a distinguished past. In the opinion of researchers Emel Akçali and Umut Korkut, elements of Turanism are ubiquitous in today’s Hungarian society and they permeate all aspects of Hungarian popular culture. In their words all this “resonates with... a search for an Eastern identity as an alternative to the country’s Western orientation.” Turanism offers Hungarians a panacea for the country’s “social collapse and disintegration” by “promising order, social cohesion, and survival.”¹⁹ It

¹⁷ I exchanged a few e-mails with Dr. Makkay in 2011 and 2012.

¹⁸ Emel Akçali and Umut Korkut, “Geographical Metanarratives in East-Central Europe: Neo-Turanism in Hungary,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, 5 (2012): 596-614, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.53.5.596>

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 605-611; the quoted words are on pp. 608-609.

conjures up images of past national glory that has been denied to Hungarians through the machinations of their enemies: publicists and academics writing within and outside of the country.

As long as Hungary will be plagued by myriad social and economic problems and millions of Hungarians will feel confused, perplexed, and even oppressed by processes such as globalization, the future of Turanism there will be bright — as will the prospects of a far-right movement such as Jobbik.

Who is right: The Turanists? The Autochthonists?

When it comes to asking who is right about questions such as when the ancestors of the Hungarians first began arriving in the Carpathian Basin — and, especially, who were the nomadic tribes that conquered the region at the end of the 9th century — it is difficult to give answers. Sources of information about the Hungarians' distant past are few and often they are untrustworthy — and the further we go back in time the fewer and less reliable these sources become. Still, it might be appropriate to offer some conjectures about these two queries.

The writings of such Turanists as Kiszely are riddled with misinformation. For example, the evidence and even the statistics Kiszely cited to support some of his arguments keeps changing from one book to the next, always in order to make sure that his theories appear more convincing. His "scholarship" is a clear case of evidence being adjusted to support the theory, rather than the other way around.²⁰ The same seems to be true of the claims of A. Zs. Bíró and his associates about the Madijars being blood relatives of Hungarians. The majority of Madijar men belong to the G1 y-chromosomal genetic haplogroup. Members of this haplogroup are absent from present-day Hungary's population. Any genetic relationship between Madijars and Magyars is hardly conceivable. The similarity between these two peoples' names must be a coincidence.²¹

A few comments might be made about the relationship of Hungarians and Asian peoples, the Turanians, in particular. Indeed there are similarities between elements of Hungarian culture and, for example, the culture of Turkic peoples. Whether these similarities come from co-habitation during many centuries or even millennia, or an even closer relationship is difficult to say. Are Hungarians the westernmost eastern peoples in Eurasia? Shared cultural characteristics, even music and mythology, might suggest they are. Other attributes of these peoples suggest that they are not. The science of genetics tells us that the predominant majority of Asians are lactose intolerant. They lack the genetic mutation (revealed by the presence of the C/T⁻¹³⁹¹⁰ allele) that makes a person lactose-tolerant. In today's Hungarian population the incidence of individuals with lactose intolerance is not substantially different from that of the Hungarians' Central European neighbours.²² On this question of the Hungarians being the "westernmost of eastern peoples" genetics have a further comment. The incidence of "Asian genes"

²⁰ See my review of Kiszely's ideas, "Misinformation, Disinformation..." cited above (note 4).

²¹ Information from Mr. Tibor Fehér, manager of the Hungarian project of the Family Tree DNA Company of Texas. Various e-mails, including one dated 15 February 2013.

²² Dóra Nagy, Gyöngyvér Tömöry, Bernadett Csanyi, Erika Bogácsi-Szabó, Ágnes Czibula, Katalin Priskin, Olga Bede, László Bartosiewicz, C. Stephen Downes, and István Raskó. "Comparison of Lactose Persistence Polymorphism in Ancient and Present-Day Hungarian Populations." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 000:000-000 (2011), available online.

or “Asian DNA” — or, more precisely, men belonging to Asian y-chromosomal DNA groups — is hardly more frequent among Hungarians than it is in neighbouring European populations. The exception to this generalization is the case of the Romanians, among whom the incidence of “Asian DNA” is slightly higher than among Hungarians.²³

If the theory of the Turanian origins of Hungarians is difficult to confirm or refute, than it is even more difficult to comment meaningfully on the teachings of Hungary’s autochthonous school. Reliable, substantial evidence for the presence of proto-Hungarian populations in the Carpathian Basin in Roman and pre-Roman times is difficult to produce. The arguments of Hungarian academic dissidents ranging from the advocates of the dual conquest theory to Pál Lipták’s “several wave” theory of Hungarian settlement help somewhat, but none of these scholars have placed the arrival of the Hungarians’ ancestors before the 5th century A.D. Genetics offer only meagre comfort to members of the autochthonous school. Members of the R1a1 y-chromosomal haplogroup with the Z280 marker are common in the Carpathian Basin, in fact they are the most frequently occurring genetic group among Hungarian men. Members of this group can also be found from the southern Baltic to the bend of the Volga in eastern European Russia — the latter is the home of such Volga-Finnic populations such as the Mordvins. R1a1 men with the Z280 marker, however, are also frequent among Russians. Was the Carpathian Basin the ancient homeland of this genetic population? Only time and the genetic testing of far more people, from the Danube Basin to the foothills of the Ural Mountains, will tell.

One claim the autochthonists make, however, can be dismissed fairly easily. It is the assertion that the nomadic tribes who conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century were the descendants of the original population of that “ancient Hungarian homeland” — who left for the East and many generations later returned to “liberate” their long abandoned “brethren” from “foreign occupation.” The anthropological and genetic evidence available contradicts this hypothesis. Anatomically as well as genetically these two populations — the peoples of the Carpathian Basin and the conquerors of 895 — were different. It has been mentioned above that the predominant majority, according to one study 100%, of the conquering population was lactose intolerant, while among the common or subject peoples resting in 10th and 11th century graves in Hungary, the incidence of lactose intolerance was not much different from what it is in Hungary’s present-day population — or the populations of neighbouring nations.²⁴ Hungarians are not the relatives of the conquerors.

Who is Right: the Establishment Historians or their Critics?

The debate between these two historiographical schools focuses in large part on the relative numbers of the autochthonous population vs. the conquerors end of the 9th century. In this connection the claim of the defenders of orthodoxy to the effect that at the time the Carpathian Basin was almost devoid of population seems unsupportable. The masses of Avar-age graves that have been found in the region as well as other archaeological evidence suggest that the Basin had been relatively densely populated ever

²³ Information from the above-mentioned Tibor Fehér, contained in e-mails since 2011. The higher incidence of Asian DNA among Romanians is a bit of a mystery but it can probably be explained by the settlement of more Kumans on the territory of present-day Romania than in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 13th century.

²⁴ Nagy *et al.* On this subject see also István Raskó, *Honfoglaló gének* [Conquering genes] (Budapest: Medicina Könyvkiadó, 2010).

since the Roman era — and even before. It had abundant resources to support human habitation. In the 9th century other parts of Europe, such as for example the land of the Franks and the Italian peninsula, had millions of inhabitants, why would the Middle Danube Basin not be similarly densely populated? Some historians claim that there had been wars there, but there had been wars in other parts of Europe too and still the population was numerous. Furthermore, the population of 14th century Hungary can be estimated from written records and that estimate can be projected back to the 9th century given the fact that demographic growth rates are known for European populations of the times. Such calculations suggest that the size of the Carpathian Basin's population on the eve of the conquest was larger than supporters of the orthodox version of Hungarian ethnogenesis have claimed.²⁵

While the defenders of historical orthodoxy have belittled the size of 9th century Carpathian Basin's autochthonous population, they nearly always exaggerated the numbers of the conquerors. In this connection we should point out that throughout history populations of nomadic peoples tended to be smaller than those of agriculturalists. The claim by a few members of the orthodox school that a part of the conquering population consisted of tillers of the soil is dubious. Prince Árpád's warriors were above all marauders. The coexistence of marauders and agriculturalists in a tribal confederacy for more than a temporary period is unlikely. Prince Árpád's people, furthermore, had been on the move time and again for at least one, possibly two generations before their arrival in Central Europe. Under such circumstances it is quite unlikely that there were agriculturalists among them. We have the opinions of many historians and archaeologists who say that the numbers of the conquerors was small. The most recent of such estimate comes from a team of geneticists who studied the DNA of the conquerors. In one of their studies the team pointed out that, once the conquerors established themselves in the Carpathian Basin, they made up only a "small fraction" of the land's total population. If this had been otherwise, i.e. if the conquerors had constituted a sizeable population, they would have left some kind of a genetic footprint.²⁶

Still another argument against the upholders of historical orthodoxy is the fact that a conquest such as they describe, as a result of which a wholesale language change followed an invasion by warrior tribes, never happened in medieval Europe. European history from the demise of the Roman Empire in the West to the 12th century is full of examples of warrior peoples occupying one or another part of Europe. Every time such an occupation occurred it seems, the result was the same: the occupiers (i.e. their descendants) were sooner or later assimilated by the local, autochthonous populations.

Soon after the collapse of Roman rule in what is now Italy the Ostrogoths occupied most of that land and established a kingdom of their own — and their children started to be Romanized. About the same

²⁵ For a well-informed refutation of the claim that the Great Hungarian Plain was largely devoid of population at the end of the 9th century see the works of Professor Teréz Olajos of the University of Szeged, including her paper "Az avar továbbélés kérdéséről: A 9. századi avar történelem görög és latin nyelvű forrásai" [About the question of Avar demographic continuity: Greek and Latin sources of 9th century Avar history], *Tiszatáj* (November 2001): 50-56 <http://www.lib.jgytf.u-szeged.hu/folyoiratok/tiszataj/01-11/olajos.pdf>

²⁶ Gyönyvér Tömöry, Bernadett Csányi, Erika Bogácsi-Szabó, Tibor Kalmár, Ágnes Czibula, Aranka Csősz, Katalin Priskin, Balázs Mende, Péter Langó, C. Stephen Downes and István Raskó, "Comparison of Maternal Lineage and Biogeographic Analyses of Ancient and Modern Hungarian Populations," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 134 (2007): 354-368. See also Raskó, *Honfoglaló génnek, cit.*

time the also German-speaking Burgundians moved into what today is eastern France. In our days nothing remains of their language in that part of France, though the land, Burgundy, is still named after its post-Roman age occupiers. Also in the 5th century, the Visigoths conquered much of the Iberian Peninsula, established a German-speaking kingdom there — and within about half-dozen generation their descendants spoke Spanish. In the 6th decade of the 6th century, the Longobards set up a kingdom in northern Italy from where they expanded their rule over most of the peninsula. Today only the name Lombardy reminds us of their Germanic language and culture. Still later the Franks, a confederation of German-speaking tribes, extended their rule over much of what now is France, part of Italy, and much of the rest of Central Europe. Today there is no linguistic trace of them except in the lands that had been originally populated by German-speakers.

The experience of Scandinavian conquerors was similar. Wherever they conquered lands (Novgorod, Kiev, Sicily, etc.) already inhabited by other peoples, they became assimilated by the locals. Early in the 10th century they occupied Northern France and established what became known as the Norman kingdom, and in about half-dozen generations their descendants spoke French. In 1066 these French-speaking Normans occupied England and in another half-dozen generations their descendants began speaking English. In the second half of the next century an army of Anglo-Norman warriors conquered Ireland and displaced the land's political elite — and in a few generations their descendants became more Irish than the Irish. Closer to the Carpathian Basin, in Eastern Europe's lower-Danube region, the Turkic-speaking nomads known as the Bulgars came as occupiers in the 7th century. They established themselves as the region's ruling class. In less than ten generations their descendants spoke Slavic, the language of their subjects.

The defenders of orthodoxy would say that what happened in the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin was a repetition of what had transpired, nearly half millennia earlier, in England. There, according to them, West-Germanic speakers conquered the land and imposed their language on the autochthonous population. And, indeed, that used to be the explanation of the so-called conquest of England by the Saxons, Angles and the Jutes. In recent decades however that theory has been increasingly challenged. In the United Kingdom the image of medieval history being dominated by invasions is being replaced by one emphasising culture transfers and gradual movements of peoples. In place of the idea of nations being founded as the consequence of the massive shifts of populations and the military occupation of foreign lands, historians nowadays tend to talk about the slow spread of new technologies and production techniques — as well as of peoples. The members of this new school of historiography might best be called “anti-invasionists.” They conclude that invasions, in particular by nomadic barbarians, usually resulted in what Professor Peter Heather of London's King's College calls “elite replacements” rather than in the ethnogenesis of nations.²⁷

²⁷ Peter Heather, *Empires and Barbarians: The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12-21. See also the works of Francis Pryor, especially his *Britain AD: a Quest for Arthur, England and the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Harper/Collins, 2004). Another example of the new historiography is Stephen Oppenheimer, *The Origins of the British* (London: Robinson, 2007), especially pp. 477-82. See also the entry “Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain” in the Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_settlement_of_Britain (accessed 04/10/2012). It is notable that this encyclopaedia entry talks of “settlement” as opposed to a “conquest”.

While in the UK the idea of “conquests” resulting in language change is increasingly questioned, among Hungarian defenders of the orthodox view of the “Hungarian conquest” an “invasionist” explanation of such events continues to dominate. Even some of the critics of the dominant explanation of Hungarian ethnogenesis talk in terms of a single mass-movement of the Hungarians’ ancestors into their present homeland. The exception to this generalization is above all Pál Lipták whose theory of the “several waves” of Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian Basin between the 5th and 9th centuries appears to be the closest to being an anti-invasionist hypothesis — and the most rational theory of Hungarian ethnogenesis.²⁸

Lipták’s theory has antedated the birth of the anti-invasionist British school of culture-change by a generation but it has gone unnoticed in Hungary. The fact that it has not gained a following in that country is not surprising. The theory of the arrival of the Hungarians in their present homeland in incremental stages, in several waves, is neither romantic nor exotic. It certainly does not appeal to a nation troubled by the present and in search of a glorious past. It is highly unlikely that any influential public institution or political movement will ever endorse it as the true story of Hungarian ethnogenesis.

What is the future of the Hungarian past? The answer probably is that the search for the Hungarians’ origins will continue to be dominated by the persistence of myths — as well as more debates about the ancestors. Sir Bryan Cartledge was right: “nations need myths”²⁹ — and Hungarians today need them more than ever.



²⁸ Professor András Zoltán (of ELTE), a linguist and a disciple of Péter Király, has come to conclusions similar to Lipták’s when he said that he would not be surprised if it turned out that the ancestors of Hungarians arrived in their present homeland not as a result of a mass movement or invasion but through quiet and prolonged migration. See: Péter Király, ed., *A honalapítás vitás eseményei fogadtatása* [The reception of the {book} the disputed events of the establishment of a homeland] (Nyíregyháza: Nyíregyházi Főiskola, 2010), 73.

²⁹ Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, p. 3.

POLITICS

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Kazakhstan as a Model for Regulating Interethnic Relations

Abstract: This article studies the development of interethnic accord in Kazakhstan and describes the tools needed to harmonize interethnic relations. The implementation of democratic principles through the development of civil society is considered in the article as a main tool to regulate interethnic relations in the country. Political stability in Kazakhstan is studied as it is assumed to be directly related to the Kazakhstani model of interethnic accord. The main purpose of this research was to analyse the interethnic policy of Kazakhstan aimed at preventing interethnic conflicts which is considered as one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. The paper examines the correlation of civic society and interethnic relations in the country and studies the issues of interethnic accord as a main principle of democracy in the modern world.

Key words: *interethnic relations, civil society, Kazakhstan nation, political stability, consensus, social harmony, democracy.*

Introduction

After Kazakhstan gained its sovereignty, individual and collective (ethnic, religious and general civil) identity within the formation of civic patterns in a changing multiethnic society became one of the highly discussed issues, not least because Kazakhstan was a part of the Soviet Union, and the 'We are the Soviet people' concept had a profound effect on promoting the general civic (collective) identity which put an individual identity on the back burner and dissolved cultural differences and diversity within a 'melting pot'.

Based on issues of identity in the context of multiethnic society and ethnic diversity, Kazakhstan is now facing the transformation from a 'traditional society' into a civil society. Determination of political and cultural identities, which will be the basis for the future of the country, requires the correct assessment of identities and implementation of appropriate strategic solutions.

Democracy and Interethnic Relations

Civil peace and interethnic concordance are critical for the prosperity of the state at the present moment, particularly taking into account the current global economic crisis. Kazakhstan has developed its unique model of interethnic accord which has enabled the consistent implementation of its legal and institutional aspects.

According to the president N.A. Nazarbayev, 'Kazakhstan is continuing to carry out significant transformations aimed at increasing the efficiency of the political system and the governmental structure of the state'¹.

Being the main driving power and the subject of the historical process, we are building a *civil* society which promotes citizens' interests and their system of values. The extent to which individuals and society are protected from the pressure of government is defined by the degree of democracy. Therefore, all the processes in civil society are carried out in 'upward' rather than 'downward' direction, i.e. 'the state and its competent bodies are formed from members of society and controlled by society as a whole through specific tools'².

A highly developed civil society is the highest form of democracy; it is the firmness and stability of democracy.

So what is *democracy*? In his 'On Democracy', the famous political scientist Robert Dahl writes, 'Democracy has been discussed off and on for about twenty-five hundred years, enough time to provide a tidy set of ideas about democracy on which everyone, or nearly everyone, could agree. For better or worse, that is not the case'³.

Today, there are more than 6 billion people living in the world; they all differ by their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, racial and religious affiliation. Approximately, 3-4 thousand nations exist worldwide⁴. Nations consist of various ethnic groups and nationalities; therefore, it is extremely important to maintain interethnic accord in multicultural countries.

Lately, the term *social consensus democracy* is often used in the scientific vernacular. Social consensus democracy could be characterized by religious, linguistic, ethnic, ideological or racial integrity and the prevalence of horizontal segmentation during the institutionalization of interactions that happen within the elite level of this integrity and so on⁵.

It is our belief that the specific and proper analyses of modern democratic systems were provided by R. Dahl and Ch. Lindblom. They pulled aside the abstract ideas of democracy and focused on the most important subject as 'polyarchy': what type of democratic systems should be in place in the contemporary world, to what extent is democracy developed in so-called modern democratic states⁶.

¹ N.A. Nazarbayev. Kazakhstan na poroge novogo ryvka vpered v svoem razvitii. Poslanie Presidenta N.A. Nazarbayeva k narodu Kazakhstana «Strategia vhozhdenia Kazakhstana v chislo 50-ti naibolee konkurentnosposobnykh stran mira. – Astana, 1 marta 2006 goda. – s. 20.

² G.S.Knabe. 'Cicero, culture and eloquence. Foreword to selected works'. Marcus Tullius Cicero. Selected Works: M.: 'Khudozhestvennaya Literatura', 1975. – p.12

³ Political Studies. Encyclopaedic Dictionary. – M.: PUBLISHERS, 1993. – p.75-76.

⁴ Collins Dictionary of Sociology. – Volume 1 (A-O). – M.: Veche ACT Publishing House, 1999. – p.508.

⁵ The new encyclopaedia of philosophy in four volumes. – Volume 3 (N-S). – M.: Mysl Publishing House, 2001. – p.132

⁶ Political Studies. Encyclopaedic Dictionary. – M.: PUBLISHERS, 1993; Kazakhstan Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Political Science – Almaty: Al-Farabi KazNU, 1998, etc.

However, Robert Dahl comes to the conclusion that 'it is difficult to cover the most recent and authentic information'⁷.

With regard to the philosophy, the democracy is built on the ratio of 'freedom and equality as social and political values'; these values are reflected in state institutions of democracy, in direct or representative democracy, correspondingly. The latter is now spread as a rule of law in law-governed states with the supreme power⁸.

At the same time, it is essential to keep in mind the importance of the following: each generation discovers democracy in its own way because each historical period builds up its own peculiar system of material, social, political, and human values. Thereby, the conscious and adequate social structure comes into being during that particular period. Needless to say that each new generation is responsible for standards of civilization; this should not be ignored at any time.

The development of legal relations within each historical period means the formation and development of a civil society formed by the state with citizens having supreme social, economic, political, cultural and moral status – 'this is the unlimited process of development which covers all the spheres of life including the aspirations of the society, power and the mankind for freedom, equality, justice, and other social, political, moral and cultural values'⁹.

Despite the unlimited nature of this development, there is still a basis for measuring the extent of this process – *this is the degree of democracy*, i.e. the degree of democracy within the power, the politics, and civic initiatives of individuals and collective groups.

Although we attempt to provide a comprehensive, yet brief review to define the nature of democracy and identify the main indicators of the civil society, it is first necessary to find out the followings: **firstly, we should define which form of democracy is being implemented in the course of the civil society development in Kazakhstan; secondly, we need to define and prove the main ways for the development of interethnic accord.**

As for the first issue, it is our belief that the civil society in Kazakhstan is being developed through social consensus democracy.

This is a base for determining the condition and the future of the civic identity in terms of multiethnic and multi-confessional society.

Many research works show that a collective identity encourages citizens to have a positive attitude towards establishing good relations with individuals of another ethnicity. Thereby, the positive nature and positive aspects of civic identity improves the social interaction and this increases the self-esteem and national pride of the individual, causing them to strive to benefit the future of their homeland and motivating the person. This, in turn, guarantees the stability in the state. The most important thing is that

⁷ K.S. Gadjiyev. Introduction to the Political Science. – M.: Logos, 2000. – p. 34-38

⁸ The New Encyclopaedia of Philosophy in Four Volumes. – Volume 1 (A-D). – M.: Mysl, 2000. – p.549

⁹ N.A. Nazarbayev. State-of-the-Nation Address of the President of Kazakhstan of 2008. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2008.

the positive nature of civic identity unites the people and is one of the main conditions for stability of the multicultural society of Kazakhstan.

Pursuing the stability of interethnic concordance, Kazakhstan is now successfully implementing a policy focused on developing national-cultural diversity and unity, as well as ensuring the prosperity and preservation of ethnic groups.

National policy founded on a basis of pursuing efficient ways of ensuring interethnic cooperation and fair solutions to national issues is built on grounds like transparency, accountability to ensure social stability, supremacy of law, consolidation of state independence and active policy of integration.

Interethnic relations in Kazakhstan developed in a conflict-free manner in all periods of the state based on the idea of harmonizing interests of all ethnic groups, preserving equal rights of citizens and developing their cultural and linguistic freedom.

The Constitution of Kazakhstan provides for and guarantees the legal equality of all nationalities living in the territory of the country. The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has proved to be the most effective tool contributing to interethnic accord and productive interethnic cooperation. This national political body has undergone a total transformation from a consultative-advisory type of structure to a constitutional body and its activities are regulated by statutory instruments of the government.

Our future strategic goal in the field of interethnic relations is 'to strengthen the unity of society and develop a unique competitive Kazakhstan nation'¹⁰. The state has all the conditions that enable the fulfillment of this task. First of all, this is down to the peace-loving and tolerant nature of the people of Kazakhstan; secondly, the active participation of government in developing and strengthening the unique model of interethnic relations in the country.

The ethno-political situation in Kazakhstan is now stable and there are no explicit and apparent conflicts between various ethnic groups. Comprehensive studies show that the people of Kazakhstan demonstrate the highest level of confidence in governmental bodies when it comes to regulation of interethnic relations. Nevertheless, the consolidation of interethnic concordance remains one of the urgent issues given the presence of aspects which still need to be solved.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is capable of maintaining peace and accord without being vulnerable to social and economic crisis. The country has developed its unique model of interethnic accord and concordance of diverse cultures and religions.

Development and Evolution of Civil Society and Democracy in Kazakhstan

Civil society structures and institutions play an important part in harmonizing interethnic relations. Relations between ethnic groups, as well as the extent and peculiarities of interethnic accord mainly depend on how developed civil society is. Thereby, the society and non-governmental structures are responsible and accountable for issues like civility, credibility and reliability.

¹⁰ N.A. Nazarbayev. Strategy of 'Kazakhstan – 2030' in action: Report on the conference dedicated to 10th anniversary of Kazakhstan-2030 strategy. Astana, 12.10.2007.

Today, social organizations have a profound influence on the behaviour of citizens and the development of civil institutions because the interests of the group come first compared to the interests of an individual. In this regard, it is worthwhile noting the importance of autonomous enterprises, political parties and institutions such as the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan.

Parties are assigned a special role in the space between the political system and the civil society. They are formed as independent structures on the base of the civil society but manifest themselves in the political system through governmental structures using political tools.

Similar to interethnic relations, the interaction between civil society organizations leaves a lot to be desired. The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has not yet found the ways to amalgamate and cooperate with other parties except for the Nur Otan party. State structures and social organizations still need to reach an understanding with each other. In this respect, it is deemed necessary to put the established principles away: firstly, we should withdraw from the base-superstructure concept of the political and state system and stop perceiving it as a tool to realize all potentials of the civil society; secondly, we should stop perceiving the civil society as an object of state interaction. Recognizing the equality of the aforesaid, it is essential to find means of them having interaction.

There is also an abundance of certain social and political forces that exacerbate the differences in tendencies in civil society and the political system. They can only be eliminated through close partnership of the society and government.

While assessing the importance public associations play in unifying communities, it is particularly worthwhile mentioning that there are differences in stakeholder groups that act cohesively in a competitive and cooperating manner. They can be distinguished by their 'social weight' and 'authority' given the scales of their economic, informational and other capabilities.

Lobbying, being a form of authority, may give rise to certain controversies in ethnic relations based on the special interests of affiliated business structures. Therefore, it is critical to develop control mechanisms or other tools to eliminate similar potential risks and reduce the possibilities to influence public officers. This function could be carried out by the Public Chamber under the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan in common with the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. However, the main condition for its implementation should be the open and unveiled discussion of urgent issues.

The Concept of Civil Society Development was adopted by the order of the President of Kazakhstan in 2006. The executive bodies were assigned the role of implementing the goals of the Concept and promoting interplay and synergy within 'the civil society – the state – the business' tripod.

Nevertheless, civil society has not yet been fully developed in the country. In most part, the responsibility for regulating interethnic relations and interethnic accord lies with state institutions. Consequently, the main strategic task should be the redistribution of functions in favour of civil society institutions. By doing so, it would be possible to reach a higher degree of stability, civil peace and interethnic concordance.

State institutions and public associations must effectively assist in conducting measures designed to strengthen interethnic accord. At the same time, it is necessary to take into consideration peculiarities, ethnic compositions and structures by regions.

Currently, non-governmental organizations demonstrate positive trends in contributing to interethnic accord. Non-governmental organizations cover various aspects of ethnic factors in certain issues. They have started delivering different social services aimed at analysing interethnic relations and their harmonization.

Nevertheless, the activities of non-governmental organizations focused on improving interethnic relations are still at an early stage of formation and need to be transformed to function in a more efficient manner.

Regulation of Interethnic Relations in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan has successfully avoided the negative impacts of the social-economic crisis and preserved peace and unity in the country. The country has developed its own model of concordance between ethnic groups, cultures and religious faiths.

The stability and solidity of both interethnic accord and social harmony are ensured by the state policy in this field. The state has developed a legal framework which protects the rights and freedom of all its citizens regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation. The state excludes any legal provisions which discriminate against citizens on religious or ethnic grounds. The state has developed the national principle of equality through harmonizing traditional and liberal values in terms of civil affiliation.

Taking into consideration the global practice and main values of democracy, this approach has ensured the highest level of interethnic concordance.

The contribution of political parties to civil peace and interethnic relations is paramount. First of all, this could be attributed to the Nur Otan party which supports the democratic principles of interethnic relations.

Nonetheless, interethnic concordance strongly depends on civil society structures such as religious faiths, non-governmental organizations and trade unions. Social harmony can be established in the course of civil society development.

Evaluating the extreme importance of concordance in a society, it can be considered critical to control certain issues that emerge in daily perception and ideology. It is natural that different ethnic groups have different values and principles.

To what extent are state bodies and civil society structures efficient in resolving social, economic, political, historical and cultural issues? To what extent is the party political system developed?

The effective social and economic state policy contributes to social concord, especially in the context of the global financial and economic crisis. Sociological surveys indicated that President's anti-crisis initiatives were applauded by the majority of the population regardless of their ethnic origin. This

demonstrates that relations between ethnic groups aren't deteriorating; on the contrary, interethnic relations are shown to be strengthening more than ever.

However, there are controversial viewpoints on fundamental values in a society, namely those concerning economic and social development trends.

Thus, the critical attitude of oppositional forces towards the course the government is taking can be fully justified and deemed appropriate despite the fact that the opposition does not offer a unified opinion on social and economic development.

In this respect, the executive power must introduce certain changes to the economic and social development strategy. Improvements in the executive system will lead to the consolidation of unity and interethnic accord in society.

The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, the largest civil society institution, helps to promote the culture of interethnic relations and interconnect various ethnic interests. The Assembly has wider opportunities to preserve peace and concord in a society in the context of the global financial and economic recession.

Analyzing the State-of-the-Nation Address by the President, the Secretariat of The Assembly of People of Kazakhstan has published a document entitled 'Unite for Future'. Uniting citizens regardless of their ethnic origin is one of the main goals of the Assembly. It is our belief that an influential institution of a civil society must review and accept a specific plan of actions that facilitate to elimination of crises in a society¹¹.

At the same time, interethnic relations in the country must not be eulogized. Relations between ethnic groups are one of the complex issues in the affairs of any state. Despite the established model of interethnic relations in Kazakhstan, there are still certain issues that need to be carefully studied and covered by the state policy.

Imperialism and ethnocentrism which emerge both at the level of everyday consciousness and ideology are factors that run in contradiction with the concepts of unity and interethnic accord. It may be impossible to notice them at the first sight, though they can be clearly distinguished afterwards. Advocates of these two different directions need to conduct theoretic analyses to prove their viewpoints.

It is important to provide a correct and timely assessment of ethnocentrism (regardless of ethnic origin). It usually occurs on an everyday level and may lead to wider interethnic conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the situation and find its solution using the various institutions of a civil society. Ethnocentrism should be resolved publicly without being considered a low-profile issue.

Many analysts consider that ethnic identity prevails over civic identity; and fractioning by ethnic affiliation is more evident. In this respect, it is worthwhile to provide some clarifications.

Firstly, the ethnic identity sometimes is understood as generic identity. **Secondly**, fractioning by ethnic characteristics is not prevalent over social-economic fractioning. Thus, 28.9% of migrants

¹¹ A. Kurtov. Issues of interethnic relations in Kazakhstan. 2010.

indicated the deterioration of social and economic situation as a main reason for their departure and only 18.7% of respondents mentioned the deterioration of interethnic relations.

Despite the fact that many processes within interethnic relations go low profile, ethnic competition, namely in the field of culture and languages, is evident. This is obviously seen in the attempts of the Russian elite to secure the state language rank for the Russian language, whereas the Kazakh elite try to prevent this from happening. The dispute flowing in a peaceful and cultivated manner shows that the Russians are striving to promote their position, meanwhile the Kazakhs, being an indigenous ethnic group strive to preserve the Kazakh monopoly. The Russian-speaking population, as well as the Kazakh urbanized part of the native population, support the aspirations of the Russian elite.

The official status of the Russian language provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan seems the most appropriate solution. Furthermore, there are additional language issues that require similar solutions. One of them is the use of the state language in the official correspondence.

The representativeness of ethnic groups in the state system needs its appropriate regulation too. Not all representatives of ethnic groups are present in state government bodies; the prevalence of one ethnic group is evident in this field. The Russian political scientist A.Kurtov says, 'Although there are 130 ethnic groups in the country, the largest portion of them remain outside state and political affairs'¹².

Only 64 ethnic groups are represented in governmental bodies whereas there are 130 nationalities in the country.

Some changes have been observed lately in the representativeness of ethnic groups in state bodies. Principally, in relation to the introduction of a quota for deputies proposed by the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan to Mazhilis. This is a wise step to increase the representativeness of ethnic groups in the Parliament. However, the majority of survey respondents believe that the general picture remains the same with no obvious changes.

The results of sociological research show that 65.1% of respondents noted the representatives of certain nations (ethnic groups) highlighting the prevalence and authority of the Kazakhs; at the same time, the highest level of representativeness is attributed to Russians – 48.9%. As for other nationalities, respondents believe that their representativeness is at the lower level; this is mostly relevant to Chechens (the lowest representativeness in state bodies -25.3%).

According to M.I. Kozybayev, this lop-sidedness in human resources management should be first eliminated in regions with a high concentration of different ethnic groups; in practice, as well as while forming the human reserve, it is necessary to take into account the employment of various ethnic representatives that are well-versed with the state language. M.I. Kozybayev believes that similar works should be carried out with political parties too. According to the analyst, 'it is necessary to develop mechanisms to implement the above suggestions taking into account the highest degree of reliability'.

¹² Loktev K. Panorama. 2006.

Conclusion

Scholars believe that successful consolidation of the people of Kazakhstan into a single social structure despite diversities in religion, languages and ethnicities is determined by the choice and development of the effective values and trends of the worldview.

Kazakhstan is now practicing a stable and appropriate policy to resolve ethnic conflicts. Moreover, the formation of the 'Kazakhstani people', a historical community consolidated by a single system of values, is now being observed in the country. Some political scientists associate the notion of the 'Kazakhstani people' with the collapsed concept of the '**Soviet people**'. It should be noted that the notion of the '**Kazakhstan people**' is built on completely different theoretical concept. The concept 'Soviet people' is built on the prevalence of commonness over individuality; suppression, oppression and assimilation of the outstanding by ordinariness, whereas 'Kazakhstani people' is built on unity and solidarity based on development and prosperity of individual cultures and national images of the world...'¹³. These words confirm the importance of unity and interethnic accord in the modern social situation of the country. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the concept '**Kazakhstan nation**' is inappropriate in this respect; there is only one indigenous nation in Kazakhstan – the Kazakh nation. The rest of the nationalities (whether large or small in number of their representatives) are ethnic groups; in other words, they are considered as ethnic diasporas. They have limited opportunities to become full historical subjects in the unitary state. Historically, they are authorized to deal with the issues of ethnic identity, ethnic self-awareness, ethnic and cultural relics. This could explain the urge of the Kazakh people to govern social processes, i.e. their aspirations for power.

Based on results of her sociological research works, the humanities researcher V.D. Kurganskaya pointed out that development of interethnic relations requires the engagement of various ethnic group representatives in the state government. The superiority of the Kazakhs in governmental bodies and the expansion of the use of Kazakh as a state language directly influence the rates of migration and cause the departure of the Russians to their historical homeland¹⁴. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the civil rights of Russian-speaking citizens are not discriminated against in any way. Various sources of mass media prove that neither educational institutions nor consumer services sector impose restrictions on a person recognizing himself as a Russian-speaking individual; on the contrary, citizens of the country are provided with all the opportunities to do this.



¹³ A.N. Nysanbayev. Evolution of social conscience and development of a new system of values in the context of the achievement and consolidation of the independence. Philosophy of Independent Kazakhstan. Astana: Audarma Publishing House, 2006.-p.544

¹⁴ V.D. Kurganskaya. Interethnic Integration in Kazakhstan. Germany-Central Asia– Dialogue of Cultures: the history, modern times and perspectives. Almaty, 2002.-p.288.

MISHRA, Manoj Kumar

Changing Role of Russia in Afghanistan after Soviet Disintegration

Russia's role became more defensive in relation to Afghanistan after the Soviet Union disintegrated. On the other hand, it became offensive in relation to Central Asia — the newly independent but vulnerable states. Russia became more wary as to how to keep the divided heartland under its control. Russia is neither interested nor capable in securing a pro-Russian regime in Afghanistan as was the case during the Cold War. Russia's primary objective in Afghanistan has been to prevent the flow of terrorism and drugs from Afghanistan. However, Russia has shown an increased interest in Afghanistan after 9/11 due to greater American role in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Russia found in Iran a strategic partner with which it worked to counter the American strategy in the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and Afghanistan. They also developed strategies together in Afghanistan by arming and aiding the Northern Alliance forces against the Taliban.

Afghan War and the Soviet Disintegration

According to Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, the extant explanations on the Soviet breakdown surprisingly underemphasise the impact of the Afghanistan war (Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, 1999: 696-697). They are of the view that though the Afghanistan war initially was visualised by Soviet leaders as a small-scale intervention, it grew into a decade-long war involving nearly one million Soviet soldiers, killing and injuring some tens of thousands of them. According to Fred Halliday, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan of 1979-89 occupies an important place in the history of the last phase of the Cold War, and in the account of the collapse of the USSR itself (Fred Halliday, 1999: 675).

The Soviet Union was seriously overstretched by trying to wage a war in Afghanistan while maintaining its far-flung military commitments in Africa and the Middle East and propping up the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. The US President Carter might have thought it a propitious moment to step up arms supply to Afghan insurgents to bog down the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

There was a tide of Islamic revivalism that began to sweep the Muslim world in 1970s. Though in the beginning, Afghan nationalism and Islamic resistance against communism in Afghanistan did not fuse into a broader movement, later the Afghan resistance to the Soviet presence was propelled by Islamism and as well as by nationalism. The strength of the Afghan resistance was well-known since the days of the Great Game between the British Empire and Czarist Russia. Therefore, the US role in arming and financially assisting the Islamic forces went a long way in incurring huge military and economic losses for the USSR.

Reuveny and Prakash argue that Mujahideen being armed with US-supplied surface-to-air missiles, rockets, mortars, and communication equipment won many confrontations with the Soviet army. The casualties mounted and the number of disabled soldiers seen in Soviet cities grew substantially, and the war veterans (Afgantsy) increasingly became part of the Soviet urban landscape. Since many Afgantsy belonged to the non-Russian nationalities, opposition to the war from citizens in non-Russian Soviet Republics increased. Since their presence was not acknowledged by the authorities, who wished to play down Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, these Afgantsy became bitter and openly critical of the Soviet leaders (Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, 1999: 696-697). Therefore, the US's increasing supply of arms and aid to the Mujahideen and resolve to continue the war also brought internal divisions in the multinational Soviet army to the fore which later on became instrumental in the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Ahmet Davutoglu provides a geo-strategic explanation to the end of Soviet hegemony and its eventual disintegration. According to him, the end of the Cold War strategic balance based on bipolarity has created a huge geopolitical and geo-economic vacuum in the zone where the North-South passes intersect with the East-West belt of the Rimland (Ahmet Davutoglu, 1997-98: 8). The passes and corridors from the Central Asian Heartland to the surrounding Rimland have been the lines of demarcation for the global struggle for domination, starting with the nineteenth century Anglo-Russian struggle for hegemony over this significant geopolitical belt. Afghanistan with its passes such as Khojak, Gomal and Khyber etc, and corridors like the Wakhan corridor from Central Asia to the Indus lowlands has been the buffer area in the old Great Game and in the struggle between super-powers in the Cold War too. The 1979 Soviet attack on this buffer zone became a turning point of the Cold War strategic balance and its failure led to the fall of the Soviet strategic pillar in Asia (Ahmet Davutoglu, 1997-98: 8).

Russia, Central Asia and Afghanistan

The Soviet Union's disintegration and emergence of Russia put an end to its proactive role in Afghanistan. Russia shunned the Soviet crave for global reach by gaining both continental and naval supremacy. It tried to consolidate its position in the divided heartland. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there was a power vacuum in the strategic area of Eurasia. The Caspian region of Eurasia is geopolitically important as it provides land connectivity to different places and constitutes the largest continental area of the world. Furthermore, the natural resources and the landlocked character of Central Asian states add to the geopolitical importance of the region.

According to the estimates of geologists, the oil deposits of the Caspian Sea may not be quantitatively comparable to the deposits of the Persian Gulf, but they are still considered of excellent quality and able to provide a significant alternative source of energy in the 21st century. In particular, it is estimated that the entire Caspian Sea is a basin full of oil and natural gas, starting from Azerbaijan and continuing to the opposite shore in the territory of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. These deposits carry enormous importance because of the expected exhaustion of the deposits of Alaska and the North Sea by the year 2015 (Bernard A. Gelb, 2006: 3).

Russia has both geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in Central Asia. It considers Central Asia its strategic backyard and has a monopoly over pipeline diplomacy as it supplies the Central Asian natural

resources through the pipelines existing since Soviet times. Russia's role in Afghanistan has been shaped primarily by the threats to the region emanating from and facilitated by the latter. The Russian policy has been to contain the US's penetration into the region and prevent the Central Asian Republics from radical Islamic influences and drugs generating from Afghanistan. For the US, the region is important to develop a continental strategy to contain the influence of Russia, Iran and China as all these major powers are geographically connected to and has stakes in the region and the natural resource potential also attracted the American attention towards the region. The American plan of laying down an alternative route for transfer of Central Asian resources to the world market through Afghanistan threatened Russia's interests.

The flight of many Soviet Muslims during Stalin's brutal collectivisation campaign and nationalist purges created a permanent Soviet exile population in Afghanistan. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the resultant weakening of its control over the Islamic republics, Russia believed that a radical Islamic regime in Afghanistan would push these people towards the north. Secondly, the regime through its Islamic influences would use the exiled population to destabilise the newly independent Central Asian Republics. Rise of Islamic opposition groups in different Central Asian states strengthened such Russian belief.

The increase in the production and trafficking of drugs is also related to the collapse of the Soviet-era economies and the elimination of Soviet-policed borders. Between 1992 and 2000, Russian border guards in Tajikistan seized about ten tonnes of drugs including a tonne of heroin. These seizures are believed to be a fraction of what actually gets through, given the multitude of river crossing points and other factors, for instance the openness to corruption of underpaid Tajik and Russian soldiers and border guards, the extreme poverty of the population on both sides of the long border where unemployed young men are prepared to take risks as smugglers, and the existence in northern Afghanistan of a flourishing drugs industry (Angelo Rasanayagam, 2005: 175).

Rising opposition movements and drug-trafficking in Central Asia were genuine concerns for Russia. The growth of Taliban in Afghanistan was a constant irritant for Russia. Sergie Ivanov, the head of the Russian Security Council, threatened to launch missile and air strikes against Afghanistan after accusing the Taliban government of assisting the Chechen resistance. Moscow further accused the Taliban of giving sanctuary to Islamists from some of the Central Asian states and allowing them to train for guerrilla warfare to destabilise the states. During the Afghan Civil War, Russia kept pouring weapons and money in support of Uzbek and Tajik warlords. When the Civil War entered a decisive phase, Russia in order to push the Taliban out of Tajik and Uzbek areas threw its weight behind Ahmad Shah Massoud who had bases in Tajikistan.

However, it is argued that Russia exaggerated the role of radical Islamic groups to retain control over the former Soviet republics. The developments in Chechnya, Central Asia (Civil War in Tajikistan) and Afghanistan were seen as part of a larger plot hatched by a secretive network of Islamic activists and terrorists whose main goal, according to Russia's Federal Security Service has been to create a Great Islamic caliphate. However, scholars like Rasul Bakhsh Rais argue that the link between the Taliban and the Islamic movements in Central Asia is questionable. According to him all these movements have indigenous roots and Russia and the ruling elites in Central Asia exaggerate the transnational links

among the Islamic movements to divert attention from their own political failures (Rasul Bakhsh Rais, 2000: 138).

Afghanistan and Russia's Central Asian Strategy

Under Vladimir Putin, Russia's policy towards Central Asia was consolidated into two tracks. According to Trenin, Russia's policy was in the pursuit of economic opportunities and in shoring up stability by the military means of buffer-building. And common to both tracks is the desire to keep the Central Asian states within Moscow's orbit, and to minimise outside influence in the region (Dmitri Trenin, 2000). Russia has been seeking to direct as much as possible the oil and gas exports of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan through Soviet pipeline routes and re-establish economic links through cooperation projects. However, Central Asian Republics like Turkmenistan are looking for alternative pipeline projects to reduce their dependence on Russia. The proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline is an example of this.

Russia had tried to prevent the US from developing long-term military bases in the Central Asian region for power projection with a plea to provide security to the weak states, to promote and safeguard the pipelines and to contain the penetration of other major powers into the region prior to 9/11. On the other hand, Russia developed military strategies for its own power projection in order to show that the Central Asian states can rely on it for their security. Russia expressed its willingness to play a major role in containing the spillover of terrorism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan into the Central Asian region. Even it played a major role in stemming Civil War like situation in the region. The Civil War in Tajikistan and unrest in Uzbekistan were considered Afghan exported phenomena. After the Tajik Civil War in 1992, Russian engagement in Central Asia became clearer. The Collective Security Treaty was activated. By 1997, Russia consolidated its involvement in the face of an enhanced US presence in the area, which included a military base in Kazakhstan and joint exercises with the Central Asian Battalion (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) (Dmitri Trenin, 2009: 302-303).

Russia developed an ideology of 'sovereign democracy' to strengthen the role of leaders in the Central Asian politics and contain the American influence in the region according to Simon Shen (Simon Shen, 2010: 102). In order to spread influence into Central Asia, the US insisted on democratic transformation and observance of human rights and played a major role in coloured revolutions in the region. However, Putin considered Russian-style democracy was always likely to accord a far greater role to the state than in the west. In his Millennium Address in December 1999, he said, "The public looks forward to a certain restoration of the guiding and regulating role of the state, proceeding from Russia's traditions as well as the current state in the country" (M. A. Smith, 2000: 3).

Apart from developing the ideology of 'sovereign democracy' and military strategies to tighten its control over Central Asia and creating a buffer between Central Asia and Afghanistan, Russia tried to handle the Afghan issue diplomatically. Russia stressed the centrality of Iran to the settlement of conflict in Afghanistan. After disintegration of the USSR, Russia and Iran formed some kind of 'strategic alliance'. While greeting then presidential candidate Hashemi Rafsanjani on a visit to Moscow immediately after Khomeini's death in June 1989, Gorbachev had given full recognition to the validity and importance of Iran's ideology. Gorbachev said that "we are receiving a representative of the state

which is our old neighbour and which embarked on the path of revolutionary renewal". He further remarked that "the emergence of the new political thinking in the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran on the other hand, have created a basis for deepening ties and good-neighbourly cooperation, proceeding from respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, and mutually beneficial constructive cooperation." (Graham E. Fuller, 1990: 55). Iran considered Russian role in the Persian Gulf crucial to keep the American forces out of the region. Moscow repeatedly called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Gulf. In Afghanistan, rise of Sunni extremism under the Taliban and the American plan to use the Taliban for an alternative pipeline system running through Afghanistan bypassing Russia and Iran brought the two countries together. For Iran, withdrawal of Soviet troops meant victory for America and Saudi Arabia. Both Iran and Russia provided assistance to Masoud with Tajikistan facilitating it by allowing its territory to strengthen anti-Taliban forces in Pakistan. At times, both the countries also supported the Uzbek warlord, Dostum against the Taliban. Iran also facilitated dialogue between Moscow and Shia parties in Afghanistan to unite them against the Taliban.

However, Iran and Russia's support for anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan could not prevent the Taliban from achieving success as the Northern Alliance represented warlords having divergent interests. For example, Massoud in order to receive arms and aid from the west complained about Iran's interference in Afghanistan. Therefore, Russia at times tried to make peace with the Taliban. Russia's then Prime Minister, Victor Chernomyrdin met four of the five Central Asian presidents on 4 October 1996 to examine urgently the situation which was developing on the southern border of the CIS. In the discussions any military aid to anti-Taliban forces inside Afghanistan was denied. Instead, Russia along with the United Nations brokered peace between the Taliban and the Tajik government which enabled tens of thousands of Tajik refugees in northern Afghanistan to return to their homes. According to Sreedhar, the Russians threatening to bomb the training camps and sanctuaries provided by the Taliban to dissident groups of CIS, have not been able to do anything on the ground, other than increasing their number of border guards to counter-terrorism. This Russian hesitation to use force to neutralise the Taliban radicals resulted in a series of clashes in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in July-August 2000. Russia came round to the view of engaging the Taliban through Pakistan in constructive dialogue. The months of August and September 2000 saw a flurry of diplomatic activity between Moscow and Islamabad (Sreedhar, 2002: 281-282).

Moscow's attitude towards international terrorism was formed through its struggle with the militants in Chechnya and resurgence of Islamic radicalism and drug trafficking in Central Asia. Vladimir Putin had long been arguing that Russia and the West were fighting a common enemy in militant Islamism and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US proved that his analysis that the world was confronting 'a crescent of Islamic terrorism' stretching from the Philippines through Afghanistan, Chechnya and on to Kosovo had been correct. So far many Western commentators were reluctant to admit any international influence in the Chechen uprising. However, September 11 provided the opportunity for Russia to get international support on the Chechnya issue. Disputes over oil were at the heart of Russia's decision to go to war against Chechnya in December 1994, because its sole operational pipeline for Caspian oil, which goes directly through troubled Dagestan and Chechnya, was under threat from the radical Islamic forces of Chechnya. Russia's geo-economic reasons for establishing a firm control over Chechnya are

related to the need to control the resources of the Caspian. Apart from Russia's concerns in Chechnya, to contain the increasing Islamic opposition movements and drug-trafficking in Central Asia, the prospect of Northern Alliance coming to power in Afghanistan and the need to reset the relationship with the West in the post-Cold War period were some of the important factors in Russia's calculation to join the US sponsored 'War on Terror'. Russia had supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in terms of arms and economic aid during the Afghan Civil War. To see the Northern Alliance in power Russia provided key support to the alliance during the 'War on Terror'. For example, it provided the Northern Alliance with 60 T-55 battle tanks, 12 T-62 K command tanks and 30 infantry fighting vehicles during the War. Nevertheless, the Northern Alliance's progress towards Kabul was resisted by Islamabad and Washington (Angelo Rasanayagam, 2005: 253).

After September 11, Putin described the al-Qaeda terrorist attack on the US as 'barbaric' in a TV broadcast to the Russian people on 14 September 2001 and said that "Russia would provide all the information at its disposal about terrorist bases, and its secret services would cooperate fully with the West" (R. Sakwa, 2004: 216). A Russia-America Working Group was set up in 2000 to consult on counter-terrorist activities in Afghanistan. However, more controversial was allowing the US access to military bases in Central Asia. While Russia's Foreign Ministry initially considered that the Central Asian states were independent states and could allow the US to establish military bases, the Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov ruled out any NATO presence in the region. The Chief of the General Staff, Anatoli Kvashnin said "Russia has not considered, and is not planning to consider, participation in a military operation against Afghanistan". He reminded the Central Asian states of their 'bilateral and other obligations' to Russia (Dale R. Herspring and Peter Rutland, 2005: 273). The national security document of January 2001 and military document of 29 September 2001 of Russia listed international terrorism in Chechnya and Dagestan as the most important threat and next to it was the US and NATO assertiveness in the former Soviet republics (Anuradha M. Chenoy, 2004: 135). However, the US assured both Russia and CAS that its use of bases would be only temporary and Putin accepted the idea and persuaded the Defense department to facilitate the US military bases in the region.

To Russia's disadvantage, the Central Asian states believed that the powerful US would be an effective security guarantor in the region. Furthermore, these states were interested to see diminution of Russia's role in the region. Therefore, Central Asian leaders were quick to show themselves as US allies in the Bush administration's 'Global War on Terror'. Kyrgyzstan provided basing for the US and coalition forces at its Manas airbase, Tajikistan provided a refueling facility near Dushanbe, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan provided overflight rights and other support and more importantly Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov had signed a bilateral agreement with Washington permitting the US military to use its base at Karshi-Khanabad (K2), just 60 miles away from Afghanistan. As the outcome of the war became clear and the Taliban regime fell, the US Secretary of State said in December 2001 that the US did not intend to withdraw from Central Asia even after the war in Afghanistan since America had long-term interests in the region. The US Assistant Secretary of State to Central Asian states Elizabeth Jones stated that the US would support the states in their reforms and more aid would come depending on their reforms and she further said that US's interest lay in the 'transparent development of Caspian energy resources' (Anuradha M. Chenoy, 2004: 135).

Russia's Increased Interest in Central Asia and Afghanistan

In response to the American role in the region, Russia accentuated its military role in the region. In October 2003, Russia established its first new regional military base since the Cold War at Kant, Kyrgyzstan. Russian and Kyrgyz officials also discussed to establish another major Russian military facility in southern Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan granted Russia's 201st Motorised Infantry Division a permanent base near Dushanbe in October 2004. In June 2004, Russia and Uzbekistan signed a Treaty on Strategic Cooperation which provides for additional Russian military assistance to Uzbekistan and the creation of a joint anti-terrorism institute (Jyotsna Baksi, Dec 27, 2005).

In May 2005, the US critically responded to the Uzbek government's excessive use of force to suppress a violent uprising in the city of Andijon. It called for an independent investigation into the issue with international involvement. It was very difficult for the US to shed the ideology of democracy and human rights which was aligned with its long-term interests. Nevertheless, before the Andijon incident the US's policy in the region was directed to strengthen the role of authoritarian leaders in order to get facilities to establish military bases. However, the Andijon incident led to a downturn in the bilateral relationship between Uzbekistan and the US. The Russian ideology of 'sovereign democracy' and the continued policy of supporting the leaders in Central Asia reaped better results for it. In November 2005, Russia and Uzbekistan signed a treaty on Allied Relations that pledged mutual military assistance in the event either becomes a victim of "aggression".

To secure an American withdrawal from the region, Russia initiated a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation declaration in 2005 to fix time limits on the temporary use of infrastructure and on the length of military contingents by the anti-terror coalition. The SCO was formed in June 2001 when Uzbekistan joined the Shanghai Five – Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan – which had first met in 1996. Uzbekistan, which strongly resisted the Russian effort to bring Central Asia into closer security cooperation, joined SCO because Russia's presence there is balanced by China. Currently, India, Iran and Pakistan enjoy the observer status in the group. The SCO's declared purpose was security cooperation in relation to terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and separatism. However, after September 11, the organisation also seeks to counter Western influence in the region. Afterwards, America's withdrawal from the Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan became a priority of Russian policy. The Kyrgyz President, Bakiyev speaking in Moscow after a lengthy haggling session in which he had secured a \$2 billion loan from Russia, said that the Americans would be given six months to withdraw. Since the mid-2000s, the Manas airbase had been under attack in the Russian and local press, which succeeded to a large degree in shaping public sentiment against the presence of the US in Kyrgyzstan. In April 2009, Russian television broadcast a documentary alleging that Manas was a cover for a large-scale US spying mission on Russia (Annette Bohr, 2010: 112).

However, the Russian aim of ending the US use of the base was frustrated by the fact that US payments for use of the base represented a substantial financial assistance to Kyrgyzstan. When Uzbek President Islam Karimov announced that a cargo airport in the Uzbek city of Navoi could be used for airborne transport of NATO supplies to Afghanistan and that a major renovation at that airport would turn it into a world-class airfreight hub, the Kyrgyz government announced a deal with the US allowing Americans to continue using Manas Air base as transit centre. Moreover, the Kyrgyz government - like the governments of other Central Asian states - had good reason to believe that if the US and NATO

troops were not able to defeat Islamist extremist in Afghanistan, then sooner rather than later Islamists would become active in Central Asia (Dmitri Trenin, 2009: 302-303).

Instead of opposing the US and Kyrgyz government, Russia looked for a new military base in the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan, which was to be a key component of the new Collective Operational Reaction Forces (CORF) under the auspices of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation. In June 2009, the CSTO formally created CORF as part of its ambition to create forces 'on par with NATO forces' and in view of the unstable situation in Afghanistan. However, Uzbekistan has objected to the opening of this military base. The Uzbek leadership has argued that the continued destabilisation in Afghanistan is largely in Russia's interest, in so far as Russia has used the conflict there to justify an expansion of its military presence in Central Asia. Furthermore, Uzbekistan is likely to view a Russian-led military presence in the volatile Ferghana Valley - regarded as Central Asia's heartland- as a factor impinging on its ability to continue to exert its hegemony on its smaller Central Asia neighbours.

The deal between the US and the Kyrgyz government was probably a major reason that Russia in July 2009 agreed to allow the US to transport troops and weapons across Russian airspace en route to Afghanistan. As the US had managed to maintain transit arrangements to Afghanistan through Central Asia, it had become meaningless for Russia to continue pursuing its objective of cutting off US supply lines. That agreement signed during a Russian-US summit in Moscow, permits 4,500 American flights per year and allows NATO to transport lethal weapons along Russian and Central Asian railways, an overland supply route known as the 'Northern Distribution Network' (Andrew C. Kuchins, 2010: 33).

However, according to Dmitri Rogozin, the Russian envoy to NATO, Russia wants to help the US and Afghanistan as part of the international community but on its own terms. He said that they "negotiate from a position of strength" on Afghanistan. According to Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, in 2010, traffic along the Northern Distribution Network "was still dogged by heavy delays and disruption, while Russian and American military bases continued to jostle for influence in Central Asia, and Russian criticism of the ineffectiveness of NATO counter-narcotics operations grew louder" (Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, 2011: 227). Therefore, the relationship that the Obama administration developed with Russia and claimed to be strategic was far from being so.

Russian and American purposes in Afghanistan differed. America's military objective was limited to stabilising Afghanistan and reducing Taliban influence there: there was no intention to meet all the security challenges of the region. Russians claimed that Central Asia's borders were their southern borders and that Russia was vulnerable to a wide range of security threats within Central Asia. Not all of these threats concern America. It was argued that the Afghanistan campaign might have actual exacerbated the security problems by dispersing Taliban groups into Central Asia. Moreover, the issue of drug-trafficking which the Russians insisted to be firmly dealt with was not seriously taken up by the Americans. The warlords on whom the American-led Afghan operation depended never wanted drug production and drug-trafficking to be part of the operation.

M. K. Bhadrakumar argues that Russia negotiated with the NATO for transit route facilities that it found difficult to deny given the presence of France and Germany, which favour greater involvement of Russia in NATO affairs. At the same time, it was aware of the American plan of an alternative Caucasian route that would bypass Russia. (M.K Bhadrakumar, Feb10: 2011). It was also aware of the fact that the

US wanted to be less dependent on it for its war efforts in Afghanistan as the American containment strategy towards Russia could not be sustained if there was critical dependence on it. However, Russia has not lost its monopoly over pipeline diplomacy despite the recognition by the Central Asian states that the diversification of pipeline routes was prerequisite for their economic security. It is because there is lack of incentives for Central Asian producers to abandon long-term gas supply contracts with Russia and secondly, the Russian-Georgian war made export routes from Central Asia crossing the Caspian even less viable than before. Thirdly, the American policy of sanctions against Iran has made the west more dependent on Russia for supply of natural resources. Russia's monopoly over supplies of Central Asian natural resources allows it a larger role in the region. For example, Russia through its company Gazprom prevented Turkmenistan from exporting its energy products in 1997 (Richard Weitz, 2006: 157). Perhaps because of Russia's overriding influence due to its monopoly in oil supplies, the Central Asian states have agreed to strengthen CSTO as an alternative to NATO. In one of the top-level summit meetings, the CSTO leaders unanimously agreed that countries outside the regional security bloc would only be able to establish military bases on the territory of a member-state with the consent of all member-states. The Russian president Medvedev said "the decision we have made with regard to military bases in a third country is very important for the consolidation of positions within the CSTO" (Dadan Upadhyay, Jan 10: 2012). The CSTO member states' such decision assumes significance in view of the reported American plans to redeploy to Central Asia some of the forces that will be pulled out of Afghanistan in 2014.

Being aware of the long term American interests in the region, Russia wants the American stay in the region to be temporary. Russia avoids building strategic relationship with the US to fight terrorism in Afghanistan. Moscow said it would just stop short of sending troops to Afghanistan. Russia's Foreign Minister stated that under "no circumstances" would Russian soldiers return there (Vladimir Radyuhin, Nov 19: 2010). At times, Russia preferred to "let the Americans waste their money and troops" (Annette Bohr, 2010: 118). However, Russia's interest in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan led Russia to compromise with some of the American policies in the region and it does not want a hasty American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, after Russia's interest to see Northern Alliance dominated by Tajiks and Uzbeks in power was resisted by the American forces and Karzai, a Pastun and pro-American leader, was instituted to power, Russia tried to maintain friendly relationship with him. Russia's Foreign Minister Ivanov said, Moscow was "far from indifferent to what position a new Afghan leadership will adopt in respect to Russia" (Mike Bowker, 2007: 92). Ivanov wanted 'stable and friendly relations' and to this end, met with Karzai on a number of occasions. Furthermore, within days of the fall of the Taliban, Russia provided emergency aid to Afghanistan which "helped avert a large-scale humanitarian disaster in the region", and thereafter sought to work with the UN and Karzai government to help rebuild a strong and stable Afghanistan (Mike Bowker, 2007: 92).

Later, American criticism of Karzai's incompetence distanced him from the US. This came as an opportunity for Russia to increase its relationship with Karzai at the cost of the US. Karzai repeatedly tried to use the Russian option while dealing with the US/NATO. On the other hand the Russian Federation was one of the first foreign states to welcome both presidential and provincial council election results in 2009 (Humera Iqbal, 2010: 80). Russia welcomed the returning of Karzai to power as a

stabilising factor for the political development of Afghanistan. Russia wanted to further cooperation at all levels political, economic and humanitarian as well as anti-terror fight with the approval of the Karzai government. To strengthen the relationship with Afghanistan, Russia wrote off 93 per cent Soviet-era debts (Humera Iqbal, 2010: 80). Since 2007 Russia's intelligence apparatus reactivated their relations with the Northern Alliance members and warlords and Russia re-opened its consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif in a bid to promote its interest in Afghanistan. While not contributing troops to Afghanistan, Russia responded positively to the Karzai government's request for military equipment supplies. Russia along with Iran opposed the US led Taliban reconciliation strategy. It is of the view that any reconciliation strategy that is proposed has to be Afghan led. Russia has so far successfully used Iran's nuclear programme as trump card in its geopolitical game with the west. It does not want a political resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue as such a resolution could only come about if Iran halted its nuclear programme in exchange for massive Western investment, security guarantees, and recognition of Iran as the West's principal partner in the Islamic world. As a result, the West would find in Iran the best possible pipeline route option to export the Central Asian energy resources bypassing Russia (Yuri E. Fedorov, 2009: 312-313). Russia wants that the political and military resources of the west to be focused on Iran. Russia has so far vetoed all effective sanctions against Iran as it thinks that would lead to a political resolution to the Iranian issue. Iran is content with Russia's investment in its nuclear programme.

Russia in order to lessen its dependence on the US to fight terrorism and drug-trafficking and gain some control over radical groups tried to develop relationship with Pakistan. The example of this is the quadripartite summit of Russia, Pakistan and Tajikistan hosted by President Dmitry Medvedev in August 2010 at the Black Sea resort, Sochi where Moscow decisively moved to de-hyphenate its relationship with Islamabad and New Delhi. Sochi was a turning point in a sense that Mr. Medvedev's bilateral meeting with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari on the sidelines of the summit was marked by uncharacteristic warmth and both the leaders decided to have "very regular and frequent contacts" and engage in "good political dialogue" unlike in the past (Vladimir Radyuhin, Sep 9: 2010).

Russia's President Medvedev has also pressed for an increased regional involvement in the Afghan problems, not only with the collaboration of the Central Asian republics and other regional states, such as Pakistan, but also with the SCO (Maria Raquel Freire, 2009: 134). Afghanistan, in turn, has expressed its willingness to gain maximum assistance possible from the platforms of CSTO and SCO. In March 2009, the SCO held a special conference on Afghanistan in Moscow which aimed at establishing the SCO as an important stakeholder or investor in the security and stability of Afghanistan. In order to check the Chinese influence in the region, Russia is also promoting CSTO-SCO cooperation.

There are instances of consultations between India, Iran and Russia to devise ways and means to deal with the Afghan problem. For example, Russia's first Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Denisov, India's Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Fathollahi sought closer coordination between their countries to keep the Taliban out of power (Russia-Iran-India alliance, Nov 20: 2010). However, the consultations between these countries are sporadic and there is nothing like Russia-Iran-India alliance has come into existence on the Afghan issue.

The bottom-line of Russia's interest in Afghanistan is securing a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. To attain this objective, Russia lent quick support to the US-led War on Terror. It agreed to the American

need of establishing bases in Central Asia. It provided emergency aid to Afghanistan saving it from a humanitarian disaster. It cooperated and maintained friendly relationship with the Karzai government in its initial stages knowing that it was pro-US.

However, whenever opportunity arose, Russia did not hesitate to hinder American interests in Central Asia and Afghanistan. After the Andijon incident in Uzbekistan, Russia tried to rollback the US's influence in the region. It did not contribute its troops to Afghanistan although the US requested for the same as it might have believed that loss of American troops and money would rob its energy to project its power in a region vital to Russia's interest. Even while both Russia and the US established military bases in different parts of Central Asia, their direct contacts have been surprisingly limited. In April 2005, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said "Russian and US military bases in Kyrgyzstan are not bothering each other" (Richard Weitz, 2006: 162). Nevertheless, it did not want the situation in Afghanistan to deteriorate to such an extent that problems of terrorism and drug-trafficking would engulf the entire region and therefore there was cooperation between the US and Russia. But the cooperation was far from being full-fledged. It is argued that Russia is interested in an unstable Afghanistan where role of the radical groups is partly curtailed by the US and international actors. It exploited the unstable situation in Afghanistan to tighten its grip over Central Asia. However, to contain American interest in Afghanistan as it is already noted, Russia called for a larger role of the regional organisations like SCO and CSTO in securing security and stability in Afghanistan, reactivated its old relationship with the Northern Alliance, assured Karzai of its support when the US criticised him as incompetent and welcomed the 2009 election results which the US alleged to be fraud. Karzai, in turn, used Russia as an option to deal with the West. It has also diplomatically handled Iran and Pakistan to undercut American influence in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

After disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia's role became more defensive in relation to Afghanistan and offensive in relation to Central Asia. Russia became busy in finding ways and means to keep the divided heartland under its control. Russia seemed neither interested nor capable in securing a pro-Russian regime in Afghanistan as was the case during the Cold War. Russia, to contain the two non-conventional threats namely drug-trafficking and Islamic fundamentalism emerging from Afghanistan, required the American presence - a conventional threat in the region. Therefore, it facilitated the American presence in the region to conduct its War on Terror, though not unconditionally. However, Russia seems to be aware of the American plan to install a pro-US regime in Afghanistan. Therefore, it has reactivated its relationship with the Northern Alliance since 2007 to hinder American interest in Afghanistan. In order to contain the influence of the US in the region, it has taken recourse to multilateral bodies like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). Diplomatically, Russia has supported Iran in its nuclear programme and opposed heavy sanctions against it. Russia believes the continuing stalemate on nuclear issue would sap American energy and weaken its role in the region. Iran and Russia share the common perception on the American intentions in the region. Both countries agree that any reconciliation strategy to include the Taliban must be Afghan-led rather than being American-led. Russia perceives threat from the long-term presence of American forces in Afghanistan and existence of military bases in Central Asian states. At

times, Russia has stipulated that American forces must leave the region after the war on terror comes to a halt.

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This paper is the second part of a trilogy concerning Afghanistan's recent past. The concluding part will appear in the next issue and is entitled '*Afghanistan and US Interests in Central Asia*'. — Editor



ECONOMICS

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Economic Relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan

The trade and economic relations of Kyrgyzstan are vastly complex. The country today has a great potential for developing trade and economic relations with various countries. One of the key countries in this respect is the Turkish Republic. The two countries signed a number of bilateral agreements which have become powerful organizational tools to enhance trade and economic relations.

Turkey is a large country that occupies an important geopolitical position in a very large region. Since the mid 80's the Turkish Republic is experiencing a period of rapid economic growth, the so-called "Turkish miracle", which is accompanied by a strengthening of its influence in the region, an increase in the overall value of the country in the international economic and political relations. To ensure the flow of investment into the country the Turkish Government took several measures; foreign investors were given all sorts of tax breaks, and the Government stepped up the fight against the shadow economy and tax evasion.

All this led to better macroeconomic results and today Turkey is the 16th economy in the world. There is noticeable economic recovery; the statistics show the dynamism of the economy and the continued growth of industrial production. Turkey has made significant progress in the fields of market and democratic reforms and strengthened its international prestige. Cooperation with Turkey could contribute to further integration into the world economy of Kyrgyzstan; the two countries share not only economic ties, but also deep cultural and historical roots. From the first days of the establishment of diplomatic relations (Turkey recognized the independence of Kyrgyzstan in 1991) until today the Kyrgyz-Turkish cooperation is very dynamic.

Bilateral trade and economic relations are stable and have a tendency to expand. Turkish direct investment arrived to various sectors of the Kyrgyz economy. Next to that, an expanding military-technical cooperation between the two countries also takes place. It should be noted that in the period of the invasion of international terrorist groups into the southern region of the country, one of the first countries to help, was Turkey. Each year, it provides grants to Kyrgyzstan, which is sent to the reorganization of the Armed Forces to provide military-technical assistance to strengthen the defence system and training of military personnel. Kyrgyzstan received military education at prestigious universities of Turkey, such as the Military Academy, the Combined Arms Military School, Military High School and the School of the Gendarmerie.

10-15 years ago the economic and political situation in Turkey was similar to the situation in Kyrgyzstan. That is why valuable lessons can be learned from the Turkish experience like the fight against corruption, terrorism and religious extremism. Equally important is the experience of solving the problems of the relationship of Islam and secularism; a constructive relationship between religious communities and secular authority is an important prerequisite for the preservation of the national agreement and prevents the growth of religious radicalism.

In order to expand and strengthen the Kyrgyz-Turkish cooperation, to attract foreign investment (particularly from Turkey), it is especially important to fight corruption and to rationally use the foreign capital. Businessmen and officials are already taking measures to increase the attractiveness of the country when searching for potential investors. Already voiced the idea of providing special benefits to Turkish investors: tax-free transfer of profits, investment guarantees, tax-exemptions for interest on bank deposits for foreign nationals temporarily residing in the country.

Experience from previous years shows that Kyrgyzstan should establish effective cooperation in the field of agriculture: a) is not limited to the export of beans in Turkey from Talas, but also set up a joint venture for processing beans and other crops; b) open a leather manufacture with a view to export the leather products abroad. Opening joint Kyrgyz-Turkish companies, in turn, will create new jobs, which will help to solve the problem of unemployment.

Naturally, there is an intensification in touristic cooperation. Kyrgyzstan has been attentive to the issue of borrowing Turkish experience in the development of the tourism sector, bearing in mind that the millions of tourists visiting Turkey in a year bring tens of billions of dollars into the economy of the country. Here we are confident that the cooperation in the field of tourism will raise the level of tourism industry in Kyrgyzstan, will attract additional funds from the national budget, create jobs, and give impetus to the development of trade and services. Turkey has great experience in the fight against terrorism and religious extremism, and in this regard it is important to enhance the interaction and to have close cooperation in the military sphere.

As of now there are significant achievements in education, commerce and culture. In virtually every region of Kyrgyzstan we find Turkish schools. Fairly broad section of Kyrgyz citizens believe that the revitalization of the Kyrgyz-Turkish cooperation will give impetus to further development of the Kyrgyz economy and will boost the people's standard of living.

Speaking about strengthening Ankara's influence in Central Asia, we cannot avoid talking about the possible concerns of Russia and China. In this regard, some experts pointed out that this situation would adversely affect the relations of Kyrgyzstan with China and Russia. Nevertheless, it should be added that regarding its parliamentary system and parliamentary elections, according to international observers, to date, Kyrgyzstan appears to be the most democratic state in Central Asia. However, it's time to lift the economy. Stronger cooperation is needed and a readiness to learn from countries that demonstrate rapid growth. One of these countries is Turkey.

Turkey's investment in the Kyrgyz Republic

The countries of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan enjoy the most friendly and brotherly political relations. The Turkish public investments, such as the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, a female vocational school and the Turkish Education Center are extremely successful, and Turkey invests significant funds annually for their activities. For example, for the functioning of the University "Manas" Turkey assigned a budget of about 350 million USD. In 1980 the Turkish Republic initiated a liberal economic policy, and

therefore the government agencies can not engage in investment, so investments can be expected from the private sector.

Turkish private sector investment in education does not fall behind public investments. In Bishkek and Jalal-Abad two open universities and fourteen high schools function. In Turkish universities and high schools in Kyrgyzstan more than 10 000 young representatives of Kyrgyzstan are being educated. So the friendly relations between the two countries are secured by the Kyrgyz and Turkish youth.

The presence of Turkish business investments in Kyrgyzstan's economy is also significant. In banking, food industry, construction, furniture, agricultural and other industries (plastic products, shopping centres, etc.) a large number of Turkish investors and Turkish-Kyrgyz partnerships are present. According to the official statistics, in 1995, the investments of Turkish businessmen were over 280 million USD. According to our estimations, the volume of Turkish investments is in the range of 500 million to 1 billion USD presently.

Shortly after Kyrgyzstan gained independence in 1991, within one and a half year, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan signed 29 protocols and agreements. In addition, further agreements have been proposed for the future. These agreements relate to trade, economic and cultural cooperation. All of them operate on the present moment. Further agreements can be expected based on the yearly meetings of intergovernmental commissions. At present, specialists of the two countries are working on an agreement concerning preferential trade.

Turkey's share in the foreign trade of Kyrgyzstan is below 3%. The important task is to contribute to the increase of Turkish investments in the Kyrgyz economy, which will increase the volume of trade between the two countries.

The challenges of Turkish investors

Turkish investors have to face two kinds of difficulties. The first is a legislative one. The second difficulty arises from the unauthorized checks and requirements of regulatory authorities. Also of great concern is the long and hard process of obtaining visas and work permits.

TIKA

The Turkish Agency for Development and Cooperation (TIKA) is a charity organization established to provide non-refundable assistance to the development and prosperity of the Turkic states. Its purpose is investment in the future; it is not only about the development of foreign trade. The sole purpose of the Republic of Turkey is to improve the welfare of people with a common cultural heritage and history, beginning with Central Asia and the Middle East - to Africa. Next to it, Turkey is preparing people who in the future will be able to prevent destructive social projects aimed at destabilizing the social situation.

In general, through the TIKA the Turkish Republic provided free assistance to Kyrgyzstan in the amount of approximately 20 million USD. In addition, the Office of Culture and Tourism and the Office of Religious Affairs permanently implement various socio-cultural projects.

Priority sectors of the Kyrgyz economy

The government of the Kyrgyz Republic gives priority to investments within the sectors that are included in the governmental plan «Country Development Strategy». It concerns the energy sector, mining industry, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and tourism. The agriculture should be given special attention and needs a single strategy. At present in Kyrgyzstan no chemical fertilizers and pesticides are applied. Thus Kyrgyzstan fulfils the conditions of "organic agriculture". Given the increasing demand for organically grown products, we can say that Kyrgyzstan is the country of organic agriculture. It is well known that organically grown products are sold at triple prices compared to non-organic, modified products on all food markets. In addition, organic products could generate additional revenue in tourism, since in many European countries tourists prefer to eat healthy food. Therefore, a plan is needed for a large-scale advertisement on organic production.

Foreign investment should be viewed as a mean to reduce the level of unemployment in the country. The analysis of the Turkish experience, as well as the thorough examination of models aimed at attracting investments from other countries, such as England, Switzerland and China, will greatly benefit the Kyrgyz Republic.

Foreign direct investment flows mainly to the sectors of trade, restaurant services, industry, transport, communication and financial services. Many foreign companies are working under contract for the foreign donors. Direct investment from the United States is mainly focused on the hospitality industry and telecommunication sector and there is a growing interest in the construction and mining industry.

Joint ventures and foreign companies in the Kyrgyz Republic include: Company "Reemtsma-Kyrgyzstan" (cigarettes), Bishkek company «Plaskap» (packaging and bottles), the company «Besser» (bricks), Central Asian team (entertainment and clothing) and "Hyatt Regency Bishkek" (hotellerie), and the Canadian "Kumtor Operating Company" (mining). A Turkish businessman has received a license (franchise) for producing "Coca-Cola" which is bottled at the local bottling plant of the company.

Joint ventures have played a leading role in the mining and petrochemical industries. According to the National Statistics Committee, the following countries were the largest source of foreign direct investment in 2004 (in USD): Canada 46.5 million; Turkey 23.1 million, Kazakhstan 15.6 million, U.S. 14 million, Russia 11.9 million, Cyprus 11.5 million.

Features of marketing in Kyrgyzstan

Features and dynamics applications micromarketing in Kyrgyzstan's economy and the nature of the influence factors on the use of its principles of economic agents depends on the state of transition.

In transition economies changing the composition, content and function of the elements of the economic system, disrupts their continuity. Its special feature is the appearance of non-core elements of the old system, which include business organizations, commercial banks, stock exchanges, and various non-state funds, etc. An important aspect of it also supports the changing nature of the content and links, the structure and elements of the system. In Kyrgyzstan, the process has become fast, with a lot of economic problems created by promoting production decline. New phenomena which are not typical of mature market economies include non-payment, scroll money in commercial banks, the "brain" of capital, the barter-tolling relationship, criminalization of the economy, unpaid wages, etc¹.

It is known that the main components of the transition program are the macroeconomic reforms that have taken place in the domestic economy: price liberalization, privatization, macroeconomic stabilization, institutional reform. The years of the economic transition in Kyrgyzstan showed that the focus of the government has been given to the macroeconomic component, while the microeconomic aspects remained in the shadow. Scientists believe that it is the pace of change in microeconomics that determines the success and duration of the transition. This was the experience of the transition to a market economy in Kyrgyzstan; these were the particular features that left their mark on the formation and development of marketing.

World experience shows that the conditions for market development include: the formation of "buyer's market", the presence of high-grade market and the development of competitive relations. As a result, irreversible processes are taking place in the socio-economic life, which include the democratization of the system of economic management and the attraction of foreign investments, as well as the active development of services and information.

In Kyrgyzstan, marketing science, business, production management and marketing activity began to emerge with the transition to the market economy. Since 1991, enterprises and organizations are being set up with the help of marketing and post marketing professionals. Particularly active are the sectors of trade, agriculture, finance and banking where the principles of marketing are already being implemented. Market development began somewhat later in the industry, the service sector and, last of all, the non-profit activities. In 1993 opened the first program for specialisation in marketing at the American University in Kyrgyzstan.

As noted, an important condition for the emergence of marketing is the creation of a full-fledged market economy. However, experiences after years of market economy in Kyrgyzstan show a decline in production, increase in real and hidden unemployment, unfairness and bankruptcy of many enterprises, reduced investment activity and low competitiveness of domestic goods.

¹ Prem S. Laumas, (1975), "Key sectors in some undeveloped countries, KYKLOS, Vol. 28, 62-79. Joshi, Rakesh Mohan, (2005) International Marketing, Oxford University Press, New Delhi and New York

The accelerated and uncontrolled opening of the economy to the outside world, the virtually uncontrolled export-exchange rate regime, the presence of various non-tariff barriers have led to a massive outflow of capital, raw materials and currency as well as increase in corruption. The liberalization of foreign trade, the opening of the Kyrgyz market to foreign goods caused the halt of processing enterprises.

All this has led to the growth of the shadow economy, the demonetization, dollarization and capital flight. A significant part of the workforce (50%) receive a wage that is about 1 to 3 times the minimum wage, which also indicates a low level of wages²

In recent years the hidden and real unemployment has increased. Almost half of the working population of Kyrgyzstan today is forced to seek income abroad. According to official data, only in the CIS today employs almost a third of a million Kyrgyz people.

The reason for the outflow of the workforce is the high unemployment rate in the country and low social protection of the population. Official statistics suggest that today, outside of Kyrgyzstan are working more than three hundred thousand Kyrgyz citizens.

According to unofficial data, the number is about three times higher.

For a country with 5 million people, the loss of millions of able-bodied hands is a serious blow. However, envisaging that only a fifth of industrial enterprises and the agricultural sector in Kyrgyzstan have yet reached the performance of the mid-nineties, talking about high employment of the local population is simply not necessary.

All of these negative phenomena lead to a decrease in labour demand and -as a consequence- to the narrowing of the internal market and a reduction in the output. Domestic goods became less competitive, due to the price factor as well as to the quality, service, packaging and promotion. The Russian financial crisis exacerbated the situation of the processing enterprises in Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz producers are under the continuous pressure of cheap imports from China. Most businesses cannot make up their working capital, not to mention the implementation of technical re-equipment and modernization. Due to the high level of taxation they are forced to hide the actual production, and go into the underground economy, which -according to experts- amounts to 50% of the volume of trade. Its growth can be traced back not only to shortages of goods, but also to the corruption of public officials and the imperfection of tax law.

Under modern conditions, the activity of commercial and intermediary organizations, independent trade purchases of businesses and individuals, especially the "shuttles" exert a positive impact on the consumer market. According to various experts, the "shuttle" trade currently employs about one million people in Russia and Central Asia. Shuttle trade, on the one hand, contributes to filling the market with consumer goods, providing the population with cheap food and goods, while on the other hand it contributes to outflow of capital, as well as to the decline of domestic production. Consequently, the policy in relation to "shuttle" trade needs revision.

In Kyrgyzstan, as a result of the previously described features of the transition period, there is a

² Dev, Chekitan S.; Don E. Schultz . „Marketing Management“

specialisation in the market formation. Initially, it began to develop in the most competitive fields, that is, trade and financial sectors, and later infiltrated the industry. Marketing development in Kyrgyzstan can be divided in two phases. The first stage began to develop in the 90's and it basically had a commercial focus. Therefore, this stage can be called the commercialization of the marketing of the company, and it is characterized by the application of only a few principles and elements of marketing. The second stage, which began around '97, is characterized by market-oriented production. Ever since, the concepts of marketing have not yet become fundamental in the strategy and tactics of companies, because not all the necessary conditions are present for its development. Although the country's economy entered a phase of reconstruction and recovery, the conditions for the development of the marketing system in the country are not yet fully formed.

The main features of marketing in transition economies are as follow:

1. In the domestic economy, marketing is the most dynamic concept that has been evolved, both in theory and in practice. Certain theoretical aspects and the possibility of its practical use in various spheres of the economy are studied by Kyrgyz specialists and scientists. However, note the lack of action-oriented marketing concept in the Kyrgyz economy in transition.
2. The practice of performing separate marketing functions in domestic enterprises. There is no systematic and comprehensive view in the implementation of marketing activities. Although the enterprises apply some elements of marketing, all their activities are not covered by a common strategy to address complex customer demands, market conditions, competitors' behaviour or environmental issues.
3. Underdeveloped infrastructure marketing. In the market of Kyrgyzstan there are several centres for marketing, with research projects commissioned by foreign and domestic companies. There are virtually no marketing firms with consulting services.
4. Developments in the marketing business and financial structures later influence the activities of industrial enterprises. In most businesses, marketing functions are performed primarily by individual members of the various services or senior and middle managers. More consistently, they are implemented in commercial firms, as well as medium and small businesses, where conditions allow making independent decisions.
5. The main goal of marketing in most Kyrgyz enterprises is survival at the first place. Secondly, there is an attempt to enter foreign markets.
6. Special features regarding the marketing tools. In domestic conditions, the dominant element of the marketing mix is the price. That flail, often without the involvement of other marketing tools, allows businesses to make profit. For comparison, in the U.S. a special place is given within the marketing mix to advertising and sales promotion measures. In Europe, special attention goes to

the development of distribution channels, in Japan to innovation in the production³.

7. Insufficient attention is paid to the process of establishing relationships with customers. The role of the buyer is often underestimated and as well as the importance of marketing as a revenue basis. Thus, the main reasons hindering the development of marketing are: consumers' failure to pay, lack of working capital in the enterprises, the loss of traditional distribution channels, which occurred as a results of bankruptcy in the former distribution centres and large trading firms, and the intervention of import competing goods, compounded by "shuttle" importation. A critical step in the development of production and the implementation of a systematic approach to marketing is the reduction of failure to pay. In the present situation, companies set only short term goals, so they do not have a clearly defined marketing strategy for the long term. The organization of marketing activities is not effective in regard to the needs of the market and solving the economic problems of the company⁴.

Expansion in the operations of marketing departments is limited by the lack of funds. It is desirable to revise enterprise management structure and establish functioning marketing departments. Current management strategy fails to allocate enough money to marketing activities; therefore, marketing activities are generally low. In this respect, the words of F.Kotler, told at the Moscow International Conference of Marketing in September 1998, are to be considered: "If under normal conditions marketing is needed for prosperity, in a crisis situation it is the only mechanism that can help us to survive."⁵

It is therefore desirable to spend more on marketing, as it is through the efforts of market specialists that we can survive in an economic crisis situation.

In Kyrgyzstan many business leaders say: "Marketing is a perfect system for large companies, but not for our (small) company which do not have the staff, resources, or the time for it." However, the need for marketing is always present even if a firm has no adequate resources for it.

1. Organization of marketing in small firms is available in the following areas: Laying marketing functions for one of the more trained employees;
2. Collaboration among small firms for certain marketing activities (market research, advertising company, etc.),
3. External consultants and experts to be one-off or permanent agreements on the development of assortment, sales network, sample sales, marketing, public relations.

³ Kotler, Armstrong, Philip, Gary. Principles of Marketing. Pearson education. D.S. Hochbaum, E. Moreno-Centeno, P. Yelland, and R.A. Catena. Rating Customers According to Their Promptness to Adopt New Products, Operations Research 59(5): 1171-1183, 2011

⁴ Adcock, Dennis, Al Halborg, Caroline Ross (2001). "Introduction Marketing: principles and practice. p. Retrieved 2009 "Marketing Management: Strategies and Programs", Guiltinan et al., McGraw Hill/Irwin, 1996

⁵ Котлер Ф. Маркетинг менеджмент. - СПб: Питер Ком, 1999. - 896 с.

The development of marketing practice in the Kyrgyz business sphere shows that at the initial stage it is perceived primarily as commerce and advertising. Later comes the realization that marketing is not an improvement of the "traditional" division (sales, production, advertising, etc.), but a fundamentally new vision for interaction with the market.⁶

With the development of market relations in Kyrgyzstan Marketing will increasingly be integrated into the overall control of the company, with practically all management decisions (production, marketing, financial, administrative, etc.) being based on information coming from the market.

At present, in the Kyrgyz enterprises (mostly in private business companies) Structure priorities marketing has started to operate.

First Priority: Preparation of market information (on demand, market conditions, competitors). Many businesses have already started working with the market in terms of information.

Second Priority: Gaining competitive positions from marketing; assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the company, its ability to form new dealer-distribution networks, establishing flexible prices and effective advertising campaigns, etc.

Third Priority: The long-term activities; studying consumer behaviour, market segmentation and positioning, product development with improved consumer options, service, image building and brand image, and public relations.

Due to the lack of specialists to perform marketing functions, businesses often focus on senior management level. These functions are performed as employees of sales teams, planning, production, and other departments. Marketing professional services are just beginning to form, and the demand for them in practice is steadily increasing.

The formation and development of marketing in the Kyrgyzstan are determined by several factors:

First, it refers to the conditions of formation of the domestic market. Kyrgyzstan (as well as Russia and other CIS countries) is going through a difficult period of transition from the current, "wild" and not always civilized stage to a higher stage of market development. Previously, profits have been obtained mainly through deficit or inflation, the effects of currency or high bank interests, tax evasion and loan defaults. At present, for many companies of the Kyrgyz Republic, marketing is the means of survival, which is aimed at the flexible use of existing production, financial, labour (human) capacity to meet consumer demand for new conditions.

Second, marketing activity in the Kyrgyz Republic is largely determined by the behaviour of Kyrgyz (post-Soviet) consumers. Experience shows that it is "outside the box" in comparison to the Western model. Selection is a new phenomenon for the Kyrgyz consumer mentality. Identifying trends and patterns do not fit into the standard marketing typology and requires additional study.

Third, the character and pace of developing business relationships: The traditional mentality with regard to centralism, worshipping power-haves and foreigners, a high level of corruption in the society, the poor quality of higher business education, a lack of understanding of the importance of marketing as

⁶ Kotler, Philip & Keller, L. Kevin (2012). Marketing Management 14e. Pearson Education Limited 2012. A Framework for Marketing Management (4th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall. 2009.

a revenue basis - all these and more complicate a consumer-oriented approach. Business life is still dominated by the view that it is secondary.

Fourth, under Kyrgyz conditions not all the marketing tools of the "marketing mix" are used widely and flexibly. The most effective element is the price. In Kyrgyzstan today for many companies the price alone (without involving other means) creates an immediate effect.

Public Relations (PR) in Kyrgyzstan

Public Relations (PR) as an independent field appeared in Kyrgyzstan just about ten years ago. Since then it has not yet received much public recognition and it is most often identified with advertising. Differentiation between the two concepts is rather oversimplified (promotion is: "buy or not buy," and PR is: "like or not like").

Currently, experts divide PR into three types: business, political and social PR. According to them, the last two types are less developed. Market experts believe that political PR knows seasons, with large amounts of spinning occurring during election campaigns or other political activities. Contemporary Kazakh politicians are increasingly turning for the assistance of either the Russian or the Ukrainian political strategists. Social PR activity largely depends on the development of the third sector and the CSR (corporate social responsibility), and it is still insufficient. Therefore, in this review we will mainly focus on the role of business public relations. In general, for domestic business today, PR is either fad or an important point in the competition and means of establishing goodwill.⁷

Accurate estimation of the number of companies providing PR-services is very difficult. The reason is that in recent years an increasing number of advertising agencies, editors of various newspapers, and even NGOs offer PR services. They all work in Bishkek. Despite the fact that these agencies specialize in public relations, PR-services account for only 50% of their activities.

PR agencies provide services to customer service companies in the field of public relations, reputation management, press conferences and other events with the press, as well as the training and placement of informational materials. The main directions of the PCG are services in consultancy, planning and PR-and advertising campaigns, organization of events and exhibitions, seminars, "round tables" and press conferences, as well as monitoring of the media, information support business projects AND public relations support and consulting.

The contemporary Kyrgyz PR-market is very heterogeneous, and consumer PR services can be divided into several groups according to their degree of "maturity". The first group consists of companies who recognize the importance of public relations and actively use PR principles in practice. They usually have their own PR-structure and some branding strategy. Into this group belong a number of oil and gas companies, banks, FMCG and IT-companies.

⁷ Phillips, David (2009). *Online Public Relations*. London: Kogan Page.

The second one is a large group consisting of consumers who understand the relevance of PR, but do not have the skills of application. In addition, they do not always understand the mechanisms of constructing communications. Although these companies are interested in creating an attractive image, they are not always prepared for the publicity and transparency. Except if the company is led by a charismatic and competent leader, but in lack of such leader, the competitive advantages are not obvious.

Finally, in the third group we find companies that do not use PR in their activities because they do not believe in its effectiveness. The reason is either misunderstanding or "PR-allergy", due to fault lay agencies. Unfortunately, this syndrome occurs even in very large enterprises.

Of course, there were not many PR-agencies until companies belonged mainly to the second group, however, according to the experts, the use of communicative agencies or opening their own PR-service will soon be common practice. So, in 2005, the PR-budgets of a number of companies has significantly increased, reflecting the demand for public relations services from domestic companies and the gradual "growing up" of the PR-market.

The following factors can exert a positive effect on the PR-market: the development of the stock market, the creation of the Regional Financial Center of Bishkek, a growing understanding of the importance of PR-activity, increased competition in the media business.

A superficial analysis gives the impression that in the last year the Kazakh and Kyrgyz PR market have improved dramatically in terms of the number of players and their customer base, and the quality of services provided. Nevertheless, it would be too early to talk about major changes, because the market itself is in the process of its formation and it is going through a period of natural growing pains.

Despite the increase in supply, associated with the appearance of new PR-agencies, the quality of the services sector remains low. Companies present for a long time in this business continue to offer the old set of products. Moreover, advertising and marketing agencies often offer PR-services as an "appendage"; in a limited way, usually by placing paid materials in the media. Often the agency is simply not skilled enough to determine the competitive advantages of the consumer, to conduct a professional image diagnosis and offer effective PR-tools. As a result, the customer is disappointed, not only in the agency, but also in the effectiveness of PR-technologies in general.

Another problem is related to the lack of activity from the clients' parts. Many of them do not realize the importance of an integrated approach to public relations activities and prefer one-time actions to the detriment of full PR-strategy. Typically, PR-financing of projects is a residual, and PR-campaign is conceived only as a paid placement of materials in the media⁸.

Unfortunately in the PR advocacy dominates partly, and it has to be explained to the client that any communication strategy is most afraid of spontaneity, and therefore it should be clearly planned. Clients often come just once in a year and hope to have positive results for a year. It is not always understood that PR involves long-term relationship of trust between the agency and the client and works primarily on the growth of intangible assets of the latter.

⁸ Burson, Harold (2004). *E pluribus unum: The Making of Burson-Marsteller*. New York: Burson-Marsteller.

Communication is needed in order to maintain and strengthen the confidence of shareholders, to increase the number of investors, to achieve an objective assessment, to gain access to new capital and debt financing. Accordingly, communication should be directed to the media and the analysts, that is, to those who listen to the investors. The major tools of communication should be a good presentation of the companies covered its objectives and strategy, quality press releases (with a decent English version), a continuously updated website (including English), as well as an effective mechanism for receiving feedback.⁹

Personnel

It is very difficult to find experienced communication agencies because the demand far outstrips supply. The training of good PR-specialists is complex and very expensive. The erroneous stereotype is that if a journalist makes for a good PR-specialist, in addition to the creative component, requires managerial acumen to a greater degree, knowledge of marketing and market relations in general.

That's why teachers and public relations specialists work together to ensure that the PR-specialisation at the local universities receives full status. Important elements are: applied orientation teaching, preparation of education materials in accordance with the Kyrgyz specificities and consideration of practical case studies.

According to a survey conducted among Kyrgyz students, the main problems about PR education are the followings: the shortage of qualified teachers (46.5%), low share of practice in education (32.8%), lack of a clear division of PR and related fields (19.2%) and a lack of domestic books (4.5%). Almost all of the respondents believe that the PR in our universities should exist as a separate speciality.

Media and PR

The Kyrgyz PR-market is facing the following challenges presently: the increasing media control by the state, state orders for placement of paid materials, the shortage of highly skilled journalists and price dumping. Some experts tend to believe that the media business in Kyrgyzstan, with all its well-known achievements, is out of step with industry leaders, and the capitalization of media still remains low. They themselves do not go to the stock market, and their ownership structure is opaque.

⁹ Biagi, S. (2005). *Media/Impact: An Introduction to Mass Media*. Chicago: Thomas Wadsworth.

CMI and PR

In developed countries, the main sources of income for the media are advertising, subscription (monthly fee), and retail. Replenishment occurs only if the final product (newspaper, magazine, radio station or TV channel) meets the needs of the audience, which requires continuous quality improvement, searching for new solutions and technological improvement.¹⁰

In Kyrgyzstan most of the media financially dependent on their founders who are not always interested in their development as a professional business.

Use of the controlled media as an information platform for lobbying. Addressing the original guarantor cash infusions to the newspaper, magazine, or television station owner artificially "pulls" from a competitive media market, placing it in greenhouse conditions. As a result, it negatively affects both the quality of media production and the level of interaction with PR.

Prospects

According to experts, the volume of Kyrgyz PR-market today reaches at least \$ 10 million (for example, in Russia it is \$ 500 million). Moreover, local PRs expect further increase in the demand for PR services, despite the possible redistribution of the market in favour of the Russian or international network agencies. According to them, the main trends are: structural change of the market, crowding out "amateurish" PR-consultants, increasing PR-services to consumer companies, and outsourcing PR functions with a concomitant reduction in full-time PR-specialists.

The most actively developing areas are the following: reputation management, media-relations, corporate communications, GR and strategies for CSR. PR is becoming integrated with one of the adjacent areas, such as advertising, marketing or HR.



¹⁰ Bernays, Edward (1945). *Public Relations*. Boston, MA: Bellman Publishing Company.

LITERATURE & ARTS

PLÁJÁS, Ildikó Zonga

Above the Technique

Valentina Tóth: Hungarian Horizon – Début CD

Mysterious harmonies and disharmonies as from the collective unconscious of a small and gloomy nation from the Eastern ends of Europe, archaism and purity expressed with tenderness and premature wisdom – the début CD of Valentina Tóth plays Hungarian piano music of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, two challenging composers of the 20th century to whom the folk music of the Carpathian Basin represented the main source of inspiration.

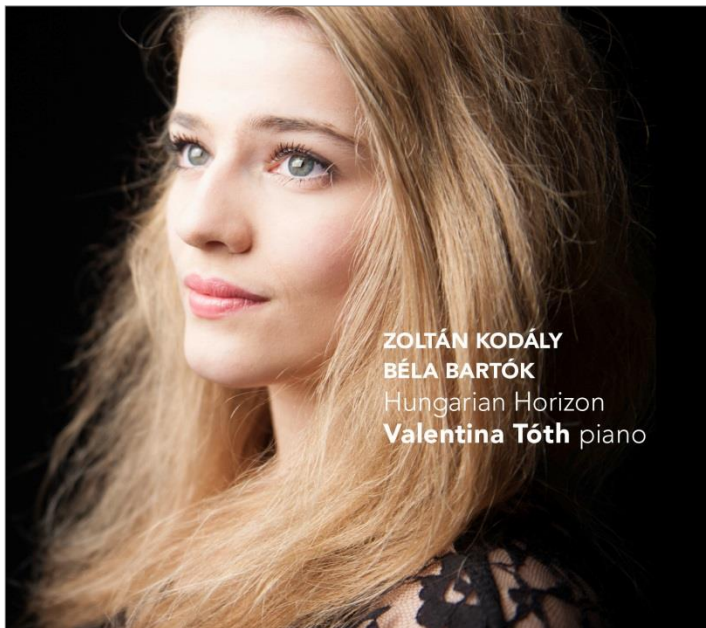
The début CD of the 18 year old Valentina, who is partly (3/8 part – as she likes to emphasize) Hungarian herself, was just introduced to the Dutch audience and the critiques are reacting eager, still she is talking about her emerging career with modesty. “I am very happy to perform music because I couldn't really see myself doing anything else” – confesses with an exceptional perspicacity and sincerity although her pianist career is not an ordinary one. She is not playing since early childhood, and the decision of becoming a piano artist was not his parents' but hers. She decided to play piano at the age of 9 and ever since she is taking her decisions with awareness.

The Début CD entitled Hungarian Horizon was released on 6th April with a concert in the Amstelkerk (Amsterdam), and since that date it receives 'purely positive' reviews, as the record label, the *Challenge Records* states on its website¹. Valentina herself receives a lot of requests and invitations from various media outlets in the Netherlands and at the beginning of July her CD will be released in the USA, too.

The success of the Hungarian Horizon has been deeply rooted in a remarkable marketing strategy and above all in Valentina's adorable personality. As her Hungarian (Tóth) grandfather emphasizes during a personal conversation, Valentina was born to be on stage. She radiates as she plays and talks, captivates and delights with the naivety and naturalness of a child and at the same time with the maturity of a self-conscious artist. But what this CD has to offer is even beyond this 'special'. Just as the grandparents represent the Hungarian origin of the Tóth family in the Netherlands, the mark of a somehow 'primitive' authenticity of an Eastern European folk tradition is incorporated in the music of Bartók and Kodály. Valentina in turn manages to address this music in which **“mere cosmetic and technical brilliance does not give much solace. On the contrary, it asks for internalized and integrated pure musicality without any frills”** as Maarten Brandt puts in his review for *Opus Klassiek*.

I met Valentina in The Hague on a sunny spring morning. She is just about to finish her first year at the Royal Conservatory. She speaks ambitiously yet with a remarkable humbleness for music. The initially more formal discussion slowly introduces me into the daily life, the joys and struggles of a young pianist just as in a laboratory where the hard work is nourished by boundless dreams.

¹ <http://www.challengerecords.com>



<http://www.valentinatoth.nl>

How did you start playing the piano?

When I was younger I played in a musical 'The Sound of Music'. The fact that I got in was a big thing in that time in the Netherlands and everybody liked the performance. Besides, I always wanted to play the piano, so I asked my parents. My mother started to look for a good teacher and it took really long. My parents always supported me but it had to be my own idea.

And that was when you were 9, a bit later than usual in this career.

Everybody at the Conservatory started at 4 or 5. Sometimes I felt it too, that I am a late starter, but on the other hand it has the advantage that it was always my own idea. Just as moving to The Hague. I told my parents that I want to come to this school, so they really helped me to get here.

You define yourself not only as a piano artist but also as a theatre singer.

I think it's possible to combine those two things: the piano with theatre. I like creating a moment live, on the stage, creating a sphere and making people feel something at the moment.

Are you doing this consciously?

Of course. Every music has a story behind it, and I think every musician will try to create feelings when he plays, just like actors and singers do. Everyone plays differently, so everyone creates a different story. This is what I enjoy most in making music. For example, now I'm playing a piece, a Prélude from Debussy and the title, Brouillard means fog or in the 'mist'. He created beautiful sounds and you can do almost all of it very soft, calm and delicate. You have to use a lot of pedals. I try to see the mist in front of

my eyes and to create a mysterious sound. It works more with pictures or feeling. Like, if something feels very happy, you can imagine it as a summer breeze.

When you're practising do you work also on these images and pictures?

First you have to work on the piece itself: the notes must be right and the technique must be good. When you have all the notes and it sounds nice, then it starts this part of the work. When I can really play the way I want it, as a story, only then is the music living. When you are above the technique you can do a lot with the musical part.

Do you make up stories as well?

Sometimes I have stories like: there was this little girl and then the mother came... It is fun also because you can play with the imagination. In the 'Mist' for example there is a wave, and I see it as if the wind would blow the leaves up and down. Or when I was younger, my mother used to tell me a little story from the time she was a child. She lived in a big house with a lot of sisters and brothers and they had a lot of mice. But the children liked them so much that they were feeding them. Once when I played a piece which was very mouse-like I was thinking at this story.

You are also introducing your pieces by telling a couple of words to the audience.

Yes, I like to tell the people what is the piece about. Sometimes you play pieces and there is so much to tell about. Everybody likes to hear why or how the piece was written or what the composer meant or said about it. It doesn't have to be long, but it also makes you to listen differently. At the beginning I was quite shy, looking everywhere while talking, but now I'm a bit better at it.

That sounds like a lot of work. Where do you have the perseverance from?

You really have to want it for yourself, and you have to keep the image in your head. If you quit, nobody will think, That's a pity, because there are so many more good musicians. Sometimes the pieces are really difficult, things are just not working out with your piano, and then you ask yourself: Why do I do it? I'm never going to be good enough! But in the end I'm not giving up and I keep trying.

And meanwhile you released your debut CD...

Yes, that is true. I was really lucky that I had the chance to make this CD, and I have learned so much with it. Of course, it is nice to have your own CD. If things are going well you have a way more motivation. But there is still so much I need to learn.

On your first CD you play 'Hungarian' piano music. What does that mean to you?

One of my grandfathers is Hungarian, and I was always quite proud that I was not only Dutch. I kind of grew up with Hungarian music because my parents were listening to it often, and I loved it a lot. When I was 12 I played Hungarian music for the first time. It was a Sonatina from Bartók. It wasn't that hard but I liked it so much. So when it came to the CD I proposed that maybe I could do Hungarian music and the record label also liked the idea. This is how we did it.

The Hungarians are told to be 'eerlijk' (nl.) which means fair or straight in English. How can you identify yourself with this?

Well, I try to be honest and fair myself, but I think the fairness is also in the nature of the music. It is 'oprecht' (nl. honest, true), there is nothing behind it, it is very straight, very to the point. That is its strengths, that is what makes it so pure.

Bartók is not the easiest music and the Hungarians feeling is also a bit darker.

Yes, that's true, the Hungarian music is always a bit 'naar' (nl. unpleasant). I tried to understand it and get the feeling but it was a really long trip. There is already so much in the music, what you have to do before you can make it on your own. It took me about one and a half year to get to this result.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uzD1ks2338>

And wasn't it hard for you to play Bartók at age of 16?

The recording was really hard because you're really alone on your own in this room only with the piano and a technician. That was pretty new for me. I've never done anything like that before, because most of the time you have the audience. But actually I did enjoy it. It is only you and the music which thus can get to a different level and it becomes more introvert.

What is different when you are playing in front of an audience?

It's really very different from the CD recording. When you're on the stage and you play, you just lock everything else. You play as good as you can and you try to make beautiful music. And then afterwards you will see what the audience thought. The amount of applause is usually a good indication.

And what about the stage-fever?

Sometimes I'm very nervous and that hears in the play: your hands are shaking, sometimes you can't make a nice sound because your breathing is so heavy. Now I'm a bit more used to play on the stage, but it also depends on how important something it is, or how important you make it for yourself.

Sometimes out of blue you get very nervous before a concert which is not even that important, but it just happens. Now that I have more experience I can control it a bit better but still, it's something you have to learn how to cope with.

Who would make you nervous?

Well, there are a lot of good pianists and good musicians. I also find scary to play in front of other students, or to play piano for my teacher or other teachers, because everyone knows your piece very well and everyone has a very good level of playing.

And what about your parents or your Hungarian grandfather?

... (after a moment of thinking) No! My grandfather is quite proud of me and he would never judge me because of a mistake, so that doesn't make me extra nervous.

What was the worse stage experience you have ever had? Or should we better talk about the best?

No, no, let's talk about the worse! (She laughs.) Once when I was 13, I had a concert at a semifinal of a competition. I knew I can play my piece well because I already played it in the first and second round, but somehow I got so nervous. I thought, now that I'm in the semifinals I have to make it clear that I belong there. I was playing around 5 o'clock in the afternoon so I had the whole day to stress myself, and I really played bad. I was nervous and tensioned, everything was too loud and I lost it and afterwards I was very mad with myself. But actually you learn a lot from the bad concert experiences.

And did you get in the finals?

No. I got a special diploma but I didn't get in the finals, and that was the right decision from the committee.

Back to the CD. When I first saw it, I thought, it's really perfectly designed, the cover, the pictures, your age, the Hungarian identity you have. Everything fits so well that it made me wonder, who is behind it?

Thank you! (And she laughs flushing.) It had to be a cover and the label was making the photo-shoot. There were a few pictures I could choose from. There were a lot of pictures I didn't like but at the end I am quite happy with the final picture. Regarding the booklet, we were brainstorming and we thought of better doing an interview instead of long descriptions. It proved to be a good idea.

The CD is not only music but also a cover, pictures, your face, which has to be marketed.

Well, yes. This is quite difficult, because of course I would like it to be about the music and not about me. There are a lot of people who are very good in having connections, to click with lot of important

people, but I am not very good at that. I just try to do my job with my music. But you are right, you really have to promote yourself. If I'm at a concert I'm going to put on a nice dress but not only because of the image. I also like it, and if you look good, you also play better. But unfortunately I'm not much of getting myself into the market.

Does it make you uncomfortable that the CD is not only about music but also about your face?

Well, yes. My record label for example, they just want a nice picture and they expect you to look in a specific way because that sells. Just like a CD with a story behind sells better, and of course that is their purpose. You can not only think about 'I have to play this, because the audience likes it' or 'I have to look or to act like this'. I get a bit uncomfortable with that because it's not all about that, but it's certainly part of it. But this is difficult for most of the musicians. Every job has its nice and down sides and the musicians have to face these kind of problems.

In most reviews of the CD the same adjectives show up: melancholic, passionate, romantic or dramatic. How can you fit yourself in this image?

Sometimes I don't know what to do with the reviews, beyond the fact that it is a nice review. About the romantic, of course, the music itself is very romantic and passionate, and I am happy if they say that, but I never really know, how to fit it with myself or the person who I am. Besides I am only 18.

How do you see yourself in the future?

That is always a difficult question because you have your dreams, but you can never know if you are going to succeed or not. I really like making chamber music and I think I would be really lucky to have a successful ensemble. I'm thinking of a piano trio: piano, cello, violin. And I would like to have a lot of concerts with the ensemble and maybe combine it with a solo piano career. I also see a lot of people in the music business that combine the classical music with theatre, and I'd love to do that: to perform all my life.



TRAVELOGUE

MIRABILE, Paul**Voyage to the Holy City of Timbuktoo over the Western Sahara¹**

Introduction

After a twenty-three year interlude, I have decided to rewrite this account of my travels through the Sahara Desert to the ancient capital of Mali, Timbuktoo. When I first wrote out my article in pencil, a twenty year old 'hero' of African adventurers and filibusters, I had no intention of ever reading it again, much less rewriting it. Now at forty-two, after having roamed through Africa, Europe, Asia Minor, India and China, an intense desire to reread and rewrite it suddenly seized me, as if that particular experience of an eighteen old boy, difficult and painful though it had been, would and should enable me to explain my present inner and outer trials and tribulations with regards to the lands which I can no longer call 'alien'. For now that the mountains, plains and jungles of India and China are my home, in the same way that the desert had become my home in Africa, I can truly declaim that to voyage is no parenthesis in life or 'get-it-out-of-your-system' cliché often heard from very conventional and boring individuals, no juvenile revolutionary's quest of Truth in view of demagog fame, no tax evader's refuge into fiscal paradises. To err is to remain in constant awe of both the wonders and the horrors of our world...

This present version differs in several ways from its youthful prototype: erratic orthography has been corrected (but not too much, why lose the fiery enthusiasm of youth?), the syntax somewhat rehabilitated, the style less fustian, and here and there I have interpolated snippets of erudite and bookish remarks of a more mature vintage! The present version does, however, put into perspective one important difference: twenty-three years of a continuum without any specific goal, any engaging cause, any sparkling land or glamorous rainbow over the horizon. Indeed, the only 'motivation' has been the Road itself, whether stretching forth or serpentine. It has always been there. For it is on this Road, and this Road only that one confronts and completes one's Self with the Other. For without the Other, one's Self is destined to an inchoate existence and eventual perdition...

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The voyage to Timbuktoo through the Sahara Desert via Morocco, the Spanish Sahara, Mauritania and Senegal was improvised from beginning to end. Ever since studying about Mali and its arts in High School, it had been an obsession of mine to reach this ancient Muslim light of the desert from where, its great chief, Mansa Musa, left for Saudi Arabia with a caravan so laden with gold that the glittering metal deflated in value when poured into the already swollen weal of the Arabian market! So says the legend.

¹ This travelogue was originally written in 1972-73. The piece here is an abridged version of it. The full version can be read in the supplement to this issue. — *Editor*

Notwithstanding bardic hyperbole, Timbucktoo was the wealthiest city of West Africa in the late 1500's, and undoubtedly the most intellectual.

When I say improvised that does not mean disorganised: I did have my Michelin map, finely detailed with its 'dirt tracks' (pistes) traced in red, embossing huge yellow coloured portions at the top which indicated the vastness and emptiness of the Sahara; at the bottom fringe, a ribbon of lush green bespoke the beginnings of the Central African jungles.

I knew these colours by heart as well as the names of the oases which peppered the pastel yellow. I knew, too, the names of the bigger cities and towns, the rivers which ran blue through the yellow, and especially I knew each and every road or track that trudged and battled their way through veld and over *erg* and *tell*. The mere touch and smell of that map with its tyre-man looming on the front cover inspired me to venture over these lands without the least preparation, be it material or psychological; it would be my only possession when, a year and a half later, I would be sent back to New York via London from Algeria, dying of malnutrition...penniless.

My journey to Mali began in Casablanca from where I took a train to Marrakech. The 'White City' held no charm for me, so my sojourn was brief. It was the 'Red City' where the royal beginnings of the Sahara Desert lay...

The train arrived on time. Although having already been to the 'Red City', I did not lose out on that Instant of excitement that a traveller feels when setting his or her eyes on a wondrous sight: the red-ochre ramparts and grovelling markets leave no room for cosmopolitan aloofness or blasé platitudes. And it is because of this Instant that Marrakech is both wondrous and deceptive: the city where your heart leads you is also the one where bus-loads of 'senior citizens' mingle and confer with con-artists, pick-pockets, swindlers, liars, petty thieves, swarming kids and supplicating women with fly-infested babies dangling from their hips. Yet, there are sound reasons for such spectacles: little work or none for the simple Moroccan obliges him or her to 'live off' tourists, which provides them with some income, be it earned, conned or stolen! Who is to judge? Furthermore, the so called 'generosity' of the Western tourist does no good deed to the artisan who is forced to lower the excellent quality of his crafts because of the massive glut of the industrialised tourist souvenirs of poor workmanship that the eager foreigner buys in unbargained quantities at astronomical prices. The ideal remedy to this dilemma would be to educate the tourist in Moroccan crafts in order for him or her to discern between what is traditional and what is rubbish. It is not enough to throw money away on worthless items, or give it away to beggars and children. Here the tourist, that is the wise and educated tourist, could play a large rôle in developing the Moroccan traditional arts and crafts as part of its infra-structure, and not abandon it to pettiness or to the exclusivity of its export market, which in effect does make thrive the one or two percent of the population because of its quality goods founded upon traditional mediums of workmanship. Traditional workmanship must remain a transversal reality in Africa and not a vertical exclusivity supported by a government policy of catering to wealthy foreign clients! And there they were! Bus-loads of enthusiastic tourists flashing their greenbacks, French Francs and Deutsch Marks in the middle of Djemaa el Fna Square much to the hysterical delight of swarming children, experts in thievery and cunning, versed in the art of qualm cajolery. About all this I can speak frankly, I had two wallets stolen in Morocco and conned into lending an adolescent some money for a reason that he never made very clear...

I sauntered about the square in search of a restaurant where I could savour a cous-cous laden with mutton and merguez. I had to eat something, for I was determined to reach Southern Morocco as quickly as possible. And so, instead of setting up tent at the camp-site I made a bee-line for the bus station.

Rotten luck! The next bus through the Atlas to the mountain town of Asni would leave the following morning. I spread out my sleeping bag on the floor of the bus terminal and slept with the other morning passengers...I hardly closed an eye that night, however the rush into the bus at 5:30 shook the sleepiness out of me: no blow was spared as the passengers strained into the bus whilst the driver apathetically observed the spectacle, ticking away the beads of his rosary (al-subha)! These moments of intense physical contact can be nightmarish for the ill-prepared traveller. Women, as well as men, become very violent in the pursuit of a place to put one's belongings or to sit down. In the mêlée are mixed animals, braying children and assorted fruits and vegetables. Yet, once seat or floor space fully secured, smiles appear, friendly glances exchanged, and conversation follows; everyone reverts to his or her former amiable, civilised self...

Because of the cold weather and me being quite unprepared for it, I remained only a few days at Asni in the Atlas mountains; I carried on by hitch-hiking a ride to Agadir, then on to Goulimine...

Goulimine is an ochre coloured town of great beauty, regardless of rusty cans, broken bottles and dead animals strewn here and there. And it was here, amidst the thick mud-packed walls that young Europeans and Moroccans (even the police!) indulged in much smoking of hashish and consuming of hallucinogenic drugs. During their rather torpid fêtes, they constantly exchanged smooth little oblong beads, blue in colour, speckled with black and red. Curious about this rite of exchange, I asked an Englishman, who rather perfunctorily, and in a wheezing pedantic tone, replied that they were the ancient coins of West Africa, probably made in Mali, and still circulated as a medium of bargaining exchange. Here they were traded for hashish...He continued to relate that they were made of the sands of the Sahara. He plucked one from his *handira* pocket (a long tunic) and handed it to me: «A little gift from Goulimine, »he laughed stiffly. «Take it with you through the Sahara, it may bring you luck.» Perhaps it did, for that very evening a lorry stopped and into the open back I jumped with a dozen Europeans, all standing and gasping at the wondrous sunset that bathed the desert wastes in a warm, orangery glow...

The route or track was but two narrow tyre treads, now visible now swept away by the winds. It wound its way around gigantic sand dunes and over sweeping salt deposits. In one of those enormous glistening salt lakes we halted. A Taureg strode up to the driver's window with an outstretched tin cup, he was asking for water. I spied out the surrounding emptiness: where had this nomad come from? An American, Joseph and his travelling companion, Bill, a Candian, informed us that these tribesmen lived on handouts from the hamlets and oases, wandering the desert in search of food and water. I was in no position to decide whether this explanation was sound or not. After a brief discussion on our travel plans, I persuaded them to continue with me through the desert of Mauritania into Senegal, although they agreed rather reluctantly. The lorry deposited all of us at the frontier town of Tah where we had to wait two days before the opening of the border because of the week-end. I was abashed: how could an official border be closed on week-ends?..

On Monday morning before the air got too hot, we all walked the two or three kilometres to the Spanish Sahara border where we were detained hours on end. Our bags were thoroughly examined, our

passports stamped three times (there were three borders!), our application papers verified, stamped and stamped again, all this done with extraordinary meticulousness, and with an exaggerated lethargy that created a strange tension and nervousness. The bus that finally transported us towards the capital, (El) Aiun was stopped three times, and each time our passports and bags were checked, rechecked and checked again. During these monotonous interludes Joseph, Bill and I planned to lodge in Aiun for a few days so as to pick up supplies for the long journey through the deserts of the Spanish Sahara and Mauritania.

We checked into a hotel whose high ceiling rooms were large and airy. Both the outside and the inside walls were roughcasted in shimmering Andalucian white; the interior decorated with photos of bullfighters and bullfighting, whorling Flamenco dancing girls and a few oil portraits done by local Spanish artists. On a large dresser a beautifully designed 'abanico' had been opened. The gawdy Spanish colours in the middle of the Sahara Desert proved as surrealist as the narrow streets filled with mustached Spaniards attired in Western style clothing. The European women dressed in ample white blouses and skirts whilst the 'locals' were jallaba-clad, the men a few steps in front of their veiled wives who followed dutifully behind. At a glance, I had the impression that the Europeans out-numbered the Saharians. All the signs were in Spanish. Now and then the Arabic translation would be printed below. But this was a rare concession. Spanish rang out from all quarters! This Iberio-Saharian admixture was no successful concoction: the out-going bombastic Spaniards intermingling with these grave, solemn, introverted desert nomads proffered no harmony of contrasting cultures. But was the interpenetration of cultures the intention of the Spaniards? No! Nor was it the Saharians'...Only ideologists believe in such miraculous assimilations or integrations. The realists accept the Master/Slave dichotomy, the cynics remain amongst their own peoples, quite content with their 'pure' heritage...After three days of munching on tacos and buying food supplies for the desert crossing, we left El Aiun with no heavy heart...

Guelta Zimmer was the small frontier town of the Spanish Sahara and Mauritania. The Spanish driver took our passports and, accompanied by the Saharian, went to have them stamped at customs; that is, a tiny shack built under a spreading willow. I had obtained, in Rabat, a three-day visa: this of course was a joke...who could cross one thousand miles of *erg* in three days? I saved a lot of money, though, for Bill's and Joe's one month visas cost them thirty dollars. Mine had cost five! I would just face the consequences at the other end. Bill, with his customary debonair, harped on that they would lock me away in some dank, putrid *ergastulum*. He was obsessed, by the way, with that word *ergastulum*, which he probably read in his Latin classes at the university. Our passports returned, we carried on swerving through *wâdis*, following the *oueds* (dry river beds) wherever possible. Leaving the canyon, we gradually penetrated the bleached white sands of Mauritania, a vast waterless ocean...

The colour of Mauritania on my Michelin map was a deep yellow save the most southern fringe which glowed a lush green. Indeed, the width and breadth of this enormous country was an *erg*, and besides the capital, Nouakchott, a few towns and outposts and several scattered oases deep in the desert, there was nothing else!

When I was struggling through High School (perhaps the senior year), instead of going to classes I would ensconce myself at the public library just across the street and pore over maps and articles related to Africa. In one particular review I recalled these facts: Mauritania's ethnic stock was a mixture of

Moorish, Arabic, Berber and Black African, these latter comprising the slave population. These tribes and clans waged endless wars on one another, primarily because throughout its history, Mauritania has had a balanced ratio of nomad population (500,000 today) and a sedentarised one (900,000)! The North is virtually empty, whereas 90% of the sedentary live in the more fertile South. The State religion is Muslim, and besides the few Black African animists, and the Christian European (mostly French) workers, all these different ethnic groups are Sunni.

Whilst bounding over one of those *barkans*, a high-pitched explosion caused the vehicle to veer and skid from rock pile to rock pile, finally coming to a jarring halt in a deep *oued*. The two back tyres on the right now lay squashed in a steaming mass of Michelin rubber. We all jumped down. These blow-outs would take time to repair. And it did...Not only due to the innumerable acrobatics the driver and the mechanic had to perform in order to replace the melted blubber, but when the operation appeared to be happily concluding, a sandy yellow light, eerie and dense, suddenly loomed large all round, as if some alien force were about to engulf us. The wind picked up and with it all the grains of the *erg*. The driver signalled to us to dive under the lorry, and did so just in time, for the sand tempest that swept past concurred very accurately to those you see in movies or read in books. Enshrouded in arenaceous obscurity, the storm lasted only a minute or two: soundless, a silent fury unleashing its wrath against the desert interlopers. We covered our heads. Suddenly birds were heard. Could that be? Then the sky cleared as supernaturally as it had yellowed, and become her old, infinite periwinkle blue. With red eyes and dry coughs, we jumped back on our desert-camel. Off she screamed, kicking up dust and black bellowing smoke. It screamed into Atar where we spent a miserable half-day attempting to hitch a ride out. Getting on each others' nerves, my two companions left me to watch over our things in a mosquito-infested oasis whilst they went in search for an exit vehicle!

They returned several hours later all agog! I had never seen Bill's face so beaming. He even slapped me on the shoulder. Joe explained everything: they had spotted a French family standing round their car. He tried to talk to them but since they didn't speak English, and Joe only a few words of their language, the only thing understood was that the family could give us a lift down South. But Bill wanted to be sure, so they came running back for me. I excitedly packed my belongings, threw the pack on my shoulder and hobbled towards the road. Joe pointed to that car, where indeed some smartly dressed Europeans were busy buying fruit and vegetables. I stopped short, left my pack on the ground and told the other two to wait. How I was strangely attracted to that pretty little car, so clean and white, so comfortable looking. I brushed back my long, greasy hair, smoothed out my wrinkled jallaba, kicked off the dust and filth from my boots: I tried to make myself look somewhat respectable.

I approached the father of the family with an outstretched hand knowing well that the French always shake hands, even when they don't like you. A short, stocky man, he broke into a wide grin when he saw me, and as I babbled away my memorized formulas, my badly learnt phrases, my choppy consonants and unsweet vowels, this friendly, discreet man nodded in affirmative to all that streamed from my monstrous lips: had he really understood? He pointed to my friends, dirty and bewildered, cringing in humility in the middle of the fly-infested market. «Bien sûr! Venez avec nous. Vous pensez rester comme ça ici?» He had understood! I didn't know what made me happier, the fact that we were leaving this hell-hole, or his understanding my French so well! Whatever it was, we soon found ourselves seated

comfortably in cushioned seats in the back of the car with the African servant, our packs stored carefully in the boot.

The car moved so smoothly along the track that I almost fell asleep; however, the wife and daughters were curious about our 'state', and shot out so many questions that I lost all record of what they and I were saying. They certainly made efforts to speak slowly, and even corrected me on sundry occasions, yet I was so exhausted that my mind couldn't keep pace. Nonetheless, everyone was in a jovial mood.

The vehicle suddenly banged on to another track, much narrower and very bumpy. Driving steadily through *wâdis* (valleys) over dunes and *oueds*, we ploughed deeper into the desert. High rising ochered canyons encircled the track, now and then enormous ripply dunes threw shadows upon their skirts. Dromedaries, tended by their owners, screamed and ran behind dunes at the approach of the Renault. At times, because the car didn't have four-wheel drive, it crashed into deep pockets of sand and lay stuck. We got out to push her, the sand being so deep that the Frenchman and the servant had to retrieve two long wooden planks that he kept in the boot and place them in front of the back wheels. The planks served as traction for the buried tyres, but without our hauling and pushing would have been absolutely useless. At last, after another hour of repeated towage, we veered into an *oued* and there stopped short. The 'chef de famille' jumped out and told everyone to follow him. Everyone did in high spirits.

He led us onto a rocky path which serpentine the *oued*. It wound its way through a narrow corridor between high *dhars* (cliffs), opening onto a flat plain. I stopped short: in front of us floated an oasis of extraordinary beauty. Lean and graceful date trees arched into one another from whose emerald fronds low arcades, dark vaults and groined ogives were configured. Mesmerised, I penetrated this enchanting wonderland: budding oleander lined recently swept roan-coloured tracks, peeping reds and whites guided the wayfarer through the vaulted Viridian. Nopals had been cultivated in front of neat huts of stone and wood, perfumed Strobilus grew in tidy clumps. Six foot high cacti girt those charming abodes, whilst just behind them large-leafed palm and date trees hung like royal parasols over the flat roofs. The sweet smells of Sandarack resin were veritable breaths of Paradise!

The villagers, smiling their gold-toothed smiles, waved to us: some, except for a loin-cloth over their privies, were naked; others dressed in moiré *bo-bos* (togas) or woolen jallabas. The women strode gracefully from well to hut, balancing huge goat-skin bags atop their heads. Since arriving in Africa these were the most primitive peoples I had yet come across. The African servant came up to me and explained that because they were virtually cut off from the main road, the villagers lived on dromedary meat and milk, eggs, a white spongy cheese from their goats, dates, oranges from their grooves, vegetables from their gardens, and of course bread cooked in roadside kilns. I would discover later that we were in the ancient town of Chinguetti...

A friend of the French family from Chinguetti directed our steps over the ruins and the surrounding countryside from which the famous mediaeval stronghold drew its inexhaustible resources, he came to a sudden halt in front of the crumbling arcades of the mosque whose exposed contours were surrounded by damaged homes, some of which reduced to their foundations. Huge blocks of finely sculptured stone lay scattered at the foot of the high wall of the *kiblah*. We entered the arcades: square stone tiles encumbered the former prayer room, some piled high, others, broken or chipped, in a jumble; short squat columns lay either fissured or intact, having been propped against the remaining walls; a small,

protruding oval shaped wall might have been the *mihrab* (altar). We side-stepped the confused masses of stone and baked earth, exiting into a complex of foundations via a dilapidated wall. In one particular courtyard rose an ochre ornamented staircase whose rich geometric motifs had been set against a background of paint or roughcast. This house was inhabited by a goat-rearing family who occupied only the ground floor, so the African explained. It was obvious from these ruins that this community had achieved a status of civilisation. Suddenly from afar we heard the strident voices of the two young daughters; they were imploring us to come and eat! What an excellent idea: I was starving. The girls had run along a *oued* to catch up to us. I was amazed, they seemed to know this place by heart. They stopped abruptly in front of me and let flow a stream of words that caused me great confusion. I guessed that they wanted me to accompany them. Giggling and laughing, they ran on ahead along the neat narrow tracks until reaching a clearing over which towered the craggy shadows of mountains and the swaying fronds of date and palm trees. We ran as fast as we could...

We stayed with this kind family for a full week at their home in Nouakchott, and they even helped us to find a lorry to the Senegal River border at Rosso. From there we reached Saint Louis where I left Bill and Joe, and continued my way to Dakar alone. My sojourn in the capital was brief and rather relaxing, even though the city itself, extremely Westernised, offered no fascination for me. These huge modern African cities imitated, on a smaller scale, our Western jungles, save the lepers, and I hadn't come to Africa to admire ugly imitations! I secured my visas for Mali and Niger, and bought my train ticket for Bamako...

And so, my backpack loaded with six oranges, two loaves of round bread and one very expensive apple, I headed for the train station. The old train was scheduled to depart at six-thirty. When I located my compartment, two other Americans were already seated next to the window: the first a bearded giant Cyrus, the second a short, nervous college graduate, Tim. They, too, were heading for Bamako. Cyrus was a farm-boy enjoying himself in the wilds of Africa. He said that all this reminded him of Nebraska! I couldn't agree or disagree with Cyrus since I had never been to Nebraska...As to Tim he never mentioned either his hometown or his motivation for being in the 'Black Continent', expression he employed quite seriously! With a whistle the pulled out promptly at six-thirty, and save a group of tunic-clad men and three fruit carrying women, we were the only passengers in the wagon. I peered out the windowless window: this was better than first class!

Through the window, marshy tablelands, clumps of woods and forest, clustered thatched communities in front of which haycocks had been neatly stacked, and enormous flocks of birds jutted out like embossed work on a fiery streaked backdrop: the sunset blazed a bloody red! At nine o'clock the train pulled into a station. Our wagon rapidly swelled: men wearing *chezes* and *bo-bos* scrambled in, pushing and shoving for a seat. They stank of sweat! It was quite obvious that they had no reservations. Their wives followed shortly, struggling under the weight of baskets, bags and crates of fruit, cereals, and colourful cloth. And it was of course the women who either dragged their screaming kids behind them or bore them on their chunky hips. Five or six of them made themselves comfortable in our compartment; that is, they pressed us, politely, against the windows. Little hands tapped me on the shoulder from outside: young girls were selling milk in large oval wooden dishes. Whilst all these flutterings amassed round me, I took refuge in some milk and topped it off with two bananas. The smell of piss and unwashed bodies grew pungent. Babies were barfing on the floor and on their mothers'

colourful clothing, goats were shitting pellets in the aisle. Beggars barged their way into the wagon: blind, legless lepers, monsters...the whole of mayhem filed theatrically down that bulging aisle, spitting, coughing, puking, cursing, wiping snot on each others' *bo-bos* or *handiras*.

Twelve thirty: Tamacunda! Here a deafening deluge overwhelmed us; never had I experienced anything so dangerous. Hundreds upon hundreds of people flooded into the wagons through the doors and windows. Outside, a full moon exposed the horrors of pandemonium: police were savagely beating and pummeling men, women and children who attempted to climb make-shift barriers, erected a hundred metres or so from the train. I heard children crying and their mothers shrieking, the grunts of men struck, and the thudding blows of police cudgels, men fighting bitterly, cursing and retching, clothes torn and faces slapped and punched. Then I heard Cyrus screaming for air and Tim whimpering in the corner against the window, smothered under arms and legs. A mass of flesh and clothes had poured into our wagon and spilled over into the compartment. Sickly, emaciated old men collapsed onto our feet begging for air, women tore at one another for an inch of space, their fruit smashed on the floor, the pulp of which became thick gluts of pasty dough clinging to peoples' bare feet or sandalled shoes. I couldn't believe what was happening; I had become the committed observer of my own nightmare; a vision that had always frightened me.

Tim had been literally crushed to the floor; he was howling for help. Cyrus, the giant, came to his rescue. With unbelievable strength he tossed off Africans until he got hold of poor Tim; yet the sheer weight of Africa made him buckle; he fell to his knees holding Tim by the waist. I began to panic! My arms were pinned to my sides, and no matter what direction I turned, couldn't free them. Cyrus managed to get to his feet with Tim at his side. His face was red and puffy, full of wrath. Hysterically he kicked and punched at the human wall, pounding on necks and backs. He had lost all control of himself. Funny enough, the Africans didn't respond; they absorbed his ire like so many punching bags. I gathered courage and used my head to break through the throbbing bulk, hardly aware whether it was a woman, man or child. I freed my arms, bent down and grabbed my bag of food. Outside the police had gone berserk: those who tried to get in through the windows had their fingers and hands cudgeled pitilessly. Up at the front of the wagon the heaving, pulsating mass suddenly toppled like some rotten wall, floundering in fruit pulp, sweat, puke, piss and shit. The train jerked forward and began to move...

There were about twenty-seven people in a compartment for six! Gnawing cramps crept up my pinned legs; an old man, his toothless mouth opening and shutting as if it was chewing the air, lay across my feet. On top of him were two baskets of fruit whose owner, an enormous buxom woman, sweaty and stinking to high heaven, had discharged her wares in a gesture of despal, then promptly plopped her fat ass down on his legs. Over Cyrus' kinky-haired head on a wooden shelf I had thrown my backpack: how was I to get to my two oranges and one remaining loaf of bread? Then a terrible thought struck me: how were we to relieve ourselves when nature beckoned? Were we to piss in our pants, hang our arses out of the window and let it fly?

The hours went by without respite; at every stop people poured in...no one got off. I couldn't sleep. Cyrus tried to cheer up a half crazed Tim who shuddered and shivered against the window. In fact, I found his humour quite attractive: he laconically commented on the pungent smells of underarms, the nauseating stench of unceremonious farting and belching. Even those belches stank for some unknown reason. But poor Tim was in no mood for Rabelasian jesture...

Morning. A sleepless night. My eyes were burning and my limbs aching. My mouth felt like cotton; I hadn't had a drop of water for over twelve hours, my plastic water bottle pinned between my pack and Cyrus'. The heat and stench weighed oppressively on us; and I swore to myself that at one point I actually 'saw' the stench steadily, dreamily, wafting towards the ceiling where it hovered in thickening cloudlets. Outside, the grassy veld rolled by, roan-coloured low-range mountains strung out in the far distance, clouds sinking between the rounded peaks, then drifting in and round them before carrying on their habitual course. Was my course as habitual as theirs? Who said that the clouds pass the sky remains? Suddenly an uproar from behind: two policemen kicked and cudged a path through the inert bodies; they stopped and requested our passports, informing us that we could collect them at the frontier town of Kayes.

Mid-day. At Kayes mass hysteria swept the station. This being the border between Senegal and Mali, passengers struggled to get off and on. I was practically in tears: how were we to get the passports? I volunteered to go alone, Cyrus promising to guard our seats and belongings at any cost. I jumped out of the window, then ploughed through the throngs with elbows and fists a-flying. A wall of people drove me back and I stumbled on fallen children and baskets. To my left stood a high wire fence around which the crowd squeezed and turned. I scaled it and reached the police station. A moustached officer, calm and collective, had our passports ready in front of him. He handed them to me politely and wished me a pleasant trip. Was he being facetious?

Getting back to the train proved worse: the crowd had swelled and thickened to monstrous proportions. People were literally stepping and tripping over one another to get to the train platform. I felt sick. Women with twisted faces clawed savagely towards the platforms and waiting train. I suddenly began to laugh in spite of myself. The police were having a jolly time bashing the hell out of everyone, leaning into those colourfully dressed bodies with abandoned glee. At this spectacle I laughed. Women clawed at faces and pulled each other's hair, some even bit like enraged dogs. At this spectacle I laughed. Naked, undernourished kids were trampled, kicked, pummeled and shoved along with goats, chickens and bags of cereal. At this spectacle, too, I laughed in wanton cruel outbursts. And here I must confess that the reckless laughter carried me through that madness, aided me to clear a way towards my window, viciously, mercilessly...gleefully! assured me the strength required to thrust myself into the vortex of flesh regardless of women, children, animals and helpless old men. I reached the window and climbed into my seat: Cyrus had kept them off for over an hour, his face haggard and pasty. Still laughing (Cyrus couldn't understand what was wrong with me), I handed the two Americans their passports: mission completed, I suddenly stopped laughing and dozed off. When I opened my eyes the train had long since left Kayes and was steaming towards Bamako...

Midnight. The train seemed to stop in the middle of a grassy tableland. Someone told us that the next stop would be Bamako, and in fact we observed people readying themselves for the mass exit. And a mass exit indeed it was: once in station, passengers stampeded towards the iron gates, knocking ticket collectors to the cement floor. How many of those liberated stampeders had tickets? We chose to wait until the bedlam had subsided, albeit the streams of passengers seemed never to slacken. So we finally alighted from that nightmare and were eddied along with the swelling billows. There was so much screaming and yelling that my eardrums throbbed. The ticket collectors, with the help of the zealous

police, had taken control of the situation, stopping everyone in order to check tickets. This, of course, was effected in the usual brutal manner: could there be any other?

Bamako, the capital of Mali since its independence in 1960 is, on the whole, an uninteresting, unsuccessful modern African city: a confusion of low-roofed grey dingy buildings, dwarfed dusty unattractive markets, mazes of thatched hovels, rubbish-strewn lots. The hot city is plagued with erring lepers, beggars, alms-men and other pilgrims of both universal and local stamp. A myriad of congested intersections converge into a mass of lorries, cars and people without any policeman or signal to direct it. The few trees that 'embellish' the capital lay withering away, browned and languishing from lack of water and attention. To add to this pot-pourri, an immense Western-style supermarket had been constructed only a few years back, yet hardly a commodity could be found on its shiny white shelves. Saleswomen dragged their feet about absolutely bored, haranguing you into buying a tin of pineapple juice, a pair of baggy trousers or a badly styled shirt.

It was the medina that intrigued me, not particularly the colours or the hawkish cries, but its remarkable mosque, a mammoth edifice rising from a square base, built of baked mud with round beams criss-crossing a series of stalagmites. Into both the base and the stalagmites had been tunneled - for the mud was packed thick- hundreds of little square holes which served as windows. The many entrances resembled the cavities of a honeycomb into which the worshippers penetrated with heads bent low. Prohibited to non-Muslims, I imagine then that they twisted and turned through the moistening cells until attaining the *kiblah*. I was told that this typically West African mosque could hold up to 800 worshippers.

On one of my numerous strolls through Bamako I met some Americans from the southern states (perhaps Florida or Georgia); we decided to depart together for Mopti by taxi. This river village was easily reached on a good asphalt road which hugged the Niger for some 300 kilometres. Travelling as a foursome, too, would cut taxi expenses considerably. We would meet tomorrow at the supermarket (this supermarket became a rendez-vous point for all the parch-throated Europeans who found themselves stranded in Bamako) with our belongings and take it from there.

I bid Cyrus and Tim a hearty farewell and that same day, arrived at Mopti. There, I arranged for a pirogue upriver for the water being so shallow, the small steamboat no longer was in service. Two days later, with an American, Greg, and about thirty Malians and one Moroccan woman, we floated out of Mopti on the fourth largest river of Africa towards Timbuktoo...

The pirogue moved at about ten kilometres an hour, struggling against the current. On this stretch of the Niger the river, in spate, was so wide that the banks could hardly be discerned; the waters were deep and the surrounding countryside more or less green with many patches of good high grass and trees. Cattle and goats roamed freely along the distant banks. Fishermen in tiny pirogues or on broad rafts were casting their nets, fixing them to each others' boats, forming thus a line that spread over half the width of the river. As the sun set everyone began to nibble at whatever food they had carried aboard, and one by one they dropped off to sleep, using the burlap bags as cushions or pillows. I lay back against a canvas bag. The rum-rum of the motor and the light rocking of the boat made me sleepy. The straw armature above swayed slightly...for the first time since leaving the French family in Mauritania I felt at ease. The first part of my voyage was almost at an end...and halleluja, there were no mosquitoes...

It was very cold that night; I had slipped into my sleeping bag and cuddled up between the burlap bags near the Moroccan woman who had nothing to cover herself. The poor woman coughed and moaned the whole night. All I did was listen and bear her agony. I dared not help her lest attract the hostility of the Malians. I had noted that the Sub-saharian Africans were very disrespectful, even aggressive towards the North Africans, be they men or women. And who could blame them: both Arabs and Berbers had sold them off as chattel during the hay-days of commercial slavery!

I awoke with terrible sharp pains on the left side of my abdomen. As the day wore on and the pirogue sluggishly cruised up the sunlit river, the pains grew sharper, and my head burned with fever. Greg searched for an answer: was it the food, the sun, the circumstances...perhaps the murky water at Mopti? It was time to eat. The captain's crew caught fish in their drag nets and rice was scooped out of a burlap bag. The women filled the fire-burnt cauldron with river water, lit the faggots and began to cut up the catfish. When the water boiled huge chunks of salt, peanuts, rice and the sliced fish (head, eyes and tail included) were tossed into the cauldron. I gasped in horror: the heads and tails! The stench of the boiling fish tingled my nostrils, turned my stomach round and round. The smiling women procured a knotty branch and stirred their brew. How I yearned to evacuate everything inside me: but where? Should I just slosh it over the side as one British sailor once recommended if extreme circumstances behooved? « Hang a moon and slosh it overboard » he snickered...Dinner was ready! Would they force me to eat? The thick broth was ladled out into coarse bowls along with a wooden spoon. Greg took his and swallowed it down in a jiffy; he actually asked for seconds! As for me, I couldn't bring myself to eat a bite; I saw too many creamy white eyes, sorrowful, too many open mouths, commiserate. I passed the bowl on to the Moroccan woman who gulped it down without even a thank you!

That night all the passengers slept on the beach whilst the pirogue dipped and rolled listlessly in the moonlit waters, anchored a few metres from the shore. The gangplank had been thrown out towards the shallow water, permitting everyone to wade safely onto the beach. But because of the darkness, and my feverish state, I fell headlong into the deep water. I dog-paddled to the shore where I spent the night shivering inside my now saturated sleeping bag. My little 'river cruise' was slowly transforming into a floating nightmare. I could hardly sleep. Furthermore, many of the passengers performed *al-'ichâ* (night prayer) not only murmuring very loudly but at different intervals during the night, as if they each had a distinct conception of the exact time of *al-'ichâ*! The next morning, my limbs aching all over, I removed my boots and socks to dry them in the rising sun. Again the strong urge to relieve myself took hold of me, so I ventured inland in search of a secluded spot. Unmindful of the thorny creepers that criss-crossed the sands, I stepped into one, the pointy thorn snapping off into the sole of my foot. Wounds like these could rapidly become infectious. Limping back to the pirogue I showed my foot to Greg. The captain strolled over to examine it. He gestured for one of the women to come; she bent over, touched my foot, then promptly procured a thin hair-pin from her kinky tufts. With one of those pearly white Black African smiles she plunged the pin into my sole, dug in deep, and in half a second the broken thorn was between her fingers! I hadn't felt a thing. She indicated the river, so I dipped my bleeding foot in. And that as they say was that!

The days lingered on: at every drought-stricken village the pirogue would stop to unload cargo. It was dreadful! There was hardly any food. Hardly any drinking water. The countryside appeared to be in a blaze: dry, bleached-white sands stretched and stretched without the slightest relief, without the

remotest spot of green! Children were walking skeletons, mangy dogs prowled around the banks sniffing or licking at the meatless carcasses of cattle and dromedaries that lay strewn here and there. The livestock that resisted had to be protected in pens against starving thieves or money-hungry profiteers. The majority of the men shouldered rifles.

Here the Niger had dramatically dried: at least four times a day we all had to jump out into the waist-deep water and pull or haul the boat off a sandbar. Greg warned me to keep my boots on for the Niger was crawling with those parasites (whose name I have forgotten) that infect the body with Bilharzia, a fatal disease of which many Africans die because they walk bare foot along the banks and in the water whilst fishing or playing.

The captain informed Greg that his pirogue would put in at Diré, a village about 150 kilometres from Timbuktoo. From there we would have to take a smaller craft, due to the shallowness of the Niger, upriver. I was disappointed, that meant more negotiating, more scant village food, more chances to contract illness or disease: in short, more hassels...

After ten lethargic days in Diré, we secured a smaller pirogue to Timbuktoo, and for the next two days under a burning sun the pirogue battled up an ebbing river, pushed and pulled by its courageous passengers so often that the owner should have reimbursed our toil at least half of what he charged us for our voyage. For toil it was! Tugging thirty foot pirogues off high sandbars was no easy business, and I was in no condition or mood to play Humphrey Bogart. At one sandbar, long and high, the boat almost tipped over on its right side whilst everyone was pushing and hauling frantically. I tripped up and as I clutched at the side of the pirogue the silver ring that I had bought in Algeria five months ago slipped off my finger...my goulimine bead, too, vanished in those shallow, miserable waters!

Kabara, the port of Timbuktoo, came into sight in the late afternoon of the second day; we literally pushed the pirogue on to shore where we were met by fishermen who helped us haul her up. Kabara, or the six thatched huts that comprised it, was twelve kilometres from Timbuktoo, accessible by either truck or jeep: no pirogue ventured further up river lest being marooned on some island-like sandbar far from village or bank. At Kabara there was no transport problem, many lorries left for the towns which dotted the Niger upriver. It was a good asphalt road which ran right down to Niamey, the capital of Niger. Within a half hour we were in the back of an empty lorry surrounded by a desert wasteland of hills and thorny creepers. We arrived in Timbuktoo at nightfall.

The Holy City appeared deserted! True it was early evening, and a gibbous moon supplied atmosphere, but could this be the crossroads of the Sahara, so described by many a gallant adventurer and traveller? Greg and I strolled through the narrow streets now lit now pitched in obscurity. The only hotel in Timbuktoo was much too expensive. We asked whether it was possible to sleep in the back gardens of the hotel, near the bed of a long since dried tributary of the Niger. The receptionist had no qualms against this...at our own risk! We decided against this idea...the crocodiles, mosquitoes, roaming, famished thugs or dogs dissuaded us, so we carried on along the contours of six foot high adobe walls that lined the lonely lanes. Indeed, this was no 'typical' village on the Niger, the constructions that we began to perceive: mosques of the Songhai stalagmite stamp, palace-like homes of stucco walls whose high narrow windows were embellished with wrought-iron bars which framed sculptured geometric or figurative shapes, outdoor ovens, mausoleums and the adobe ramparts testified to a former, great

power. Suddenly a bald head popped out of a doorway; a man clad in a *bo-bo* of hyacinth bid us step into his restaurant. We did. He introduced himself as Monsieur Baba, owner of a restaurant and three clean huts just across the lane in which, if we desired, could stay at little cost. The cost was determined and so we ate eggs, bread and tomatoes. Monsieur Baba was one of the wealthiest villagers of Timbucktoo, or so he vaunted. He had more than four wives (illegal under Muslim law), but since they were all well provided for, neither the villagers nor the Imam denounced him. Two or three of his wives did all the cooking and cleaning. For this reason he always referred to his restaurant as a 'family enterprise'! It goes without saying that the huts across the street provided nothing for the weary wayfarer save two straw mats in each. Monsieur Baba lent us a petrol lantern which Greg and I would share whenever we wanted to read at night, for as could be expected there was no electricity.

During our fourteen days in Timbucktoo, with or without Greg, I explored the Holy City and the desert around her. Everyday I would stroll down to the huge market located in an ugly concrete building that looked like an aeroplane hanger. It was the only unsightly architecture of the town: the stalagmite mosques, big and small, imprinted a marvelous image in my memory, the uncrenellated raised fortifications which protected the streets were suggestive of those that I saw in photos of Troy, Urfa, Crete and Antakaya. Everyday caravans from Taoudenni, an oasis located in the wilds of North Mali, laden with salt and legend, would stop at Timbucktoo and rest for several days. Atop the glistening dunes I would follow the unhasty, undulating movement of the caravan as it glided over them, passed the serrated adobe ramparts and penetrated the town by way of the market place. In days of yore, that is in 1324, Kandan Musa crossed the width of Africa on pilgrimage to Mecca. He brought with him 500 slaves each bearing six pounds of gold. Eighty-one dromedaries, apparelled with howdah, head armour and magnificent cloths of hyacinth carried 300 pounds of gold each. This pomp was to prove to the Muslim world that spiritual and material weal were perfectly complementary, and that both were required for a healthy Islamic expansion: the Koran and Booty provided the dual methodical dynamics of Conquest and Conversion...This same Mansa Musa had also had built the Djinguiraber Mosque, and although it has suffered over the past 500 years, it still stands proudly near the market place...

From my lofty sand dune observation post Timbucktoo laid spread before me. Did it resemble the 'well of Bucktoo', the name of the female Toureg guardian of the well (*tin*), or the 'valley between the dunes', so translated from the Songhai language? Both suited her quite admirably, although I never stumbled upon either well or valley...

Timbucktoo had been a nomad Berber camp before her steady rise to wealth and fame in the 14th century. Its decline began in the 17th century because of the Arab slave-trade, and also due to the maritime routes along the shores of Africa between Europe and the Sub-saharian countries; routes that paved the way for the glorifical days of slave fodder sold to Europe and America. Poor René Caillié, who in 1828 had bluntly stated that Timbucktoo was neither Damascus nor Bagdad, but a miserable, sad, dusty hole, where instead of heaps of gold he rummaged through heaps of salt! And the erudites back in Paris actually accused him of making it all up: the fools! Whose fault was it that this once magnificent city lay abandoned in the desert? Why be disappointed over an historical ineluctability? Ibn Battuta fared far better: in 1353, he beheld a city at the apex of its splendour. As to the Scottish explorer, Alexander Gordon Laing, he unfortunately, in 1826, not only found heaps of salt, but was murdered by

slave-trading Arabs or Berbers! I for one was not at all disappointed, and I can certainly vouch for René that heaps of salt exist, and those in myriad quantities...

For a Franc or two I had made a solid pair of goatskin sandals to which was fitted a thick sole made out of the rubber of a tyre. They would last for years, but also tear the skin off the top and sides of my left foot, a feast thus for flies! Presently though, I browsed around the market, examining the colourful clothes, the baskets of dates and peanuts, the mounds of melons: to tell the truth the market was a hideous place; fly-infested without that nervous activity necessary to generate interest. Besides, being the only 'whites' in town, we had hundreds of children at our heels every time we entered the cement building, hounding and teasing us.

Everyday at two o'clock or so, Greg and I would take long naps: the grains of sand seemed to roast white in the glaring sun. One noon, as we were hurrying back to our hut to escape the climbing sun, a tall thin, clear-skinned man motioned to us from a door-passage. We stopped and entered at his bidding, oddly enough, without hesitating. Inside, on four of five straw mats, the tall man sat, dressed in a *handira*, surrounded by scattered books in Arabic scripture (one or two of which had covers of gleaming embossed calligraphy), four lit candles whose dripping wax had formed tiny mounds in guise of candle-holders, and two low reading lecterns. In the centre of the dimly lit room a metal incense-burner was smoking called a *al-mbakhra*, methinks. A square green cloth had been carefully placed under it. He looked up and asked us, in a soft calm voice to be seated opposite him. We leaned against the cool mud walls, scrutinizing him scrutinize us. Then he pointed to his books: «je suis un Aïssawa, vous savez, un *chaykh*, un *gestionnaire* du grand empire; je me rends aux tombeaux des saints pour l'amour d'Allah.» Greg nudged me and whispered that he was a 'marabout', a sort of sage or mystic; Greg seemed to accept the title with feigned seriousness, but because of the poor light, and Greg staring stonily at the 'marabout', I couldn't understand whether he was being ironic or not! I personally thought the whole thing a *mise en scène*. Meanwhile the 'marabout', disinterested in our whisperings, opened his palms to the earthen ceiling whilst bending over the incense-burner and opened books. He began to make odd signs in our direction which I barely discerned in the semi-obscurity. Like our huts, his too had no electricity. For the next few minutes or so a dreamy silence enshrouded the circularity of the hut, not a silence of expectation, but one that strains the mind outside of its prison of prejudices and planned futures, a pained silence of some Presence which bears down on you as familiar yet ghastly: a face rising over the foot of your bed at night to keep vigil over your nocturnal, illicit wanderings...To which bedside errings he began chanting, that 'marabout', chanting an enchanting chant...melodious, light, andante; a charming chant he chanted: hushed, soft-petaled, low-key...modulated by his rising palms up and down...up and down...the wafting fumes circulating round the circular hut ceiling, the rosary beads which he counted, one by one, slowly, meticulously, attentively "Allah mu la na...Allah mu la na...Al lah mulana..." and so on, methinks! All this time he never lifted his eyes from the incense-burner. Then he glared stonily at me! I froze, lowered my eyes to avoid his unembarrassed gaze, then turned to Greg: he had dozed off! I had done my best to remain lucid, fighting off lead-laden eyelids, rolling my eyes inside their orbits to the orbicular movement of the fumes which circumambulated from right to left. They smelt like an Orthodox Church: myrrh, frankincense...that last word reminding me of Frankenstein, whose horror tales I had read hundreds of times, whose horror magazines I had devoured before the age of eight, whose whole concept of life I attempted to equal, to be his first emulator...Did I still feel that

way? The Monster, the ostracised; he who dares 'show' himself as the acclaimer of Difference? Visions of this social deformity flooded my mind: the 'marabout' chanted on, his eyes fixed on me and the snoring Greg. Those experiments in the Art of Lycanthropy, at night, in the moonlit woods near home. The situation was becoming monstrous as the hut fumed and chanted, a horribly, delicious one of two truths, two monstrosities, two seven-year old visions: nightmarish and ambrosial...The 'marabout' suddenly stood up in the swirling fumes. His reddish tinted *handira* with long, broad white stripes touched his bare feet. He drifted to Greg and touched him in the middle of the skull; he bent over me and did the same. Then, before we knew what had happened, the 'marabout' was standing at the threshold of his hut gently ushering us into the Outside, where the white sun exposed me to Reality...On the way back Greg uttered not a word. He was disturbingly silent. True, the entire episode rose and set like so many incidents of the day; fugitive, hardly worth noting...and yet I did note it as soon as I recovered in our hut...

That night, in the semi-obscurity of my hut, I discovered that my hair and tee-shirt were invested with lice! Greg had been crushing his between blood-stained fingernails for months: what else was there to do? In these parts of the world neither spray nor powder existed in the pharmacies. Killing one meant twenty others lingering near: eggs, babies, adults...Three months later in the oases and impoverished hamlets of Southern Algeria, I would gasp in horror at the hundreds of louse bites on my chest and stomach, red and lumpy. It would be some six or seven months later, in convalescence, that I would exterminate fully these irritating blood-sucking pests. The tall 'marabout' came suddenly to mind: had he blessed or cursed me? Or could it have been the constantly scratching Moroccan woman aboard the pirogue? Or had it simply been the fact that I hadn't changed my clothes in over eight months, and had gone without a shower or bath in three?

On the fourteenth day of our sojourn at Timbucktoo, after having made the pilgrimage to the mud-packed stalagmite tumulus of Mansa Musa two or three times, Greg and I scoured the town in search of an exit vehicle: we both had a strong desire to depart. I had sat and contemplated Musa's tumulus on those three occasions, transported back to those golden days of empires, dromedaries spangled with royal trappings, ebony-skinned slaves, crowned kings and mitred bearded sages in flowing robes of hyacinth...of tinkling camel bells! I had smelt the incense that has been the royal smell of all great religions. It was time to recommence the pilgrimage to the other sacred lieus of that vast continent, for they were many. And Time? There was no Time in the deserts of the Sahara: the flat, stony one of Mali and Algeria, the *tanezruf*; the gigantic ochre dunes of Southern Morocco; the ruffled sands of Libya and of the Spanish Sahara touching white-crested waves along desolate shores; the mountainous canyons and shifting sands of Mauritania; the tremendous salt lakes of Southern Algeria...Here there was no Time only Space. Space on which hundreds of pilgrimages, myriads of holy sanctuaries and sacred Roads had been paved and trodden. And like the beads of a rosary, those countless grains of sand, too, were told, each and every one chanting the deeds and marvels of the former Spiritual Knights of the mystic congregations. I wanted to re-tell, to re-count those beady grains, those saintly High Lieus. That was why I am here. To let the Sacred penetrate my naked feet. To be *exposed*, I say fully *exposed* to a timeless Space...to a Void whose plenitude can only be measured by the Encounter of the dreamer's dream and his 'touch' within that dream Space. Without the dream or that 'touch' there could be no Space...no great Encounter with the Sacred...

As the lorry rambled onto the sun-cracked 'piste' heading East, I looked back and took a final glimpse of the City of 333 saints. Would this sacred lieu resist Time... the events of history? Would the tombs of the saints of the 'Valley of the Dunes' survive the assault of modernity, fanaticism, intolerance and unimaginative interpretation of the holy Writ? Would it become a 'Valley of Tears'? Timbucktoo had indeed overcome slavery and colonialism...would it overcome the onslaught of the infernal commercial machine of hordic tourism, or the purges of violent dogmatic sects whose hateful cries for purity match their profound ignorance of human compassion and dignity, of human fault? The lorry suddenly veered to the right, plunging into a landscape of high, moon-bathed serrated dunes, the brightness of which illuminated our Road... I must confess it was the happiness moments of my life...

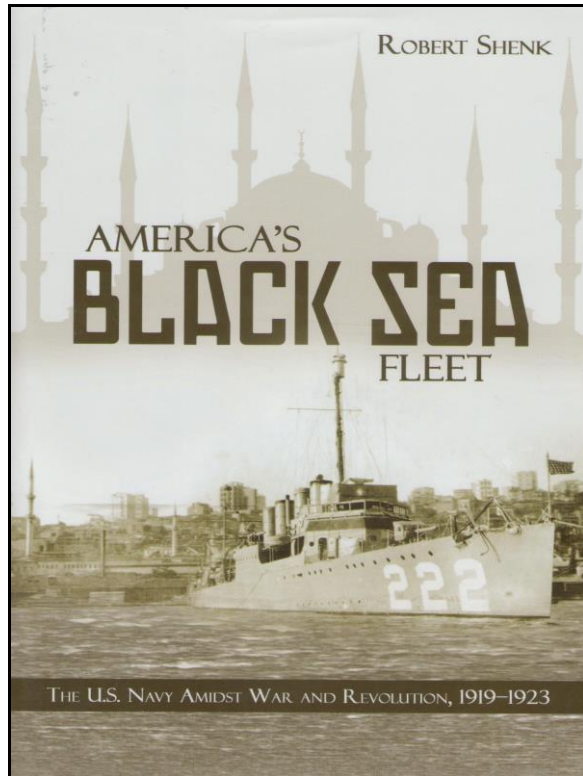
«Fantasies, these will seem, to such as are able to call my beginning an ordinary effort».

T.E. Lawrence: *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

En hommage à Sir Richard Burton



BOOK REVIEW

FARKAS, Flórián**America's Black Sea Fleet****Authors:** Robert Shenk**Title:** America's Black Sea Fleet

— The U.S. Navy Amidst War and Revolution,
1919-1923 —

Publisher: Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD**Year of publishing:** 2012**Language:** English**Number of pages:**400 (23 photos, 7 maps)**ISBN:** 978-1-61251-053-8 (hardcover)

Last year, just before Christmas the Naval Institute Press released a book that tells the story of a less known episode of American naval history. The author, both a retired captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve and professor of English at the University of New Orleans, created a very readable, fascinating account of American naval personnel's activities during post-war period in a strategic region of the world.

The aftermath of an empire's collapse is usually chaotic, bloody and the risks of spill-over high. That was exactly the case with the Ottoman Empire after its defeat in World War I. The situation was even worsened by the fact that another empire, the Russian, had collapsed too, and a terrible civil war ensued. A relatively small American naval fleet was sent to the region in 1919 for a couple of years and the service men found themselves in a complex situation, dealing with humanitarian crises of different types. Robert Shenk tells their story based on extensive research in libraries, national and family archives, and interviews with relatives of the participants. It provides us with a reading that makes our understanding of that period more complete, supplementing the big picture with valuable details and experiences coming from lesser influential people.

The overall style of the writing is a clear testimony to the author's literary vein. Although the book is thoroughly researched and it stands the most severe professional scrutiny, it is very readable and at some points it almost reads like a spy novel. The first chapter launches us into the story *in medias res*. Using a couple of examples, it describes vividly how the American service men experienced Istanbul at their arrival when the American mission commenced. The second chapter is an especially valuable one because it provides a contextual explanation of the situation of Turkey and the region in 1919. Although the author apologizes beforehand for the length of this chapter, in my view this chapter could be even longer; especially a broader presentation of the role of Turkey's political leaders prior to WW I and their activities in the 'Great Game' could be beneficial to the casual reader. Nevertheless, it provides a solid contextual basis for the chapters to follow.

The following 10 chapters can be roughly divided into two groups: the ones dealing with the different crises in the region and the others dealing with the everyday life of American service men outside service hours. Luckily the different types of chapters are mingled so that the reader does not get too depressed because the chapters dealing with humanitarian crises are not a happy reading.

In this category the following crises and the humanitarian relief involvement of the American naval personnel therein are covered: crisis in Cilicia, invasion of the White Russians, crisis in Pontus, the Russian famine, the burning of Smyrna and the minority crisis in Istanbul. These crises are handled by the author using a direct style, they are narrated mostly through the eyes of participating Americans and therefore the events take a human face; human suffering is presented in its fullness and not as mere statistical figures. The role of the head of the American mission, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, is discussed at length, due to the fact that he was not only the head of the mission but also the chief American diplomat in the region during that period. My only criticism is related to these chapters: in my view the author is not really unbiased in his assertions. Even from his own writing it is clear that he uses almost exclusively American or non-Turkish sources, leading to a narrative that makes a biased impression even on a casual reader, putting the blame for atrocities almost exclusively on Turks. Probably he realized this at a certain point, and therefore he inserted in his narrative the following sentence: "To be sure, virtually no American was out there asking for stories from *Turkish* refugees, of whom there were a great many, thousands [or at times maybe even *tens* of thousands] in Constantinople itself." (p. 84)

Chapters falling into the other category deal with night life in Istanbul, recreation activities of the embassy staff and naval personnel, and shipboard life. These chapters, based on personal accounts provide an invaluable source of information relating to the life of everyday people in those critical years.

'America's Black Sea Fleet' is a great reading that is both emotionally absorbing and intellectually captivating. It provides us with a comprehensive account of an important but less known American naval undertaking.



CHRONICLE

MIRABILE, Paul

Istanbul Gezi Park: A Universal Message

What would a tourist visit in Istanbul in this month of June 2013? Hagia Sophia? The Blue Mosque? Topkapı Museum or the Modern Museum of Art? Perhaps. Those who travel with eyes wide shut will certainly visit those aforesaid sites; however, those who travel with eyes wide open will direct their steps towards Taksim Square and Gezi Park where History is neither an exotic orientalism nor confined to museums: History here is very much a living organism which has disrupted quite brusquely Turkey's tourist industry (40% of flights into Istanbul have been cancelled), and has sent the stock market spiralling downwards! It goes without saying that History does have the nasty habit of interrupting political programmes, business affairs, organised amusement for the masses; for what is indeed taking place in Istanbul at Taksim Square is unique in the History of the Turkish Republic simply because it has snapped everyone's daily routine by its length and intensity, by its stubborn determination to provoke reaction from a government that scoffs at its authors, at its joyous enthusiasm, at its ecological, political and aesthetic message. It is the uniqueness of this enthusiasm, this burst of unprecedented History that I would like to discuss, now in the form of a testimony that has befallen me personally, for I live five minutes from Taksim Square, and willy-nilly have been absorbed in its unfolding phases, now in the form of reported speeches either from friends, from the protesters at Gezi Park and elsewhere, or simply from Turkish or foreign newspapers. In short, I wish to analyse the Event and not merely report it because the intercession of History at Gezi Park and Taksim Square bespeaks more of a tremendous movement of the tens of thousands of young, middle-age and elderly Turks who have gathered together to voice a polyphonic Discourse of discontent than a desperate rebellion of frustrated left-wing extremists and marginals, defying a conservative, Islamic government. This polyphonic Discourse seeks to efface the image of the docile Turk, obsequiously waiting for his or her orders from superiors, standing on all sorts of ceremony so as not to be singled out as outspoken, outlandish, out of the ordinary: the Turkish citizen is brought up on strict obedience to his or her superiors, and are even conditioned to be grateful towards the decision-makers of their country, lives...destiny, however dictated, and whatever the demands and orders from above in the higher spheres may be, whilst those demands and aspirations of the lower orders remain mute, pipe dreams at best, buried deep under deprivation and dissatisfaction. It is this 'breach of docility', this 'rupture of ceremony' that has rocked Istanbul today and has destabilised the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi).¹ The breach and rupture represents the uniqueness of the Event, of History's intercession, fashions its creative ecological, political and aesthetic expression. The ecological and political gains that may arise from the breach and rupture cannot as yet be assessed...

¹ Created in 2001, the AKP was the merging of the Refah Partisi (the Welfare Party) and the Saadet Partisi (the Auspicious Party), both conservative and religiously orientated.

The Ecological Phase: Naïvety

By naïvety I am suggesting the simplicity of action, executed with exactitude and sincerity, and perhaps with a tinge of over-excessive confidence. Confidence in whom? In the AKP? In Recep Tayyip Erdoğan? In the memory of Atatürk? Or simply confidence in one's rights to manifest against the destruction of a park -Gezi Park-, whose 600 trees, greenness of grass and brightness of flowers have pleased the myriads of citizens who live in and around Taksim. Indeed, there is no other park in the vicinity of Taksim; one must go up to Maçka to Democratic Park or down to Gümüşsuyu before finding any greenery at all. The demonstrations against the destruction of the park began as a small gathering of ecologists months before the bulldozers arrived on the scene; and when they did, these small numbers grew larger and larger, settling into the park where the protesters set up tents and made themselves quite at home in their stand off against the government's injunctions. On the morning of the May 31st, the riot police surrounded the tents, gassed their dwellers out of them, then proceeded to burn them all. So kindled the resentment that put an end to the confidence in the government, to the naïve belief in grassroots democracy. The stage was thus set for the occupation of Gezi Park and Taksim Square.

The reader may ask why all the hullabaloo over a park; why such dogged determination. As I said, there already exist parks and green zones at Maçka and Gümüşsuyu some twenty minutes away on foot from Taksim Square. To answer this question, here I must evoke the poet, film maker and philologist Pier Paolo Pasolini, he who in the Italy of the 1960's fully comprehended the ontic necessity of any 'empty space', any 'unoccupied terrain or lot' in the socialisation of city dwellers.

Pasolini realised that lots or parks, to which individuals would come to gather, chat, play football, practice yoga or picnic represent zones of gratuitousness: zones where the young and old create their own activities, design their own space (a football field, for example), express their own desires with the objects that they either bring with them or find there by chance. Their gestures and words create a never-ending palimpsest upon which daily life is inscribed and erased as gratuitously as the players themselves had gathered to play. The 'empty spaces' are thus filled with their play, their desires to play, act or create. These gestures and words are not enjoined by external impulses such as a gigantic shopping mall or a mosque, those very attractions that Tayyip and the Istanbul oligarchy which controls much of the real estate, plans to impose at Taksim. The opposing ecologists and many other residents near and around Taksim Square have asked themselves whether or not another shopping mall is really needed. It is not from a practical point of view; but it is certainly from an ideological, symbolic one! Turkey is the third country of the world that possesses the most shopping malls:² does Erdoğan want to outdo Dubai and the United States? Does he want to transform Istanbul into a mammoth Consumerland fully equipped with the latest technological features, and why not, with strolling Disneyland characters to amuse shoppers? The ecologists refuse this social option; it is not on their menu! As to the mosque, does Taksim really need a mosque? There are already three or four mosques ten minutes from the Square in Dolapdere, Elma Dağ and Harbiye, not to mention in Cihangir and on İstiklal Avenue on the other side of the Square. Thus there is no real religious need for another mosque. As to the rebuilding of the Ottoman Barracks constructed by Halil Pasha at the beginning of the 18th century, this resuscitated

² There are approximately 60 shopping malls in Istanbul.

monument hardly has its place amidst the sundry modern 'European' edifices that surround the Square; its resurrection would be an incongruous intrusion in the way of secularism, an anachronic protuberance on the face of modern Republicanism, but more important still, a subtle scheme to divide a vast open public space into so many divided private spaces. No doubt the Prime Minister maneuvers with the utmost aplomb and always supplies the ready retort in his usual authoritarian style: are not the Barracks reminiscent of the glorious Sunni military Ottoman past? If certain Turkish historians believed Turkish History to have its beginnings in 1923, others, such as the Prime Minister, will prove that Turkish History was and still is Ottoman, albeit somewhat modernised, folklorised! The Prime Minister's strategy is thus fundamentally ideological; he seeks quite consciously to efface a secular Republican symbol and replace it with a conservative Islamic one, nostalgic of the Ottoman Empire. And here Pasolini's analysis asserts its full force. Areas or zones of socialisation that are unlucrative, non profitable have no place in the AKP's liberal social programme. 'Empty spaces' do not pay direct taxes, nor are the sundry activities that are played out in them subject to indirect taxes, besides perhaps the strolling vendors or the small tea shops that border on them. 'Empty spaces' permit people to create their own needs, express in manifold forms their own desires or impulses in relation to the environment and with those habitués of them. The Prime Minister and the real estate oligarchy do not see the point of such triviality: the citizens of the Taksim area must be 'guided' in their daily activities, 'directed' towards those objects that have been benevolently and dutifully placed at their disposal for their well being: the consumer paradise over which Turkish Islam keeps moral vigil. Not to accept the logic of this social ratio would be taxed as ingratitude, and the ungrateful accused of less majesty...

The realities of a 1960's Italy in the conservative government's forging of a consumer State sustained by the moral-mongering Vatican appears to have its avatar in the A.K.P's political programme of transforming Istanbul into a gigantic consumer orientated one, sugar-coated with a State Sunnism of Ottoman hues. It is indeed an awe-inspiring programme, essentially conservative, and thus perfectly compatible with the wonderful achievements of globalisation, for it has been finely drafted out to channel the individual's desires away from his or her consciousness of the Self, reconducting them gently but firmly into ritualised cults of a very massive, overwhelming nature which absorbs the conscious Self into extraneous objects whose attraction draws the Self away from reflection and critical assessment, first of the examining Self then of its relation to the outside world. The triadic combination of consumerism, religion and Nostalgia has been on the political agenda of the A.K.P. for quite some time: the Taksim Movement, however, has caused the fruit to fall before it ripened! The Prime Minister has targeted Taksim Square because its historical *raison d'être*, its very existential entity lies in the founding of the Republic by Atatürk, the Father of all Turks! To supplant this historical chapter in the History of Turkey, to substitute it for a shopping mall, a rebuilt Ottoman barracks and a mosque has offended and insulted the people of Beyoğlu, has awakened Republicans whoever they be to Erdoğan's political scheme in his efforts to replace Atatürk's image with his own! Erdoğan's projects would have easily been accepted and carried out if they had not entailed the destruction of a park for the benefit of an ideologically orientated politician. To free Taksim Square of vehicles by having them pass under it through a series of tunnels met with no resistance; but to fill the 'empty space' with a shopping mall, an Ottoman-styled edifice and another mosque to boot implies ecological destruction and political cynicism. It especially implies that no citizen committee of Beyoğlu had been consulted during the design of the project. And it is this sentiment of substitution, this ersatz ideology, endowed with the Prime Minister's

'personal touches', that has enraged the protesters at Gezi Park. Neither consulted nor listened to, they are regarded as consumer cattle or docile worshippers who should do as they are told and keep their mouths shut because what the government does is for their own good. And this cynicism is what sparked the second phase...

The Political Phase: Heroic

This has been a brutal and embittered phase to which I can personally testify! All day Friday on the 31st of May at Taksim Square sporadic fighting broke out amongst the surging waves of demonstrators who poured into Gezi Park and into Taksim Square, where they confronted hundreds of police. Gas and pressurised coloured water was employed to dislocate the groups, push them out of the Square. I was gased and nearly swept away by the jets of water bursting from canons on the armoured vehicles, wishing only to reach the French Institute to attend a conference. The fighting was so confused and chaotic and the gas so thick that I had to take refuge in an office on a street parallel to Istiklal Avenue with two demonstrators to escape the firing of the gas capsules, aimed directly at the protesters, and the white acrid smoke that immediately arose on their impact. As soon as the way was more or less clear, I needed more than two hours to circumvent the Square amidst rock-throwing demonstrators, gas-projecting police and worst of all, the armoured vehicles -TOMA- slamming into barricades, spraying chemically treated yellowish or red water on whoever dared to place themselves in their path. When I did manage to regain my flat at Elma Dağ, I witnessed pitched battles in the street below between residents and police; gas capsules screamed through the night like flames, the air clouding with white, suffocating smoke.

On Saturday morning, June the first, throngs of demonstrators marched down from Şişli and Nişantaşı towards Gezi Park; they were met by squads of police, blocking Cumhuriyet Caddesi, firing gas capsules and using pressurised water against them. At this point the ecological movement took a swift political turn. Demonstrations cropped up in Beşiktaş, headquarters of the AKP. Battles raged throughout the day into the night, especially in Beşiktaş, but also in Ankara, Adana, Dersim, and İzmir. On Sunday the fighting continued: police brutality and unauthorised pepper and orange gas were denounced by foreign news sources and heads of States. Up till then, the Turkish media had hardly covered the Event, deeming it insignificant, but more probably due to the pressure exerted upon the journalists by the government. For this reason the protesters burned any vehicle belonging to the Turkish media in retaliation for their cowardly or bought silence! For example, the State controlled CNN instead of covering the Event when it erupted, chose to air a programme on the *Life of Penguins*. It is for this reason that the penguin became the mascot of the Revolutionaries once they settled into Gezi Park!

Gradually the resistance swelled in numbers and enthusiasm: political party members, trade unionists, intellectuals and artists all converged into the Square where they stood their ground, and on Sunday had driven back the police to the fringes of the Square by the sheer weight of their numbers and determination; they had prevailed and now occupied the Square and the park! Those versed in street fighting immediately set to work to erect huge barricades on the avenues that led into Taksim Square with tremendous mounds of iron and steel, enormous sewer pipes and construction material, charred

vehicles such as buses, cars and bulldozers so that any police attack could be momentarily thwarted. It also symbolised the territory won and delimited by the people against the police! It had become a space of Republican freedom...

Sunday night, thousands and thousands of jubilant Turks sped to Gezi Park and Taksim, for Taksim had become theirs again. Turkish flags and portraits of Atatürk were raised high on buildings and statues, on trees and burnt out vehicles. At the end of three days of combat hospitals in Turkey announced that 4,177 people had been wounded, 43 of them very seriously, ten losing an eye, and two deaths caused by gas and bullets: Abdullah Cömert at Antakaya, and Mehmet Ayvalıdas at Ankara. Those who lost an eye were hit by direct firing of gas capsules, a tactic quite illegal. It goes without saying that these sadistic and gratuitous police methods were condemned by many countries, including Germany and the United States, even by vice-Prime Minister Bülent Arınç, who apologised to the victims' families after Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's departure for North Africa on a three day official visit. Many demonstrators suffered from pepper and orange gas exposure, from head and other body wounds due to the projected capsules, or kicked, cudgelled and punched by policeman, women included! I met boys whose legs were black and blue from skidding or rebounding capsules. I saw men lying in the back streets of my neighbour, bleeding from head wounds or from broken glass when smashing through shop windows to escape police charges. These scenes have since been disclosed in all the newspapers of Europe and on all the Internet sites, I shall not dwell on them here. What I shall dwell on, however, is the political support of so many diverse movements, ranging from Kemalists, the public trade unions (KESK) and the DISK, the anarchists, socialists, communists, Alevites, the Sunni anti-capitalists, the ecologists, the feminists, the representatives of the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), founded by Atatürk, the Democratic Party, etc. This extraordinary movement which was spilling into Gezi Park and Taksim Square was not as Erdoğan so vulgarly phrased it, a gang of marginals, extremists and vandals; they were the living testimony to a political movement that refused the arrogant language and unilateral politics of the AKP. Its threats and bullying, its insensitivity towards the voices of dissent that screamed and howled from all quarters of the social landscape, of the so called 'other 50 percent', those who do not support Tayyip's political and religious ambitions, those who dislike being treated like children, like docile servants or potential enemies of the State.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, when the dust had settled, and the tens of thousands of protesters had settled into Gezi Park with tents, food, flowers, shrubs, medical equipment, stands, books, tables, concert material, etc; as I said, flew off to North Africa where he was snubbed by King Mohammad VI and the President of Tunisia for having abandoned his country in times of trouble. They refused to receive Turkey's Prime Minister, he who believed he should have been given audience in majestic style. And whilst he was flying back to turbulent Istanbul, somewhat piqued by the snub, the marginals and riff-raff (çapulcu) were organising life in Gezi Park and on Taksim Square in an astonishing orderly and disciplined manner; one that truly revealed the Turkish people's Sense of the Past, which I shall succinctly trace.

Taksim Square is charged with History, and being so potentially explosive. It represents the symbol of Republicanism and secularism. In 1921, Atatürk had the Ottoman Barracks demolished in order to substitute a decadent and shameful symbol -the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War- with a rejuvenated one, the first Turkish Republic, and whose nascent symbol was the Memorial Statue

of Atatürk and his statesmen, modelled and built by the Italian architect Pietro Canonica in 1928. Atatürk's intentions for the restructuring of the Square were quite clear: a vast space to be filled by everyone for everyone, in the very Heart of Istanbul! In the 1950's, the public sector gradually gave ground to an aggressive private sector, especially after Douglas MacArthur's visit to Turkey in 1952 which opened the doors to Turkey's entry into NATO, and consequently positioned her more and more as friends of capitalist America, enemies thus of communist Soviet Union. The political and economic shift towards Western capitalism transformed a people's square into an arena for private investment, where the vast empty spaces were rapidly filled with huge American-style hotels. An expanding capitalistic Turkey and her blatant disgust and hatred of anything 'public' or 'of the people' in the fifties and sixties provoked a cleft society of left and right-partisans, anti- or pro-American. In 1969, during a political gathering at Taksim Square around the Memorial, 150 demonstrators, deemed left-wing extremists were wounded. In 1977, the left/right political division crystallised into militant groups, and during the May Day celebrations at Taksim Square 34 to 45 demonstrators were killed by the police whilst hundreds were wounded. The killed and wounded again were regarded as left-wing activists by the right wing government. This day has been named the May Day Massacres, and the memory of it has energised all groups of Turks to celebrate May Day at Taksim Square regardless of the cynicism and brutality of the police. From that day on the chant has always rose 'Ya Taksim Ya ölüm!' 'Either Taksim or Death!' This is not a left-wing slogan but a Republican one...

Due to the bloody May Day events Turkish right wing governments have continually prohibited any rally at Taksim Square, prohibition which has invariably mobilised tens of thousands of demonstrators to the Square every year...as could be expected! This year as usual, whilst rallies were permitted in other districts of Istanbul, Taksim Square was declared out of bounds to the May Day Marchers. Violence thus ensued. Deprived of basic civil rights on Labour Day, it is these same demonstrators who today at Gezi Park and Taksim Square have accomplished what they set out to do on the First of May. The deafness of the Prime Minister, of the governor of Istanbul, Hüseyin Avni Mutlu of its mayor, Kadir Topbaş to these simple demands have baffled commentators and analysts abroad. Is it due to fear or haughty arrogance? The fear of anything 'public' or 'of the people' immediately sets the oppressive police-machine into operation. The government prefers to harp on tangible projects like the third bridge over the Bosphorous which will wipe out what is left of Istanbul's forests and the many villages nestled on the shores of the waterway, and whose name, Yavruz Selim, Erdoğan seems to have chosen either through ignorance or cynicism, for it was this Sultan who had exterminated more Alevites in the History of the Ottoman Empire than any other! Tangible projects, too, like the grandest mosque in the world, planned to be built on the wooded skirts of the Bosphorous at Çamlıca on the Asian side are on the AKP's *folie de grandeur* agenda as the year 2023 approaches with all its Ottoman might and glory! It is Tayyip's meglomania, and consequently, fear of the Other, of the Other-Enemy, that infuses him with the legitimate right to crush any opposing voice or force that stands in **his** way of progress, of **his** glory! For opposition has no significance in his eyes; it is worthless rabble and trash to be handled accordingly. The three-day battle at Gezi Park and Taksim Square against armoured vehicles and gas-firing police, and the joyous victory of its aftermath has clearly displayed to the government a heroism that the AKP either ignored, scoffed at or underestimated. It is heroism both in word and deed. Heroism as I understand it: courage with dignity, manlihood with respect. Heroes are not to be treated like a motley mob of degenerates, a gang of terrorists or vandals: they are not to be told what to do nor what to think, neither

what to eat or drink. As Nedim Gursel, a Turkish novelist living in France today has said, and we quote: *"Vous ne pouvez pas me dire, comme vous venez de le faire, d'aller boire mon verre de rakı en cachette chez moi comme si je devais en avoir honte. Je veux siroter mon verre de rakı au bord du Bosphore, monsieur le premier ministre, où se trouve notre maison de famille et si possible au coucher du soleil. [...] Vous n'avez pas le droit de me priver de ce plaisir, même si vous avez été élu avec cinquante pour cent des voix."* (**Télégramme d'Orient**, juin 2).

Indeed, political democracy does not imply that fifty percent of a population reigns tyrannically over the other fifty percent! Today's revolt has made this very clear to the Prime Minister: has he opened his ears to the sound of music? I doubt it: his riposts have been as brutal as the police operations he has ordered. The new Father of the Turks prones a conservative State of Sunni Islam and a merciless liberalism which leaves very little space for those who wish to live according to their own consciousness, their own motivated penchants, be they religious, economic, political or artistic. The revolt is an Act of Heroism because it posits individual value in face of a consensus that cannot tolerate alternative forms of existence that may put into question this manufactured consensus; this fifty percent of the AKP's partisans! So what have the Revolutionaries responded in light of megalomania and crude, gross language, in light of such colossal projects and schemes? They have responded with Heraclitus' terrible weapon *Logos*! For the Revolutionaries at Taksim Square and at Gezi Park are in the process of ardently narrating their own tale, creating their own image by igniting the forces of creativity in wise of alternative tales and images than those boasted and imposed by the government! The Revolutionaries have become the heroes of their own tales and images because they have created them, spontaneously, enthusiastically, peacefully. They have shown the Prime Minister, Turkey, even the world that they have paved the way for the Return of the Hero, he who lives and creates without the benevolent trammels of Justice or the paternalistic shackles of Development...³

The Aesthetic Phase: Idealisation

The heroes at Taksim Square and at Gezi Park are experimenting a narration of the Event in the most epic dimensions and bombastic tones: this experience consists of a convergence of multi-form movements which have always comprised the many chapters of the Book of the History of Turkey, but till today have had very little political and artistic impact simply because they have been regarded by the consensus as marginal elements of the Nations, as 'minorities'. The gathering together of their colourful flags, banners and pennants, their jousting both with the government and amongst themselves bring to the surface the reality of Turkey's History. It is a formidable historical jousting of antagonistic voices and gestures that has little by little given shape to an aesthetics...to a science of sentiment that perceives objects in their reflected forms, in their secondary contours, thus preparing the terrain for the object to attain a superior reality; namely, symbolic. The transition from a primary perception of an object to a reflected, secondary one is what creates aesthetics. For example, a primary perception of a horde of

³ The Prime Minister wishes that every Turkish family furnish the nation with three, even five children! A myriad pair of hands for the brighter future to come. But how many 'halk evi' (**low-cost housing**) will accomodate them? How many **public** hospitals and clinics will provide care for them? How many **public** universities will educate them?

hooligans when the methods of aesthetics are applied; that is, by reflection, transform that object into a sympathetic political Movement! Or Erdoğan's repeated shibboleth 'çapulcu' (vandal, riff-raff) which when reflected by the Revolutionaries, served as the name of lanes in the park: çapulcu caddesi, or stands 'çapulcu köşk', indeed served as a self-appreciative title for the Revolutionaries themselves! What is then the method of transferring objects from primary to secondary perceptions: Logos: Logos or Discourse, that which shatters opinion, consensus, *la langue de bois*! Logos bursts asunder the **said** with the what is **being said**! It is that Heraclian movement which transcends eternity to settle into the temporal, *hic et nunc*. The Taksim Revolt has evolved into an agonic arena of contesting Discourse: Marxist, Anarchist, Kemalist, Socialist, Alevite, Anti-Capitalist Sunni, feminist, ecologist, unionist, gay, academic, and so on. This contest or agonic jousting has energised Turkey's political landscape: its spontaneous creativity has sarcastically revealed the Prime Minister's primary perception of the movement -his many hackney, scornful and belligerent refrains which all conservative governments expound against the 'minority voices'- because it reflects the movement in its secondary, perceived reality: one that transforms the hackney refrains into works of art, conceived and created by individuals composing the whole of the Movement. The Art of Logos or Discourse melds dichotomies and assimilates the contrasts, the alternating forces into creative energy, be it antagonistic or analogic. Erdoğan's primary perception of extremists and vandals has undergone a tremendous semantic and semiologic shift in the days that followed the occupation of Gezi Park and Taksim Square. Logos has slammed the representations of truth, of the said, and has transmuted them into hundreds of posters, banners, flags and pennants, all emblazing, iconically or scripturally, political slogans, poetic verses (Nazım Hikmet), religious wisdom (Ali), revolutionary figures (Che Guevara, Karl Marx), the fallen in political combat (Ibrahim Kaypakkaya,) environmental issues (Greenpeace), etc. Creativity here not only expresses the discontent of 'minority voices', it rejects by the same token a mercantile status of objects or people whose only legitimacy is in its consumption and performance. The art galleries and workshops hastily erected in Gezi Park indicate quite another fashion of disposing one's time in one's space.

In my sundry strollings through Gezi Park and Taksim Square I have photographed several works of this aesthetic movement that I would like to illustrate as examples of logos or the art of agonic Discourse. For indeed the plethora of artistic creation has astonished not only the people of Istanbul, but the many foreigners who are everyday streaming into Taksim and Gezi Park to partake of the Event. The photographs of several of these works can be found at the end of the article.

I have come across such banners as 'Ben bir ceviz ağacıym Güllhane Park'ında//Ne sen buna farkındasın, ne polis farkında' (I am a walnut tree at Güllhane Park//Neither you nor the police are conscious of this) with the great people's poet, Nazım Hikmet's face, drawn behind the verses...

The Alevites raised their colourful banners at Taksim Square in several places on which the beautifully depicted face of Ali, the first Imam of the Shia and founder of the Alevites is turned, and his slender finger points to these boldly written words: 'Doğayı ve demokrasiyi katleden iktidar //Alevi katliami yapan//Yavuz ismini istemiyoruz' 'power has massacred nature and democracy//we don't want the name of Yavruz (Selim) who caused the massacre of Alevites//...

The omnipresent poster of the Prime Minister depicted as Ghengis Khan, his head sporting a gas mask, over or under which is written: 'Kimyasal Tayyip' (Chemical Tayyip) embellishes many of the trees and tents...

On a very long banner on whose right side has been drawn a young man in bright nuanced hues declares these Republican words: 'Türkiyeyem' 'I am from Turkey', and under which is written: 'Hangi dil, hangi ırk, hangi inançtan olursak, olalım vatandaş Türkiyem' (whatever language, whatever race, whatever faith, we are Turkish citizens). This banner indeed captures all the Republican spirit of the aesthetic movement; to be a Turk does not require one to be a Sunni Muslim or a member of the AK Party...

A banner hanging over the steps that lead to the central fountain in Gezi Park depicts a young man throwing not rocks but a bouquet of flowers...

Several banners tied to tents or trees bear the proud heads of Che Ghevara and Karl Marx, but the one that attracted my attention was the enormous banner hung on the disaffected building on the Talimhane side of the Square, portraying Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, the Turkish Communist militant who introduced into Turkey Albanian Communism, and who was murdered for doing so...

Slogans such as 'uzun yürüyüş' (the Long March), which elude to Mao Zetong, or 'hoşgeldiniz Kızıl Meydana' (Welcome to Red Square) a hint at Soviet Moscow, and others which advise us not to be afraid of the State because the State should be afraid of us, with a huge portrait of Tayyip bedecked in Nazi colours are abundantly also scattered about the Spruces of Gezi Park...

One banner fluttering over the Divin Hotel side of the Park reads quite ironically: 'her şeye olmasını rağmen, yeryüzünde şarkılar söyledik' (In spite of everything on the face of the earth we sang songs), allusion indeed to the illicit tear gas and chemically treated cannon water...

An immense diabolically red-coloured banner shows a Hitlerian moustached Prime Minister's head under two drawn swords, seemingly held by a devilish looking individual, and under Tayyip can be read 'insanlar devletlerinden korkmamalıdır//devlet insanların korkmalıdır' (the people must not be afraid of the State//the State must be afraid of the people). Near the drawn swords can also be read: 'sonsuz dek özgürlük(?)' (freedom for ever). The Prime Minister stands between a mosque to his right and the Statue of Liberty in New York to his left: the ideological implication is quite clear...

The Revolutionaries' demands can be perused on small pennants hanging between trees or on tents: in green the protesters demand that 'Gezi Parkı olarak kalmalıdır' (Gezi Park as it is must remain), in blue 'eminiyet müdürü, vali ve yaşanman şiddetle sorumlu görevliler İstifa etmelidir' (The chief of security, the governor and those civil servants responsible for the violence must resign) and in violet: 'Gaz bombası kullanımı yasaklanmalıdır' (the use of gas bombs must be prohibited)...

Small placards of red and white read 'eğme boyun' (don't bend your necks!) whilst others depict Tayyip in mock, sultanic fashion over whose crowned head is written 'Gezi Parkı'nda taç yer yok' (In Gezi Park there is no room for a crown) alluding to newspaper caricatures of the Prime Minister seated on a cushioned throne, bearing his majestic crown...

Trade union, political party flags and portraits of Atatürk embellish the Memorial Statue in bright Republican colours; the Atatürk Concert Hall and the other public buildings that surround the Square have been draped with immense portraits of Atatürk and Turkish flags. The Memorial Statue has never been so imbued with Republicanism, a true iconic symbol of Atatürk's words and deeds!

A particular piece of art caught my attention: the epitaph of a certain Nor Zartouk on a tombstone of cardboard is written in both Turkish and Armenian, and below it the dates 1551-1939. Inquiring the reason for the tombstone, a chess-playing man explained that Nor Zartouk had been a cook under Sultan Soliman the Great, and that he had saved the Sultan's life by revealing a plot to have him poisoned. To reward the faithful Armenian, the Sultan asked the cook what he desired most; his answer was land to provide a place where Armenians could be buried in decency and respect. Soliman granted the Armenians the land which became a cemetery in 1551 and consequently Gezi Park, when in 1939 the Taksim area was completely renovated. The epitaph reads 'you have taken our cemetery, you will not have our park'.

Amidst all this colourful iconography, groups dance and sing, demonstrators parade through the mingling crowds bearing their banners and chanting their slogans: "shoulder to shoulder against fascism" (faşizme karşı omuz omuza), or "Tayyip resign" (Tayyip istifa)! The skies are a deep blue and the rays of a very hot sun filter through the 600 trees of Gezi Park. At night, the pot and pan ritual begins and hundreds of people living in the Taksim district clang and bang their pots and pans, a rite that reminds the Prime Minister and his police that the streets belong to the people and not to squads of police who prohibit the use of them!

The idealisation of the movement has indeed produced symbols of its own: trees represent freedom as opposed to massive concrete buildings. Certain posters show peoples' profiled silhouettes erect like trees! Huge maps of Istanbul hanging between trees or carried by the demonstrators point out in vivid colours Erdoğan's grandiose projects for rendering Istanbul the greatest city on earth, cutting down all the remaining forests of the city to accomplish his feat. Charred buses have become meeting points or make-shift cafés, many of them painted in gay colours with ecological or political slogans painted on them. Former objects of repression have been transformed into useful items in organising the occupation: the Revolutionaries have effected a semiologic shift, and in doing so have opened the Square to all and sundry! The myriad tents convey a sense of belonging to the Square, represent a space of open residency, quite the contrary to Istanbul's flourishing golden ghettos, enclosed with barbed-wire and guarded by police and surveillance cameras. Cleaning committees maintain cleanliness, food and drink vendors supply daily needs, books are given away or sold at small fees, several medical units have been installed, dance stages have been erected, political and poetic workshops improvised, an open-air art gallery display the works of Gezi Park artists who give away their paintings or caricatures at demand. Visitors stroll through the lanes lined by tents and trees: families, journalists, workers and business men, the curious...Flowers and shrubs were brought in to replace those uprooted by the bulldozers during the initial stages of the combat. Gezi Park is indeed a breath of air in the stifling urban architecture that the Prime Minister longs to bequeath to his citizens. An air of openness that has long been held in abeyance because of the Prime Minister's enclosure movement policies. An alternative air that opens windows and rushes through the corridors of a brutalising urbanistic programme which has progressively pushed people out of the centre of their city into the outskirts, into the peripheral zones, emancipating thus space for big business, for gigantic consumer zones, for mass tourism, peppered here and there with mosques that serve as points of traditional reference: the Sunni State! These plans have been momentarily baulked by an alternative project for Taksim, one whose force of aesthetic persuasion, and by that formula I mean political persuasion, has placed the Prime Minister on the defensive where he is

violently and crudely voicing his vengeance. The idealisation of the Taksim Movement affronts and mocks the Prime Minister's ideals not necessarily with opposed values, but ones that invite dialogue and negotiation. The semantic and semiologic shift that the Revolutionaries have effected translates the voices of minority, their claims and open invitation to the Prime Minister to sit down and plan Taksim Square together, to work out an ideal city-centre by taking into account all the voices that comprise a Republic. Up till now, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has turned a deaf ear to these calls. They are hardly in his interest, nor in the interest of Istanbul's real estate mafia! For the Prime Minister has the weight of fifty percent behind him, the police forces (the military?) and long experience as a politician. And perhaps due to these reasons, and the fact that he despises art, this has led him to ridicule the movement, to brand it as terrorist! A cliché that many heads of States employ when they or their ideas are attacked by the 'other fifty percent'. If Democracy has been redefined as the rule of fifty percent, then we are no longer living in a democratic world, but one of lame and complacid consensus whose representatives resort to brutality and cynicism whenever the voices of minority question their projects intended for the 'well being of the nation'! Is dictatorship any more candid, any less lenient?..

Conclusion: the Assault (June 12th, Tuesday)

The Millet-System

June 11th: As I am writing out this conclusion the riot police have stormed into Taksim Square and taken it by assault: helicopters survey from above, cries and whistling fill the morning air, tear and pepper gas, pressurised water and clubs translate the Prime Minister's sensitivity to the 'other fifty percent', the voices of the minority who do not really count because their votes did not count him in! The very organised police operation began at seven thirty in the morning and was quickly terminated: two police and journalists wounded, seven in all, if the figures are accurate, so the newspapers reported. In a magnanimous gesture Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has expressed sympathy for 'certain' groups amongst the dissidents, and may meet with them when he sees fit, insisting nonetheless, that he will break the back of the Taksim Movement, and will meet only 'responsible groups': translation: the Kurdish, Communist, Socialist, Anarchist, Alevite, feminist groups are irresponsible, albeit their voices be an organic part of the Turkish Republic today. The Prime Minister does not seek to dialogue but to dictate the terms of his victory, or so he believes to be a victory. This was quite clear at his Istanbul meeting on Sunday June 16th, the very afternoon he had Gezi Park 'cleaned out' of its marginals in a massive police operation which began at 3:30 in the morning and ended with a hundred or so wounded! At Kazılıçeşme, Erdoğan gathered three hundred thousand of his partisans (the newspapers put the figure at a million!) to justify his coarse strategy and violent tactics towards the "immoral" (ahlaksız) terrorists and riff-raff who were squatting at Gezi Park, to warrant his 'right' to govern Istanbul's affairs as he so desires, and not be thwarted by a bunch of extremists, to vindicate the evacuation of Gezi Park with tear gas and then preach that henceforth it is up to the courts to decide the fate of the park, knowing perfectly well that court rule depends on political pressure and bribery. Finally, Erdoğan galvanised the crowd by his good will, his sense of democracy and openness towards the representatives of the Taksim Movement,

defending his idea of a referendum which was refused categorically by the rabble on the grounds of a sure victory for the AKP! Indeed, the Gezi Crowd is unworthy of such magnanimity. He then ordered the Park to be 'properly' cleaned by responsible workers, guarded by squads of police that have roped the Park off to people. Oddly enough, first the government wished to destroy Gezi Park, now they are zealously making it shine...

The counter rally on Sunday was a *mise en scène*, a grandiose show à l'américaine throughout which Tayyip's voice was the only one heard besides the programmed applaudings and obsessive rantings of his name as he appeared on stage! A voice that screeched injunctions, that dictated: it is a voice that knows no dialogue because it is a programmed voice...

Dialogue. This word has had no weighty historical substance in the minds of those who have held power in Turkey. The AKP has promised to negotiate with the Movement, but first it must display a show of force to make it clear who lays down the law. The Prime Minister has also made it clear that the majority of elements that comprise the Movement must be extracted and eliminated before any negotiations are to be held. He has divided the Whole so as to parley with the smallest of voices. This of course is not a dialogue; it is a political strategy of manipulation after the mopping up operations have terminated! 'Patience has its limits', declared Erdoğan before his galvanised supporters. Patience, on the contrary, is what is required in dialogue, if it be fruitful to both parties, and not to the one that holds all the cards as Henry Kissinger once brayed so boastfully. Indeed, fifteen days of festivities, of sympathy, of a Wholeness never seen in Turkey since the Republic must have surely offended many of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's fifty percent partisans, his governor of Istanbul, Hüseyin Avni Mutlu and his mayor Kadir Topbaş, not to mention the perplexed mayor of Beyoğlu who knew not what to say when asked about the Event on television. I say 'his' governor and 'his' mayor because their voices are his, both in tone and inflexion. In fact, to listen to the Prime Minister speak about Istanbul one would think that he actually owned it! No one of the AKP has dared contest the boss's decisions! The Prime Minister attempted a strategy of wearing away the enemy (the riff-raff and extremists) so that the patience of these many diverse movements would wither and split, and finally incite dissent and fighting. The strategy failed. It was Tayyip's patience that wore thin, and consequently frustrated him. His use of violence to put an end to the patience of the demonstrators exposed the personality of a man who has never had any patience; that is, any real desire to dialogue.

A dialogue that would serve the interests of those who live in Beyoğlu and at Taksim. A dialogue that would call for compromise and concessions. But as I look out of my window I see black smoke rising up thick and billowy from Taksim Square, I hear the crack of gas capsules fired. Compromise and concession: the Prime Minister's fervent speeches to the 'will of the nation' bespeak another strategy and tactic, one that has always prevailed in Turkey: the crushing of the enemy: indeed, in three weeks there have been five deaths, 7,322 wounded, fifty-nine of them seriously, and 460 arrests. This is the language of the stronger, not the wiser; but is this not just another instance of 'collateral damage' in globalisation?..

If I have been critical of the Prime Minister's position during the Movement at Taksim in this article it has been couched without aggressivity; after all as former mayor of Istanbul, and now as Prime Minister and perhaps future president he has accomplished many needful and welcomed reforms: the social security system, the Istanbul transport system, his cleaning of the Golden Horn waters and the creation of parks along its shores (a point that he reminded his partisans on Sunday, evoking the horrible smell of

the tanning factories!). These are worthy achievements. However, with the passing of time, and especially because of the lack of any opposition whatsoever, the Prime Minister has taken for granted that all his decisions will be readily accepted without a murmur of critic or discontent. This has led him on a quest of greater projects which has brought to light his ideological penchant and intolerance of any meddling or interference in these ideologically designed projects. His rhetoric has become authoritarian, minatory; his gestures and actions, mechanical, as if no obstacle could or would stand in its ineluctable way. To declare that those who do not respect the party in power in this country will pay the price in language of revenge, of vendetta. Tayyip does not dialogue with riff-raff: this is beneath him. Then with whom does he dialogue?..

And here I conclude, if any conclusion can be proffered at this very sensitive moment, with the crux of my argument: in Turkey, be it Ottoman or Republican, dialogue has always been an ill-defined concept, a *rapport de force*, at best, negotiating concessions which invariably result in the acceptance of a consensus. And yet, dialogue seeks to unite the various heterogeneous movements of a Nation, not to divide them. The Ottomans were masters at dividing; they excelled the art of division, of juxtaposing the 'minority voices' of its empire: Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Syriac, Alevite. This was the *millet-system*, a variation of the Koranic *djimmis*: a system that **tolerates** (and I underline the word) dissident voices because it cannot accept them in mutual consent. The Turkish Republic, in spite of the word Republic, has transferred the *Millet-system* into so many divided groups of a less religious nature, nonetheless conserving the concept of 'minorities': feminists, Alevites, Kurds, poets, gays, Kemalists, Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, etc.; all voices of the Republic, yet only tolerated by the government as long as they remain within their designated 'legal' territories, linguistically stigmatised because treated as extraneous elements outside the 'mainstream' dogma: conservative Sunnism, and to whom, since they are extraneous elements, Taksim Square is forbidden!

And this is precisely why the 'millets' stood their ground in Taksim Square and at Gezi Park: to dialogue implies speaking to all the groups of the Movement before gasing and flooding them out of their 'illegal' territory! They legally won the right to speak at Taksim. And they indeed spoke, sang and danced for two weeks without violence or hatred: I can personally vouch for this! But what government member really listened to them?..

It may be that Gezi Park will be salvaged under the rubble and debris of the illegal evacuation: there are many, though, who seriously doubt it! The park has been 'thoroughly cleaned', which means banned to everyone, except the police! Everything there seems calm; the chirpings of the birds at Taksim Square have replaced dialogue: the alarmed citizen can return to his or her daily routine without fear! Life can now go on as usual: *la vie a repris ses droits*! History has been stamped out for the moment, and although there are scars, they too can be effaced as easily as the drunken marginals had been evacuated! But the battle goes on say the Revolutionaries (*mücadeleye devam!*) who seem intent on offering the Prime Minister a lesson in Democracy, albeit Tayyip apparently was not voted into power to be given any lesson in Democracy, especially from Revolutionaries.

The will to truth requires that those who seek it put it into peril if they are to understand it at all! Is this not the first step towards dialoguing with the Other? Would it not be more efficient for the Prime Minister to address the 'other fifty percent' by stammering and stuttering as Winston Churchill would

do, so as to gain his audience's empathy, and once gained, follow up his discourse with brio and verve? A modest overture invites, it does not rebuke, nor envenom...

Gilles Deleuze once said that the principal cause of fascism was the masses; they who bring the dictator to power by their consensus, triggered through fear and mistrust. The only solid remedy against this fear and mistrust is education. It makes its citizens responsible, it teaches them to be distrustful of paternalism, now benevolent now minatory. Education substitutes this avuncular voice by purposing a curriculum that cultivates subject speakers, conscious of their own thoughts, masters of their own destinies. To be conscious of one's being and master of one's Self is called subjective discourse. And this is precisely what the authoritarian figure fears in his citizens (or subjects?); he fears that they will tell their own stories, recount their own narrations, become responsible for their own self-made being! The 'being here' -Dasein- is he or she who draws from his or her own experience what is termed a Limit; and to be conscious of this Limit implies to be responsible, first for one's Self then for the society as a Whole. Only education can instill this spirit. In Turkey today, this spirit is far from prevalent and on the contrary, education is subtly forging a mass of liberally-minded students, cultivated by and for multi-national entrepreneurial duties, hordes of 'Gardians of the State' in guise of a police force that has tripled in ten years, endless swarms of Sunni Muslims who graduate from the Imam Hatip schools, and whose dogmatism has revived a discourse reminiscent of an Ottoman spirit of Islam, one that excludes non Muslims (gayrimüslim), but also non Sunnis!

Indeed, education in Turkey has been transformed into a categorical quoto of very few options, knowledge esteemed as mercantile, or as J.D. Lyotard has so rightly coined it: "*mercantilisation du savoir*", by which the buyer (students) ask "*à quoi ça sert?*", and the seller: "*est-ce vendable?*"⁴ The force of *agôn* has disappeared, and with it logos, thus paving the way for mechanical routine and a technological specialisation whose means of action justify its ends! It is producing a fear of dissent and fashioning a consensus: be it economic, technological or religious. Education that should open the students' eyes to the wonders of the world, in fact narrow them to the 'task to be accomplished', however insignificant or tiny it be. This trend is not just a problem in Turkey; it is one that encompasses our globalising planet! It is a dilemma, sad indeed, that has aroused the spirit of the Revolutionaries at Taksim Square and Gezi Park; they not only want their city back, they demand the right to responsibility: the first step towards the conscious citizen...

For the Taksim Movement is a true citizens' Movement! The citizens of Istanbul have the right to their Square and Park, to occupy them when they desire to do so and create within it if they feel the need! These are spaces for both the nation and the people, whatever their voice be. Open spaces where concepts are forwarded freely and played out freely. It is precisely this spontaneity of Word and Deed that has upset and enraged Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. His fear of the minority voice, of the 'other fifty percent', of their sudden cohesion and display of intelligence, their political demands for a genuine Republic. The momentary set-back to his projects admonished him to the caprices of History when obsession is a substitute for patience...

The Court will decide the fate of Gezi Park. It just may happen that we shall be witnesses to a *coup de théâtre*: Justice that triumphs over brute strength and bribery! Perhaps. Be that as it may, whilst the

⁴ La Condition Postmoderne, edition Minuit 1979.

decision is pending the battle continues: as the police make their arrests, pots and pans resound in the still night; as the riot police flood out and gas demonstrators in the streets of Ankara, Adana, Konya and İzmir, hundreds of people stand in silence around the 'duran adam' (the arrested man) at Taksim Square during the night, Erdem Gündüz, the artist who silently manifests his right to occupy the Square; as the government takes its revenge on the 'collaborators' (reporters and artists and writers) of the Movement because of their 'intrusive and faulty coverage', articles and books both in Europe and in Turkey are slowly but surely revealing the Event as it was lived by hundreds of participants.

Gezi Park invokes a universal message: spaces that are closed to spontaneous movements, actions or gestures, spaces that prevent a discourse of any kind besides a presupposed economic, political or religious one are condemned to an ideology that cannot escape from its own hermetic discursive space, and without such an outlet will stagnate of its own rigidity and either perish from 'bad blood' or tear itself apart due to internal narrowness, eventually merging with other political parties to avoid complete annihilation. Will this message be understood?..

Gezi Park is an example of enlightened citizenship for our future world, not one hawked by the peddlars of cheery globalisation, nor one forged and fashioned on demagogic promises of a Sunni Ottoman Revival whose breadth and profundity give hope of newer and brighter dawns to come...

'Le reflet éclaire la nuit, non le feu'

Henry de Montherlant

Paul Mirabile, June 21, 2013



Honour to your name: accounts will be called: Giant Youth - Banner at Taksim Square.



We honour Abdullah Cömert:
every place is Taksim/ every place
resists - Cemetery at Gezi Park.



For the Future and Freedom:
Resist dictatorship: AKP
Opposition Youth.



I am a walnut tree at Gülhane Park // Neither you nor the police are conscious of this: Nazım Hikmet's face..



I am a citizen of Turkey: whatever language, whatever race, whatever belief we be we are Turkish citizens.



Atatürk Concert Hall draped with banners.



Taksim Memorial Statue decorated with the colours of the Republic.



Welcome to Red Square: Unity of the Opposition Platform.



Portrait of the Ghengis Khan Tayyip Erdoğan.



Bus transformed into a meeting point.



The People must not be afraid of the State//the State must be afraid of the People, and written over the Hitlerian moustached Prime Minister, between the drawn swords, is written 'for ever freedom'.



In spite of everything on the face
of the earth we sang songs –
Hence enough!



Planting new flowers and
shrubs in Gezi Park.



Power has massacred nature and democracy//we don't want the name of Yavruz (Selim) who caused the massacre of Alevites.



The list of demands from the Taksim Movement Platform: 1) It is forbidden to use chemical gas weapons. 2) Free services for those who are ill. 3) Taksim is for the people, all spaces be open that are forbidden to people. 4) Put an end to the destruction and pillage which is called 'Urban Transformation'. 5) Put an end to attacks on the values and beliefs of people, to the scorn of people. Signed the People's Front.



Map-carrying protesters march through Gezi Park. Behind them on banners is written 'Tayyip resign'



The Armenian tombstone which reads 'you have taken our cemetery; you will not have our park'. Behind and above the tombstone one can see a photo of Hrant Dink, the Armenian journalist, founder of the bilingual newspaper Argos, assassinated in 2006.



Our History in not for sale.



A decorated tree: Environmentalist Tayyip. Above him the penguin that symbolises the Gezi Park Movement ever since CNN broadcasted the *Life of Penguins* during the uprising and ensuing revolutionary movement. In smaller print can be read 'I am a defender of the environment', signed Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.



A flower throwing terrorist?



The Gezi Park open library.



NEWS BRIEF

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This *News Brief* was compiled and edited by *Andor Zombori*.

ARCHAEOLOGY**Afghanistan: Ancient manuscripts indicate Jewish community once thrived in Afghanistan**

CBS News (Jan. 3, 2013)

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57561891/ancient-manuscripts-indicate-jewish-community-once-thrived-in-afghanistan/

Asia: How Some Medieval Cultures Adapted to Rise of Islam

ScienceDaily (Jan. 2, 2013)

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China: Engraved Stone Dating Back 30,000 Years Found in China

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<http://www.sci-news.com/archaeology/article00755.html>

China: China unearths ruined palace near terracotta army

The Guardian (Dec. 3, 2012)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/03/china-ruined-palace-terracotta-army>

China: Hominins already inhabited the Three Gorges region of South China in Pleistocene

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EurekAlert! (Feb. 6, 2013)

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