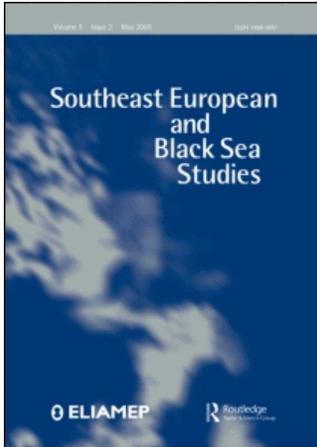


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### BOOK REVIEWS

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and ‘post-nationalism’ are taken for granted and used generously, but are not discussed critically in their wider context. Other concepts and fields of study discussion would help to contextualize the Turkish case – such as trans-nationalism, Diaspora studies, racism and post-colonialism – are largely absent. It appears as one of the book’s weaknesses that the introduction – rather than contextualizing the Turkish case historically and, in its neighbourhood of South-East Europe, shaped by comparable processes of contested nation-building – opts for a Turkey-centred, rather inductive mode of discussion. The resulting ‘Exceptionalism’, a notorious undercurrent in some political commentary on Turkey, leads to a rather sterile account of Turkey’s particularly fierce case of nation-building, discussed in great detail in English-language scholarship. The editor’s normative proposition that ‘It is time to say a last good-bye to the Turkish nationalism which is rooted in the inter-war period’ (X) and his call for an ‘emancipation from ethno-nationalism for the sake of liberal and human rights’ (xiii) does not fully compensate for the lack of conceptual debate.

A second drawback is the uneven quality of the volume. The contributions range from fully developed scholarly papers with great substance, original research and relevance for the debate to summaries of interesting essays published elsewhere. This unevenness in quality, coupled with inattentive editing in some contributions, suggest that the editor had to choose between a thorough yet time-consuming editing process and the immediate publication of available conference proceedings, regardless of their quality. It might have allayed criticism, and tempered expectations, to state in the introduction that, rather than an edited volume, *Turkey Beyond Nationalism* should be read as a collection of papers delivered at the conference with the same title in Basel in October 2004. Despite these deficiencies, however, the volume contains a number of high-quality papers that contribute to the new debate on Turkey’s remarkable past and its undecided present.

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**Varlık vergisi ve ‘Türkleştirme’ politikaları [The property tax and policies of ‘Turkification’]**, by Ayhan Aktar, İstanbul, İletişim, 2000. 244 pp., YTL13.50 (paperback), ISBN 975-470-779-0.

The year 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of the 6–7 September 1955 events, the pogrom that hit the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities of İstanbul. As discussions on İstanbul non-Muslim minorities and Turkey’s minority policies increased on that occasion, a book published some years ago gained new interest and deserves the attention of readers. Ayhan Aktar’s book, entitled *The Property Tax and Policies of ‘Turkification’* (*Varlık Vergisi ve ‘Türkleştirme’ Politikaları*), is one of the first and most successful attempts to deal with the issue of state policies of national homogenization in Turkey and their impact on the non-Muslim minorities of the country. Although Anatolia had acquired a solid Muslim majority by 1923, İstanbul maintained – to a considerable degree – its pre-republican multi-ethnic and multi-religious character. However, republican Turkish policies aimed at eliminating that last enclave of ethnic and religious diversity. Aktar’s book consists of a series of five chapters whose common element is the study of state policies aiming at the national homogenization of Turkey’s population.

In the first chapter, Aktar focuses on the Greek-Turkish Mandatory Population Exchange Agreement of 30 January 1923. He points out that this was the first time that a mandatory population exchange was considered an acceptable solution for minority problems. Nationalist elites

in both countries found the population exchange desirable, aiming to strengthen the ethnic homogeneity of their respective states and disregarding the economic, psychological and social costs for the minorities. The population exchange was followed by the Ankara Agreement of 1930, which mutually abolished all property rights claims of the exchangees. Aktar then elaborates on the opinion of a US diplomat, according to whom 'the population exchange harmed Greece politically and benefited it economically, while the converse was true for Turkey'. Following that, he explores the alleged comparative advantages of the population exchange, as well as the history of the idea. A first, small-scale *de facto* population exchange was implemented in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, while it was Greece that proposed a voluntary population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey in 1914.

Aktar then moves to the difficulties of resettlement for refugees in Greece and Turkey and points to the structural problems, which affected the resettlement of Turkish exchangees. The loss of almost 20% of the Anatolian population within a decade had a major impact on the social fabric of republican Turkey. Anatolia's non-Muslim merchant elite became extinct, and the state attempted to construct a new Muslim urban elite. In this direction, discriminatory measures were taken against minority merchants who were still living in Istanbul and Izmir. Aktar concludes his article by arguing that Turkish nationalism underwent a serious transformation because of the population exchange. Ziya Gökalp's cultural Turkish nationalism had been developed – under the conditions of the late Ottoman Empire – to accommodate a multi-ethnic, multi-religious population. Nonetheless, the dramatic demographic changes between 1912 and 1923 allowed for a reform of Turkish nationalist ideology and the inclusion of the element of ethnicity in it. While non-Turkish Muslim groups – such as the Kurds, Laz, Circassians and Albanians – were considered ethnic Turks who had lost their cultural identity, the same was not the case for the non-Muslim minorities. Instead, they continued to be treated as an 'internal enemy' (*iç düşman*), or as 'the other among us' (*içimizdeki öteki*), a 'foreign' (*yabancı*) or 'guest' (*misafir*) element. This approach led to the continuation of state policies that discriminated against Istanbul's minorities. Non-Muslims would never be accepted as fully fledged first-class citizens (*birinci sınıf vatandaşları*).

The second chapter explores the 1934 anti-Jewish pogrom in Eastern Thrace. Between May and July 1934, the Jewish communities of Eastern Thrace underwent a series of attacks by Turkish nationalists and were finally forced to move to Istanbul, according to the 1934 Resettlement Law (*İskân Kanunu*). Aktar argues that these events could not exclusively be attributed to the influence on Turkish society of rising European anti-Semitism. He adds that the simultaneity of the attacks shows that the state was not only aware of the 1934 events, but probably masterminded them as well. The action of local nationalist groups and media was significant, but could not have been the primary reason for the events. Aktar also reminds us of a similar forced relocation of rural Armenian populations from Central Anatolia to Istanbul, six months prior to the 1934 events. Thus, Istanbul became the place where all non-Muslims were forced to settle. The author finishes his piece with a comment on Turkish nationalism: he argues that racism was incompatible with the version of nationalism that prevailed in the early republican years. The very project of Turkification of all Muslim non-Turkish ethnic groups showed that race was not a significant determinant of republican Turkish national ideology.

In his third chapter, Aktar explores the policies of Turkification as implemented during the early republican years. He departs from a study of Ziya Gökalp's cultural nationalism and its impact on Turkish national identity, and then examines the issue of capitulations and the legal status of non-Muslim minorities, as appeared in the 1923 Lausanne negotiations. The proclamation of a new, secular Turkish Civil Code in 1926 meant that the minorities had to give up their special civil legislation, necessary as long as Turkey's civil law was influenced by the Islamic Law (*Şeriat*). Aktar then sheds light on the allegedly voluntary denunciation of minority rights

guaranteed by the Lausanne Treaty and the Turkification of capital and labour markets. These policies expanded into the exclusion of non-Muslim minorities from the public sector and certain professions. They culminated with the 1937 'Citizen, speak Turkish! (*Vatandaş, Türkçe konuş!*)' campaign, in which all minorities were urged to give up the use of their own languages and speak only Turkish. Aktar concludes his piece by pointing to the difference between the inclusive character of Turkish nationalism in the case of Muslim minorities and its exclusive nature when it came to non-Muslim minorities.

Aktar's fourth chapter focuses on the Property Tax and its implementation, and departs from a chronological account of the events. A media campaign was launched in the summer of 1942 against the Istanbul non-Muslim merchant class. They were accused of taking advantage of Second World War conditions to profiteer. On 11 November 1942, the parliament approved a bill aiming to tax these alleged excess profits. Commissions were formed to identify the debtors and calculate the amount of the tax payable. The debtors were asked to pay the tax by January 1943. Many of them had to sell their houses and/or businesses to pay the tax. Those who failed to do so were deported to a labour camp at Aşkale, near Erzurum, in Eastern Anatolia. Increasing international pressure resulted in the transportation of the detainees in August 1943 to a labour camp in Eskişehir/Sivrihisar in Central Anatolia and finally to the abolition of the Property Law and related financial claims and the release of the remaining inmates on 15 March 1944.

In the second part of the piece, Aktar examines who paid the tax and the amounts they were charged with. He shows how this measure aimed at delivering a heavy blow against the non-Muslim merchant elite of Istanbul. The Property Tax also took a punitive character against consumerism and conspicuous consumption. Those non-Muslims who allegedly provoked the bureaucracy and the public feeling with their luxurious life were taxed more heavily. This further increased the already heavy arbitrariness of the measure.

In the fourth part of his study, Aktar presents details on how the tax was paid and immovable properties were concomitantly sold. In conclusion, Aktar points that the 1942 Property Tax became a milestone regarding the attitudes of non-Muslim minorities towards the Turkish state. Although several anti-minority measures were taken up until 1942, non-Muslims maintained a hope that their situation would improve in the future and that they would gain equal citizen rights. This hope was lost with the 1942 Property Tax, and this accelerated the emigration of non-Muslims and the further homogenization of Turkey's population. Meanwhile, the Property Tax further reinforced the emerging Turkish bourgeoisie, which benefited from the heavy economic blow that this tax meant for non-Muslim merchants and their increasing emigration. Aktar finishes his chapter by quoting an illuminating conversation in which the cynical stance of the bureaucracy to correct the alleged injustices of the Ottoman period by overtaxing non-Muslims becomes clear.

In his last chapter, Aktar further elaborates on the issue of the Property Tax by providing detailed information, as well as tables, regarding the sales of immovable property during the implementation of the Property Tax, as they appear in the Land Registries of Istanbul. He makes an interesting observation: the Property Tax had a negative impact on Turkish efforts to join the Western bloc in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Aktar's book is a brave and successful scholarly attempt to tackle one of the most sensitive issues of republican Turkish history, one that remains largely unexplored. Aktar convincingly displays the significance of the 1923 Mandatory Population Exchange Agreement between Greece and Turkey for the transformation of Turkish national ideology. He also carefully tracks the transformation of Gökalp's cultural nationalism into a version of ethnic nationalism, devoid of any racist underpinnings. What the adoption of ethnic nationalism meant was that non-Muslim minorities would never be accepted as equal citizens of the Republic. Aktar focuses on all the discriminatory measures taken against non-Muslim minorities from 1923 until the 1942 Property

Tax, showing the consistency of state policies in aiming to minimize the economic and social influence of Istanbul non-Muslim merchant elites and replace them with a Muslim elite.

Aktar's book is of great value for students of nationalism, as well as Balkan and Turkish politics, and its style is accessible. Had it included a study of the September 1955 pogrom against non-Muslim minorities of Istanbul, the book would have been a complete study of national homogenization policies in republican Turkey. If the 1942 Property Tax was the event that eliminated all non-Muslims' hopes of being treated as equal Turkish citizens, the September 1955 events accelerated the disintegration of Istanbul non-Muslim minorities and their reduction into arithmetical and social insignificance. This shortfall, however, does not affect the validity of Aktar's arguments and observations, nor the overall value of his work. The book can set an example for the study of nationalist homogenization policies in other South-East European nation-states, as well as their comparative analysis. It also deserves to be translated and thus access a wider readership.

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**Greek naval strategy and policy, 1910–1919**, by Zisis Fotakis, London, Routledge, 2005, 240 pp., US\$160.00, £80.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-415-35014-3

The second decade of the twentieth century encompasses one of the most interesting and important periods in modern Greek history. It is during this period that the modern Greek state was consolidated into its current sovereign and territorial form. It is also a period that remains significantly under-researched. In this context, as the author himself argues, this study not only aims to fill a gap in Mediterranean naval history; it equally aims to provide new perspectives into the history of Greece, particularly to explore Greek naval strategy and policy during the second decade of the twentieth century.

At first sight, the subject seems to be rather narrow. At the start of the second decade of the twentieth century, Greece was a small Balkan country, struggling for internal security, in a very unstable external environment. It is pertinent to note that one of the main characteristics of the period in question, from a geopolitical point of view, was the prevailing uncertainty and instability, as well a continuous flow of geopolitical changes in Europe and particularly in the Balkans. The particular time-frame covered by this publication was a decade that transformed Europe and the Balkans deeply. So why has the author chosen the subject of Greek naval strategy and policy during this period as the object of his study?

First, it is a very insightful period and area of study because of the crucial role of the Hellenic navy in the endeavours of a small country to fulfil its national objectives, particularly in terms of expanding and consolidating its territorial sovereignty. Second, as the reader can discover through the pages of this book, the Hellenic navy served as the main vehicle of Greek foreign policy during that period. In effect, to the surprise of the reader, who expects to read naval stories from a specific historical period, the author offers elaborate and detailed presentations of diplomatic events that affected Greece and the country's relations with the then Great Powers.

At the beginning of the 1910s, Greece was confronted with a major regional crisis that it could not circumvent: the Balkan wars. The Hellenic navy became the country's main instrument in the diplomatic bargain with the Allies and the Christian states of the Balkans, against a rapidly declining Ottoman Empire. However, the Hellenic navy was not initially fully ready for the task