

## BOOK REVIEW

**E. V. Bahrevsky, Ĭ. A. Svistunova, *Obraz Rossii v Turtsii: Ĭstorcheskoe Razvitie i Sovremennoe Sostoyanie*** [The Image of Russia in Turkey: Historical Development and Current Status], Moskva: Rossiskiy nauchno-issledovatelskiy institut kulturnogo i prirodnogo naslediya imeni D.C. Lihacheva, 2019, 233 p., ISBN: 978-5-86443-274-7

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Turkish-Russian relations have a history which goes back to more than 500 years. Most of the history comprises rivalry and wars. For this reason, to write Russian history without Turkish history and vice-versa seems impossible. Despite the common past, in Turkey, Russia and Russians image were studied very little. Lots of studies about "*Russian image in Europe*", "*Image of Russia in Arabic World*" were studied, which is

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possible to find in Europe. However, the grim historical rivalry between Russians and Turks has been the subject of very few studies. As a complete work, a new book, was published in Moscow, *Obraz Rossii v Turtsii: İstorcheskoe Razvitie i Sovremennoe Sostoyanie (The Image of Russia in Turkey: Historical Development and Current Status)* by E.V. Bahrevsky, İ.A. Svistunova.

On the book cover, there is a guard, called “kavas” in 1870’s Russian embassy in Istanbul. Writers of the book try to draw the general framework of Russian image in Turkey from historical, cultural, and political aspects. The book deals with the issues of actual image of Russia in Turkey, the Ottoman Empire period, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the World War II, and the Cold War years, the period from 1980’s up to the jet crisis of 2015, spy crisis and afterward. In short, the book offers a general framework of Turkish-Russian relations, from Ottoman sultans to President Erdogan for ordinary and professional readers.

The book consists of 6 chapters. Chapter 1 starts with the chapter in which contemporary Russian image in Turkey is tackled with data from sociological surveys. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with Ottoman period and give general information about Ottoman history as a background. According to the chapters, the image has been shaped by the historical process, which is why the memory about the past conflicts is always alive and ready to be remembered. Also, the book points out that there is no stable bad or good Russian image, it is changeable from time to time. Despite the long term relations, a milestone in the Russian-Turkish relations is accepted with the conquest of Istanbul by Turks. The city allowed Ottomans to be an empire and also to use the titles, symbols of Roman emperors. On the other hand, they intensively enjoyed Islamic titles “Khalife” and symbols which belong to the Islamic world. All these symbols made the Ottomans more powerful state against Russia.

During the last Ottoman period, the Muslim migration from Crimea and Caucasia to Anatolia has an unignorable effect on Turks. Those migrations were one of the most important triggers forming Russia’s bad reputation. That process, after the Russian Revolution of 1917, continued with White Russians’ migration to Ottoman lands. Afterwards, the Russian image seemed to be evaluated positively. Republic period, especially Turkish-Russian friendship in the 1930s, changed with the Cold War period. In the historical process, the period in which the propaganda and ideas imported from West, was the chief point in the relations. However, in Syria 2015, Turkey's downing of Russian warplane was expected to lead “New Cold War”.

Besides, the existing political relations and problems, the image shaped by not only Russia but also by the old Soviet countries. Some countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldava, also the countries in South Caucasia, Middle Asia, and Baltic, with the historical tie, still have effects on Russia's image in Turkey. It is important that the Russian image in Turkey was also formed by the attitude of Russia towards the people in Soviet territory, like the deportation of Meshetian and Crimean Turks to Central Asia by Joseph Stalin in 1944, Karabag crisis with Armenia, Soviet attempts to seize Eastern Anatolia -Kars, Ardahan, Erzurum, Igdir- and Chechen War.

Surveys used in the book were conducted in Istanbul, Adana, Antalya, Ankara, İzmir, Trabzon, and Samsun. From different ages, people in different regions of Turkey gave their ideas about Russia for the survey. According to the results, Turkish people find Russian leader V.V. Putin closer to themselves among the European and American leaders in 2018. Contrary to the past relations in Turkey, it seems that Russian popularity increased. In the surveys, there are many questions, some of them are as followings; which group of people in Turkey take a fancy to Russia? Which generation in Turkey sympathises Russia? Which profession of group people support Russia more? What are the bad things in Russian culture for Turkish people? What is the reason for the fact that a part of people in Turkish society sees Russia as a burden? There is another question about whom the most remembered Russian leader according to Turkish people from historical perspectives. As an answer, first four are V.İ. Lenin, İ.V. Stalin, Petro, Tsarina Katerina. Most popular authors and artists are L.N. Tolstoy, F.M. Dostoyevski, M. Gorki, and A.S. Pushkin.

In chapter 4, with the result of Russian pressure, the Muslim immigration from Balkans, Caucasia, and Crimea has a vital role in Turkish-Russian relations. With the advent of time, after the revolution in 1917, it is estimated that nearly half a million White Russians passed through Istanbul, Turkey between the years 1918-1920. During that period especially, the beautiful Russian women were blamed to petrify Turkish men by Turkish women. That is why, it is claimed that the Russian image was shaped also by non-muslim immigrants.

The writers, in chapter 6, claim that the image of Russia as a good partner or enemy changes suddenly in Turkey. That change is determined by Turkish relations with the European countries. From this aspect, the bad image of Russia was shaped because of enslaving Turkic people, closing mosques and tombs. Long term Russian wars have an

image in Turkish family, most of the mothers say to children “I gave you muscovy” (seni Moskova veririm), which is a bad impression on children about Russia.

In chapter 7 mainly focuses on Cold War period by giving references to educational, cultural and political the developments in Turkey. In Chapter 8, writers mention the following issues; in 1900s, Turkish politics distrusted Russia, especially the collapse of the Soviet Union and Chechen Question negatively shaped Russian image. However, the image also changes among the Islamists, Nationalists (Milliyetçiler-Ulusalcılar).

Chapter 9 is about Russian-Turkish Crisis in 2015; it is written that the relations with European powers shaped the policy of Turkey towards Russia. Also, in each conflict with Russia, the historical memory reminds of past events again such as Soviet Russian policies toward the Muslims in Caucasia and Middle Asia. Despite this common memory, which is the *Moskof gavuru* image of Russia, it emphasizes that The July 15 coup attempt opened a new era in Turkish Russian relations. In the last chapter, it is advised that the prejudices coming from history in the relations between the two countries should be erased. Today most people in Turkey believe that Russia is the real power behind the Armenian Question.

To determine the Russian image in Turkey, the book writers have used Turkish and Russian sources. That is why, it can be said that there is a balance of sources. Among the sources which the writers have used, there are Turkish literature, songs, Russian archives, and the results of sociological research. The authors use positive language dealing with Turkish-Russian relations. The book ends with the recommendations for elimination of prepossessions and promoting of cultural and humanitarian relations between modern Russia and Turkey. The book includes a lot of important knowledge about the relations, also a good reference for future studies which is why it should be translated to the Turkish language.