

THE ROLE AND POSITION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN TURKEY*

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1) The history of the teaching of political science in Turkey goes back to the second half of the 19th century. The Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Ankara-the oldest institution in the field in Turkey was originally founded as a school (*Mülkiye*) where the high level bureaucrats for the Ottoman administration were to be educated.

2) The decline was apparent in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century in all aspects of economic and social life. In order to cope with the problems arising from the weakness of the Ottoman Empire against the "super powers" of Europe of the time, first attempts were made in the military field in the hope of the "westernization" of the armed forces. Later on, the need for the reform in the field of administration was also felt.

The western oriented reform movements of the 19th century, however piecemeal they might have been, required new cadres of civil bureaucracy educated by western standards. *Mülkiye* was established as an institution of higher education in the hope that the graduates of this school would contribute to the efforts of preventing the Empire from decay.

3) *Mülkiye* was founded in 1859 as the first school where teaching on contemporary social and political sciences started. Among the courses covered in the original curriculum of *Mülkiye* were History, International Law, Law of Treaties, Administrative Law and Economics.

* This paper was presented at the Round Table meeting titled "The Position and Role of Political Science in Developing Countries", Ljubljana, October 6-10, 1979.

Although there was no course entitled "political science" in the curriculum, the introduction, in the 1860's, of a curriculum covering a combination of courses as International Law and Administrative Law on the one hand and History and Economics on the other may be considered as the beginning of the teaching of political science. This is, at least, what is believed in the Turkish academic circles. This belief is also supported by later developments in the curriculum, such as the inclusion of Constitutional Law and a separate course on French, British and American Constitutional histories*.

4) The main features of the teaching of political science under the Ottoman rule may be summarized as follows:

- (i) The introduction of political science teaching was closely connected with the reform efforts aimed at saving the Empire from decay and decline—an aim which at the end was not accomplished!
- (ii) The courses included in the original curriculum of *Mülkiye* had not hitherto been systematically taught at any Ottoman school. The introduction of these new courses at a newly established school represented a genuine desire of modernizing (or "westernizing") the Ottoman bureaucracy. It should be noted, however, that the theocratic nature of the Ottoman Empire did not allow the complete elimination of the old institutions of religious (Islamic) origin. Thus, alongside the "western" type of courses, the *Fiqh* (essentials of Islamic Law) was included in the curriculum of *Mülkiye*.
- (iii) As the combination of the courses taught at *Mülkiye* indicated the ideal type of Ottoman bureaucrat was expected to be a well-rounded intellectual

* The course on Constitutional Law was introduced in 1877, one year after the promulgation of the first written Ottoman Constitution. As the Constitution was "shelved" (put aside) after remaining in force for about one year the course on Constitutional Law disappeared from the curriculum in 1879 only to reappear in 1891—albeit within a predominantly religious educational framework.

The course on French, British and American constitutional histories was introduced in 1909.

who would take an active part in the efforts of modernizing the country.

5) At the end of the War of Independence that followed the collapse of Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey was declared in 1923. Under the presidency of *Kemal Atatürk*, the leader of the liberation movement, efforts towards the modernization of Turkish society gained a fresh momentum. The leader of the new republican régime believed that *secularism* should be one of the most important aspects of the new socio-political order. Thus, the *dualism* of *oriental* values based on the Ottoman tradition and the *western* values based on the western European (mainly French) model was discarded. It was replaced with a new approach: The Turkish Republic would seek *integration* with "western" civilization in all aspects of social life. *Secularism* was taken as the foundation on which the new Turkish Society should be based. In 1926 the government declared that it deemed necessary to discard religious rules of conduct and began a full scale reform of the legal system.*

6) As the spirit of *social engineering*, that is to say the optimism and hope that social problems can be solved by better designed laws, dominated the new political cadres, the bureaucracy was to be used as a tool to consolidate the new order created by legal rules.

It was no coincidence that *Mülkiye*, the school which had originally been founded to educate high level bureaucrats for the Ottoman administration was transferred from Istanbul to Ankara, the capital of the the new republican régime. This school was first given a degree of autonomy and its name was changed to the School of Political Sciences in 1935. Finally in 1950 it was integrated in the University of Ankara as an independent Faculty.

7) The main features of the teaching of political science during the early decades of the republican régime may be summarized as follows:

* The Swiss Civil Code and Code of Obligations were adopted to replace old Islamic Law. These were followed by the adoption of several other western codes. Among them were the Criminal Code of Italy and Civil Procedure Code of the Swiss Canton Neuchâtel.

- (i) The main purpose was again to educate higher level bureaucrats for the new régime. The graduates of the School of Political Sciences as a young cadre who received an entirely secular, republican and "revolutionary" education were to serve the efforts towards the modernization and development. They were also expected to strengthen and consolidate the new republican régime against the reactionary social forces. These purposes were certainly similar to that of the Ottoman rule. However, the similarity is formal, as the content of the education was not based on a dualism of "oriental-religious" and "western-secular" foundations.
- (ii) The curricula of the School of Political Sciences that were in effect during the 1930's and 40's indicated that the multi-disciplinary approach of the 1860's continued. However, in addition to the courses which had been taught since the Ottoman era, new courses such as Finance, Local Administration, Urbanism and Statistics were included in the curricula in order to meet new needs.

8) Turkey succeeded in her policy of neutrality during the Second World War and remained out of the actual fighting. However, the years that followed the end of the Second World War represented a turning point in the international relations of Turkey. The policy of integration with western *civilization* was pushed further towards the integration with the victorious western allies of Second World War in economic, diplomatic and military fields. Turkey's relations with the U.S.A. experienced a particular increase after 1946 and many bilateral agreements concluded with the U.S.A. opened the doors for American influence in almost every aspect of life. Academic life was no exception to this and the traditional (French-style) political science education lost considerable ground to the American-style political science. Many professors and young scholars from the Faculty of Political Sciences went to the U.S. universities for studies enjoying American fellowships and on their return brought new ideas and methods inspired by the American world outlook.

9) Beginning in 1946 another important event in the Turkish political life took place: a multi-party régime was introduced and a number of opposition political parties were formed, one of which came to power in 1950 through perhaps the first free general elections in Turkish history. Although this multi-party régime was a limited one* it brought about new areas of research for the political scientists such as the electoral systems and political parties.

PRESENT STATUS

10) The Turkish Constitution of 1961 which is presently in force is a rather long and detailed example of its kind. Its original form consisted of 157 articles plus eleven transitory articles. The elaborate nature of the Constitution reflects its makers' caution consequent on the lessons of the past and their desire to avoid, as much as possible, any loopholes that might lead to abuse of power.**

This may also be seen as an indication of *social engineering*, that is to say the optimism and hope that social problems can be solved by better designed laws. In short, this may be regarded as an attempt to solve political problems by legal regulations.

This "legal solutions to political questions" approach brought about a rather strange and indirect contribution to the development of political science in Turkey. As the complex and dynamic nature of Turkish economic and social life during the 1960's and 70's readily proved the "legal solutions" insufficient, the interest in the extra-legal aspects of social phenomena has increased. Political Science and International Relations, alongside Economics and History clearly increased their credits at the expense of dogmatics of law during the last 15 years.

It should be mentioned, however, that this tendency should not allow the political scientist to entirely disregard the constitu-

* The parties with socialistic tendencies were either prohibited altogether or met with enormous difficulties in their organization and activities.

** For the developments leading to the preparation of the 1961 Constitution see my articles "Some Contemporary Constitutional Problems in Turkey" *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin* (1977), pp. 21 and "The Constitution and Judicial Review in Turkey" *Armağan, Kanun-u Esasi'nin 100. Yılı, SBF (Faculty of Political Sciences) publication, Ankara, 1978, pp. 331.*

tional law aspects of certain political problems, as some seem to do. Such an approach is particularly irrelevant in a country like Turkey where an extensive system of judicial review of legislative acts is functioning through a powerful Constitutional Court.*

11) The number of the schools where political sciences are taught has shown a considerable increase in recent years. The monopoly of the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Ankara (formerly *Mülkiye*) which had lasted for more than one century does not exist any more. In addition to the Faculties of Political Sciences founded by the *Academies*,** The University of Istanbul has, recently, opened up the Faculty of Political Sciences of its own.

12) The socio-political life in Turkey has been going through a number of radical changes which make Turkey a very interesting research area for the political scientist. To mention only one feature of these changes it may be interesting to note that the number of Turkish workers who went abroad is estima-

* The Constitutional Court in Turkey has an extensive range of jurisdiction which covers not only the review of the constitutionality of laws (statutes and ordinances with the effect of statutes) but such matters as the constitutionality of the Standing Orders of legislative assemblies and decisions on the abolition of the legislative immunity of a member of legislative assemblies.

In addition, the Constitutional Court hears the cases against the political parties which are charged with violating certain constitutional provisions and decides on dissolution of political parties.

On the other hand, the Constitutional Court is empowered to review and decide whether the procedural rules were complied with in the passing of constitutional amendments. The Court interprets this power in a rather broad manner covering not only strictly procedural questions.

It should also be noted that the Constitution envisages a system under which Turkish public administration is completely subject to judicial review through the administrative Courts. No administrative act, action or decision can be excluded from judicial review. Under such a system, there are certain categories of judgments rendered by the Administrative Courts which deserve the attention of political scientists. When, for instance, an administrative decision which dismissed a high level bureaucrat from his post is challenged before the Administrative Court certain "political" dimensions are inevitably involved in the arguments of the plaintiff.

** Academies of Economic and Commercial Sciences which form a system of higher education alongside the Universities are created to instruct students by providing scientific and applied knowledge of economics, commerce and finance.

ted to have exceeded one million. This certainly is an unprecedented picture and one may easily assume that, presently, one out of every forty Turkish citizens lives abroad. The great majority of these "guest workers" are in Western European countries (Federal Republic of Germany, France, Belgium etc) but some went as far as Australia. Also certain Arab countries such as Libya receives Turkish workers. As the great majority of these workers do not break their legal, psychological and economic ties with their motherland, the new experiences and values they acquire will be reflected in Turkey in one way or another. Although these workers cannot vote in general elections in Turkey because of certain legal and practical difficulties they still play a considerable part through their relatives in Turkey. Leaders of the Turkish political parties from time to time pay visits to western European countries to speak to these workers in meetings.

13) Among the topics which seem to be fashionable lately among the Turkish political scientists are the following:

(i) Ottoman history attracts an increasing interest among the younger generation. Many political scientists, economists and historians conduct studies on the economic and political structure of the Ottoman Empire in the hope of finding out the reasons of and solutions for some actual problems of Turkey.

(ii) The industrial development in Turkey, however slow and insufficient it might look when compared with actual needs, brought about a great increase in the number of unionized workers. On the other hand, in reaction to the American-style trade unionism which had dominated the Turkish labour movement since the end of Second World War, a new movement of unionism based on marxist views has emerged.

The professional organizations, such as the Bar Associations and Engineers and Architects Associations are very keen on having their voice heard on the general policy issues. Thus, the workers' unions and professional associations have emerged as interesting topics of study for the political scientists in Turkey.

On the other hand, some political scientists carry researches on the workers' participation in management and self-management mostly inspired by the Yugoslav experience.

(iii) Elections and political parties have naturally been subject to many studies. As under the present electoral system any political party may hardly win a secure majority in the National Assembly, studies on electoral systems and coalition governments seem to attract attention. Analyses of electoral results are also taken up as research topic by some political scientists.

(iv) International relations which have always been regarded as an integral part of political science in Turkey attract a growing interest. Many young scholars conduct studies in the hope to contribute to Turkey's relations with the Third World countries in general and the Arab countries in particular. These are the topics which had been somewhat neglected until quite recently. On the other hand, studies on the relations with Balkan countries have gained a fresh momentum lately.