

## FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND POLAND

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As you know, we have celebrated an important historic event, the 550th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Poland.

Referring to the 550th anniversary of these relations, it would be proper to recall the period in which these relations were established.

The world's map at that time was very different. I think that it would be enough to state that the American continent was not even placed on the map, and that Christopher Columbus would discover it 78 years later. Although the geographical distances were not then any different from the distances of our times, the peoples of that era were living in countries which were far from each other with, seemingly, greater distances, and they were lacking proper knowledge of other peoples.

It was the period of the rule of Wladyslaw Jagiello, elected King of Poland who, four years after a great victory over the Teutonic Knights, sent a diplomatic mission to Turkey.

As you know that Teutonic Knights were a part of Crusaders, who were driven out from countries of Middle East and later from Hungary. Then they came to the North-Eastern

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part of Poland where they continued their policy of expansion and pillage.

In the great battle of Grunwald, in the year of 1410, side by side with Polish, Lithuanian and city of Smolensk forces fought a battalion of 2000 Tartars.

Today, a monument emerges at this location where that great victory was won. This monument of solid granite, bears the engravings of national flags of nations which had then taken part in this battle. Among them there appears a flag which resembles the Turkish flag.

Was Jagiello, King of Poland informed then as to the facts about Turkey by Tartars who had participated in that battle; or were there any other information or reasons that lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the State of Ottomans - are questions that historians do not indicate. The first historian who had referred to the Polish diplomatic mission to Turkey is Jan Dlugosz of Poland. This mission arrived at Bursa in the year of 1414 and was headed by Skarbek z Göry and Grzegorz Armenian, and was received by Sultan Mehmet Çelebi. This was a period of restitution and reconstruction of the State of Ottomans subsequent to the destructions caused by the occupation of Timur in 1402. Mehmet I, son of Bayezit I, took over this heavy duty and had succeeded in establishing the order and peace in the country.

The Turkish chroniclers do not make any reference to this first Polish diplomatic mission. It is probable that many sources valuable for the history were somehow lost. Nevertheless, Jan Dlugosz, the Polish historian, and Neşri, the Turkish chronicler, confirm each other on one point, without even being aware of the existence of other. Neşri relates that Mehmet I had resided in Bursa in the year of 1414; and according to Dlugosz, Sultan had received the Polish mission the same year in the same town. The inter-connection of their statements is clear. But we must as usual leave the details to historians. The important point for us is that these relations were established such a long time ago and based on reciprocal friendship, respect and peace.

During these 550 years diplomatic missions were continuously sent to and from both countries. It is quite obvious that

this was realised in a completely different way than to-day. The same geographical distances of today were then expressed in terms of entirely different units of time. The same problems, and same political events were identified totally different under the conditions of such times. It must primarily be recalled that the problems between the countries concerned were then being settled through the diplomatic missions rather than permanent, diplomatic representatives.

As far as the relations between our countries are concerned, this procedure had continued until the end of 18th century. In my opinion, it would be proper to say a few words about this matter which, in the century of telephones, radios, televisions and sputniks, appears to us most backward.

The formation of a diplomatic mission was a work that required quite a long time. There were no career-diplomats then. The ambassadors were assigned among high officials. In the assignment of envoys, the social standing and wealth of candidates were given consideration as it was often conventional for envoys to absorb a part of the expenses of the mission.

The mission some time consisted of few hundred men in addition to guards and servants. It is clear that the number of individuals comprising the mission would be proportionately set up according to the importance of problem to be solved, and to the social standing of Ambassador. They were travelling either on horse or by carts. The route to Istanbul would start at Krakow and lead through Kamieniec Yassy, Braila and Edirne. This distance which now can be covered within a few hours, then took few months. Approaching the capital, the diplomatic mission was halting and, only after a few days, marching with solemnity and magnificence toward the city where residences were prepared in advance.

It would not be forgotten that the era we speak about was a period in which roads, islands and countries were sought and discovered. Today, men are flying in the space. Tomorrow they will reach the moon and then engage themselves after other planets. The world is progressing with and ever-lasting speed; and there will come a time when the diplomacy of this era also will be obsolete. It will change in form and appearance.

While talking about the development of diplomatic relations between our countries, it must be pointed out that our relations had been dominated with long peaceful periods. Even in the periods of disagreement and conflicts, our countries were continuing the relations and taking care to be respectful to each other.

We observe that starting almost from the end of 15th century and during the period when the State of Ottomans and Poland had common boundaries, the frequency of exchanging diplomatic missions indicates an increase. These legations were, in addition to their missions of carrying letters at times of accession to the throne, also charged with the duties of handling the problems of international policy, solving boundary problems and renewing the friendship treaties.

The treaties of 1480 and 1621 are remarkable among other friendship treaties that regulated the development of our relations through the friendly and peaceful approaches.

Our commercial relations, already developed in the medieval age, were being supported with bilateral agreements and unilateral measures. There were even measures which were taken in connection with the customs duties and the protection of marchants. Poland was then exporting to Turkey grains, beewax, honey, leather, live-stock, salt, glassware and textile materials. Poland, in turn, was importing from Turkey such commodities as raisins, fruits, oriental textile products, smoked-fish, balsam and perfume.

The treaty of Karlowce of 1699 further regulated relations between Poland and Turkey. It was a period of uninterrupted good relations between our countries. These relations however were interrupted at the end of XVIII. century, when three neighbouring empires invaded and occupied Poland. We lost our independence. Turkey did not recognize partition of Poland. This set in a deep sentiment in the hearts of our people. We are a Nation deeply attached to our history and tradition. In my country people do say, whether it may be a story or a fact, that in his reception hall the Sultan always kept an empty chair for the Ambassador of Poland. During the periods of Polish national insurrections, Turkey offered refuge to Polish patriots.

To Istanbul came Poland's greatest poet Adam Mickiewicz. He died in that city in the year of 1855. Thousands of Turks paid homage on his last journey.

To Turkey also came General Jozef Bem, a hero of the national insurrections in Poland and Hungary. General Bem crossed the Turkish borders with his 6000 men after the 1848 Hungarian insurrection. Turkey honored him. He became known as Murat Pasha.

Many Polish patriots of 1830 insurrection came to Turkey, Amongst them an assistant to Gen. Bem, Antoni Ilinski, who became here İskender Pasha. Other insurrectionist Zarzycki became Osman Bey. Aleksander Laski adopted the name of Mehmet Bey and later was promoted to the position of the Chief of Staff of the Turkish Army.

Of others it is worthwhile to mention the name of Wladyslaw Koscielski, Sefer Pasha, who became a Minister of Ceremonies in the Palace of Sultan Abdul Aziz. Koscielski is connected with the foundation of the Polish village near Istanbul, "Polonezköy" which is existing today. Koscielski was the first Administrator of Polonezköy.

During the uprising of 1863, Wladyslaw Jordan was appointed to Turkey as official representative of the Polish Insurgent Government in Turkey. His assistant was Dr. Oksza-Orzechowski who later became known as Oksza Bey. He is the author of the outline of the Turkish History.

And finally, I would like to bring to your attention the name of Konstanty Borzecki, known in the Turkish history under the name of Mustafa Celâleddin Pasha. He served as cartographer in Turkish Army and is the author of the history of the Turkish nation.

In Istanbul there is a grave of Gen. Marian Langiewicz, the last leader of the Polish Insurrection of 1863. In Turkey he was collaborating with "Young Turks" and with Italian revolutionist Mazzini.

Poles in Turkey also contributed toward improving and modernization of the state, administration, economic development, building of roads, bridges, railroads, telegraph lines, etc.

That's how Polish-Turkish friendship grew through centuries. So, when in 1918 Poland regained its independence, it reestablished its diplomatic ties with Turkey. And in 1923, in Lausanne a treaty of friendship was signed. It is a great pleasure to note that under that treaty there is the signature of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmet İnönü.

When in 1919 Turkish people under the leadership of Atatürk, raised the banner of struggle for national liberation Polish people wholeheartedly supported that just cause. During the II. World war, Turkey continued her relations with Poland. Many Polish emigrants were again favored with hospitable refuge in Turkey. After Hitler's defeat by the end of II. World War, the Polish people's Republic was founded. The relations between Turkey and Poland have been based on mutual understanding. The basis of our correlations is the traditional amity. The source of the amity and fraternity is also demonstrated to a handful of Poles who live at present in Turkey.

In spite of the differences that exist in the social and political structure of both countries, Turkey and Poland continue to cooperate in the fields of economy and culture, and their commercial exchanges show development. The Polish artists and scientists on their visits to Turkey are being received well. Our scientists have participated in the international conferences held in Turkey, and received as the guests within the scope of concluded agreements of exchanges. We too receive and treat the Turkish scientists and artists as our good guests in Poland.

There was always an interest in Poland about Turkey. Reports of the diplomatic missions were published already in the early days of our relations. There were also many publications dealing with historical and other aspects of the life of the Turkish people. In the XVII. century Turkish grammar and dictionary, written by Franciszek Meninski, was published. This publication indicates that many Poles were studying Turkish language. Then later Polish government established in Istanbul an Interpreters School for Polish students, where Turkish language was taught.

Today, at the Universities of Warsaw and Cracow, we have Turcology chairs which study Turkish Language, Tur-

kish history, literature, culture and art. Such Polish professors of Turcology as Tadeusz Kowalski, Ananiasz Zajaczkowski and Jan Reychman are well known for their work in this field in Poland as well as in Turkey. There is also an Oriental Institute at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The museums and archives of Poland contain many documents about Turkey. The richest collection is in the State archives of Cracow, where documents related to Polish diplomatic correspondence with Turkey can be referred to. A part of these documents were written in Persian language as this was the diplomatic language of that time. Scientific publications such as *Folia Orientalia*, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* and *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* devotes considerable space to matters related to Turkey.

People of Poland do have an admiration for talented, hard-working Turkish people. We are following with interest your industrial development and progress. And we wish you successes in your endeavour.

We have all the reasons to believe that the cooperation between our countries can be developed further and that our mutual relations can likewise be improved. The historic traditions and sentiments of amity based on mutual respect for centuries should form the foundations of happier correlations and encourage us in this respect.

Let me terminate my remarks with the comment that I have excerpted from the speech delivered by Deputy Premier, Mr. Kemal Satir, on the occasion of 550th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Poland, for it equally expresses our intentions:

“It is my heartfelt desire that Turkey and Poland maintain in the future, in peace and happiness, this friendship for a period much longer than the past one”.