

THE CENTURY THAT CANNOT BE LEARNED: TEACHING OF XXth CENTURY IN TURKEY

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Introduction: Stocktaking

A survey carried out with 88 history and social studies teachers and 515 history and social studies student teachers towards the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 showed that those who oppose Turkey's membership to the EU are more than of those in favour. According to this survey, while 65 per cent of teachers are against Turkey's membership to the EU, an even higher rate of the student teachers (83 per cent) objects to Turkey's membership of the EU. Such figures are remarkable as public support for Turkey's membership to the EU has never been lower than 50 per cent. The teachers' and student teachers' attitudes towards the membership are understandable because this is after all a political issue. It is natural to show one's choice according to one's political stance. Such choices do not necessarily reflect public opinion and State's policies.

However, what is interesting is not the above mentioned finding. The teachers and student teachers were also asked other remarkable questions: "Do you think that European history should be given space in the curriculum?" and "Do you think that you should learn/teach about the European history in your classes?"

74 and 67 per cent of history and social studies teachers and 71 per cent of both history and social studies student teachers said "no" to this question respectively. This answer is obviously rather meaningful in that those who are against Turkey's membership to the EU appear also not willing to learn or to teach about European history in their classes. However, these two are not the same thing. Having a negative perspective concerning the EU on the grounds of political choice is one thing and not wanting to learn or to teach about European history in the class is another thing. Two things seem to be mixed up. In so doing, what should be taught in the class which is a matter

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of curriculum development, a process based on academic/scientific efforts, is considered to be the same as the relationship between Turkey and the EU, which is subject to manipulation by daily politics and events. It is seen that the majority of the teachers and student teachers who took part in this study think that if European history is taught in the class, this serves positively towards Turkey's membership process of the EU.

This judgement is further confirmed by some other findings of the survey. When asked whether "world history should be taught more in the class", 65 and 85 per cent of the teachers and student teachers respectively answered positively. When the geography of Turkey and political, economic, and socio-cultural developments of the last few centuries are taken into account, there would be no world history to be taught in the Turkish context if European history (including Russia) is excluded. It is obvious that the political developments occurring in such places as Japan and China which are geographically distant to Turkey were also affected by European states. The conclusion that could be drawn from the preceding argument is that the teachers and student teachers who took part in the survey do not have clear views about Europe.

The reasons for this confusion could be summarised in a couple of points: Firstly, the history and social studies curricula in Turkey traditionally omitted the political-military and social-economic developments after the 1945 era. Almost all teachers who took part in the survey did not learn about the events that shaped today's world during their school (and university) education. As for student teachers, it could be said that they covered such issues very limitedly during their courses in the university. When the word/concept "Europe" is uttered, what comes to the minds of most Turkish history and social studies teachers and student teachers is that: invasions took place in Turkey following the Mondros treaty (30 October 1918) that ended World War I for the Ottomans; Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) that was signed to secure/stabilise the invasions; and finally the events of the Turkish Independence Movement which took place between 1920-1923. These events are usually considered to be the reason why "Europe" could not be seen sympathetically by the eyes of the Turks. In a sense, the developments of the 2000s are considered in the context/shadow of the events dating back 80 years ago. The prominent problem lies in the question "how could we today live together with the enemy of those times?" A meaningful pause happens when these teachers and student teachers are confronted with the fact that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had peace negotiations with and hosted Venizolos, the Greek Prime Minister of the time, against whom he fought as a commander not long ago, in Ankara when the pains of war were still fresh. However, when they

are told about the developments that have happened in the aftermath of World War II; Turkey's unity in destiny with West Europe against the USSR's expansionism; cooperation under the NATO umbrella; Cold War years, and the developments happening in Turkey and Europe in these times, usually more moderate perspectives start to emerge regarding the place of Europe in the curriculum and what happened in history between Turkey and Europe.

Another important point emerging from the survey findings is related to the scientific/educational problems resulting from the fact that until recently modern times (after 1945) certain aspects were not covered in the history and social studies curricula of Turkey. Today's people do not know the stories of domestic and international events of 10, 20 or 40 years ago. The memory of a teacher or student teacher did not want to be filled with the events from after 1945, or in fact after 1938. For this reason, the teachers and student teachers cannot help but evaluate the developments of the 2000s with the viewpoints of the 1920s. Those who prefer to place Turkey in the geography of Europe in such areas as sports, music, fashion, and cinema act differently when it comes to politics, the independence of the country, mutual inspection, and cooperation of states. However, Turkey has already been exercising the relationship with other states based on cooperation, mutual control and dependence by being a member of NATO for more than half century. Turkey also recognises the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights as higher than its own jurisdiction since 1989. Many Turkish citizens have already been seeking their rights through this court. Moreover, Turkish governments have been adapting Turkey's domestic legislation and institutions in parallel with EU legislation and institutions even though not being a member state for many years. But since these details are not well known by the teachers and student teachers, they oppose the teaching of XXth Century European history while objecting to EU membership.

In fact, such problems concerned with the understanding of "the other" are not endemic to Turkey. There also exist different perspectives and sensitivities in recounting historical events in other countries in Europe. For this reason, the Ministers' Committee of the European Commission, recognising the significance of history in order to regulate the relations between the societies that it contains, felt a need to propose some suggestions regarding the teaching of history in the 21st century. Sub-units of the Council have developed various projects in the context of the proposal. These projects aim to achieve the following: re-interpretation of history teaching, examination of the contents of the curricula, the issue of how history should be taught for a more democratic and participatory Europe with a particular attention to the XXth Century history, examinations and re-writing of the textbooks (Pinkel, 2000).

Topics of XXth Century in History Curricula

Although the history curriculum in Turkey has been subject to changes over time, the changes have been usually limited to how to recount/teach better “Turkish History Theory”. The matter of what should be emphasised has changed according to the ideological stance of political parties that hold the Ministry of National Education, namely Kemalist, socialist, nationalist or conservative. Having said this, there has been no significantly different approach in the teaching of XXth century history in essence. History starts to be taught in year 4 of primary schools through a subject called Social Studies (in some other times there was National History, National Geography and Citizenship lessons instead of Social Studies) which is compulsory and has 4 hours of credit per week. In secondary schools, history is taught from year 9 to year 12, only compulsory to all students in year 9 and 10. It has two hours of credit per week.

When we look at the distribution and proportion of the topics of the history curriculum, which started to be taught in all secondary schools from 1982-1983, the last topic to be taught in secondary schools was World War II (see Table 1). The share of the causes and effects of World War II was 5 per cent in the beginning. The changes took place in 1991-2 and resulted in the delivery of all content through only year 9 and 10. While the units stayed as the same, the proportions of the topics were changed. However, in addition to compulsory history lessons, new selective lessons, General Turkish History 1, 2 and 3; Ottoman History 1 and 2; and History of Islam were introduced. With this new curriculum, the unit entitled World War II had a share of 3 per cent.

Table-1. Topics and distribution of units in secondary school history lessons in Turkey (1982-1983)

Year	No of hours per week	Name of the units	Proportion (%)
IX	2	Introduction to history	8
		Motherland of Turks (place of origin) and migrations	5
		First civilisations of Asia and Egypt	20
		Aegean and Roman Civilisations	5
		Turkish States founded before Islam	25
		Culture and civilisation in Turkish States founded before Islam	12
		History of Islam	25
X	2	Turk's conversion to Islam and first Turkish-Islamic states	21
		Europe in Middle Age	7
		History of Turkey	29
		Other States Founded in Central Asia and Near East	8
		Ottoman State (from beginning till the era of Conqueror Mehmet II.)	35
XI	2	Ottoman Empire (till XVII. Century)	25
		Europe in XV. and XVI. Centuries	7
		Ottoman Empire and Europe in XVII. and XVIII. Centuries	28
		Ottoman Empire and Europe from XIX. Century to the end of World War II.	35
		World War II	5

Since the history of XXth Century does not only consist of World War II, the Turkish history curricula have the problem of being out dated. Having had a long school education, students enter their lives without knowing the historical backgrounds of the events affecting the times they have been living through. For example, someone who had been to school in the 1990s and went on to live in the 2000s did not have any education concerning the polarised world of the Cold War era, so would not necessarily know how the conflict between West and East in 1960s and 1980s shaped the world politics, economics, cultural and intellectual life, cinema or sports. Likewise, if the young person

did not know of such events as the Cuban crises, U-2 crises, protests of 1968, Soviet expansionism in Africa and the Middle East, the conflict between the USSR and China, the boycott of the Moscow Olympics by the USA and its allies, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets, and the revolution led by Khomeini in Iran. These are historical events which effect current events. A person who does not know about 1979 Iranian Coup/insurrection resulting in the USA-Iran crises would have difficulty in understanding the conflict between Iran and Western countries and why mutual mistrust exists.

When Turkey's case is particularly considered in respect to the above argument, not only issues of foreign politics, but also domestic issues which were omitted from the curricula, have made it hard for students to place today's events on the historical platform which would provide rich insights for the present. The domestic issues/events, which have happened after 1938, have not traditionally been mentioned in history classes in Turkey. Therefore, students complete their education without knowing what happened within the country after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death; just to name some the characteristics of one party rule in Turkey, its political, social and economic policies and opposition movements to one-party-rule; the introduction of troublesome multi party life in 1946; the first free general election that took place in 1950 and the change of government in the country; the governments of the Democratic Party during 1950s and its end with a military coup; efforts for a new democracy; the reflections of 1968 events in Turkey; military intervention of the 12th March 1971; Cyprus issue; left wing-right wing clashes across the country; the military coup of 1980 and its still continuing effects, and efforts to join the EU. Students are not taught about the above mentioned events before they start their university education. In universities only those studying certain degrees, (so a limited number of students), have opportunity to get to know about these issues in a scientific way.

An illustrative example of how the history curriculum fails could be observed in the responses of some students when asked about Adnan Menderes. Adnan Menderes is a figure that is talked much about in the media or daily politics. Many roads or parks are named after him. He used to be the prime minister of Turkey between 1950 and 1960 until his execution that took place after military coup in 1960. Some students consider Adnan Menderes as one of the Ottoman Sultans. Likewise, some students consider Kenan Evren, who was the commander of the military coup which took place in 1980, as Atatürk's companion in arms. Young people in Turkey today are being governed by the constitution prepared by the Military Council chaired by Kenan Evren. Although the constitution has been subject to some changes ever since its commencement in 1982, legislation, state administrations and

institutional organisations all result from this constitution, so it is very evident in Turkish people's lives.

Therefore, history curricula in Turkey have not traditionally prepared students for life, leaving gaps between the present time and 50-60 years ago. A student studying in the secondary school in 2009 will enter adulthood in 2015 and will have responsibility in public or private institutions by 2020s and 2030s. However, the events of the 2020s and 2030s are more likely to have been shaped by the events of the 1990s and 2000s rather than the 1940s. For this reason, a history curriculum that aims to prepare young people for life has to focus more on the developments of the 1990s rather than 1940s. A young person would not understand how Germany, Britain and France came together under the umbrella of the EU by making a union if the curriculum stops in 1940s. Of course the causes affecting today's events are also affected by the older events. Particularly beliefs, ideas, values, cultural norms, concepts and words belong to yesterday rather than today. The words in use today were produced tens of years ago. The number of words which newly emerge in one's lifetime is limited. Thus, the value of teaching the history of distant times should not be diminished. However, when the aim of social studies lessons in primary schools and history lessons in secondary schools is considered as providing students with a general historical awareness and culture and preparing them for life, then history teaching should be as much as in the context of recent history (contemporary and modern times history) so that students would have a realistic perceptions concerning the times and the world they live in.

Any empty space is filled by something else in the nature. This is true for the human mind too. People find ways to learn about any issue which they are not taught in formal educational organisations, from their social environment. This is what happens in Turkey: people have access to the information through their parents, relatives, friends, community they belong to, books and newspapers they read, radio and TV and finally the Internet. Particularly the Internet makes it very easy to access the vast amount of information quickly across world. However, an important pitfall of such a situation is something to do with the quality of the information provided because websites are not usually scrutinised scientifically. They can be partial, incorrect, inadequate or misleading, but could be treated as reliable information. When contemporary history is taught through scientific methods, students could at least develop basic criteria to assess the quality of their informal learning. Without this, they would find themselves in the middle of disinformation and this is what happens in Turkey today. Too many manipulations have been exercised in relation to contemporary Turkish history leaving people confused about what

really happened. This situation is evidence to show that the history curricula do not adequately prepare children for life. The question then needs to be asked; why recent history has been omitted for years although there has been an obvious problem.

The curriculum for each subject that is taught in Turkish schools is determined by the Educational Board which serves under the Ministry of Education. When the propositions of the board are endorsed by the minister who is a politician, then it starts to be implemented. Political polarisation between people is something which quite easily happens and effects daily politics in Turkey. For this reason, political parties have a hidden compromise in not involving schools, mosques and barracks with the daily politics. How to get schools out of politics then? Since contemporary developments/events have usually been sensitive, controversial and troublesome, according to general compromise, the best solution was found by not including the events after Atatürk's death in 1938. Political parties were so sensitive about this that the textbooks did not cover, for example the date of the Bosphorus Bridge or the name of the prime minister when Turkish troops took over Northern Cyprus. Such information, if it had been given, was considered to be promoting policies of one political party therefore bringing politics into the schools. Because of this reason, the politicians stop the history curricula in 1938. Apart from a few weak criticisms, this was widely accepted by academicians, teachers, media, and educators, because the events post 1938 are considered as sensitive and troublesome issues that need to be censored.

An exceptional Lesson: The History of Revolution of Turkish Republic

Starting from 1981, the Ministry of Education introduced a new lesson named as Innovation History of Turkish Republic. This lesson was to be taught in year 9, 10 and 11. Although it covers the history of XXth Century, it contains an era that is considered to be special for Turkish State. The aim of the lesson is to teach students the political and militaristic developments leading to the foundation of the Turkish Republic, social and state reforms brought by Atatürk and the principles Atatürk that led way to reforms.

The distribution and propositions of units in year 9 to 11 are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Class	No of hour per week	The name of the unit
IX	1	Ottoman Empire in the Beginning of the XXth Century
		The State of Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I
		The Life of Mustafa Kemal
X	1	The Independence War
XI	2	Republic Era
		Turkish Army and National Defence
		Foreign Policy of Turkish Republic
		Atatürkçülük-The Principals that Turkish Reform Based on and The Qualities of Turkish Reform
		The Death of Atatürk and the Selection of İsmet İnönü'as the President
World War II and its aftermath		

A shortened version of this lesson is taught in primary schools in the 8th grade as a compulsory lesson. The name is slightly different from the secondary version: "The History of Reforms of the Turkish Republic and Atatürk". Although in the beginning, World War II was not covered in the curriculum, from the 2000-1 semester, a new unit, "World War II and Turkey" was added to the curriculum. The sub-headings of the unit were as follows: a) The opinions of Atatürk before the World War II, b) Causes and effects of World War II, c) Turkey's policy in World War II. In the revision which took place in January 2009, the name of the unit was changed to "Turkey after Atatürk: World War II and its aftermath". Therefore, the events between 1945 and 2000 could find a place in the curriculum.

The aim of this lesson, as would be understood from the name of it, is to teach students formally the foundation process of Turkish Republic, new reforms and the political, economic, social changes which took place in Turkey within the framework provided by the State.

What Should be Included in History Curricula?

The amount of historical knowledge to be given to varied age groups has been an issue that almost all history educators gave some thought to. In this respect, two main questions arise: Why and how much should we teach history (and social studies)? How should we teach History and social studies?

The same question, in fact, could be asked for every subject. There are also debates about why and how much we should teach maths or physics. However, these questions have a special meaning when asked in the case of history in Turkey just like in many other countries. The reason for this is that what happened in the past is mostly not considered to be a subject of historical science in Turkey. The interpretation, representation and recounting of some historical events might usually indicate one's religious-philosophical perspectives or one's political affiliations. While recounting an event dating back to 100 years, the language historians use could be used to situate them into one or another ideological camp. Then history is not widely considered to be a field of scientific research, but an area of beliefs and values. As a result of this, someone who lived in the past or an event which occurred in the past could easily become a matter of controversy. Such situations naturally affect the people who prepare history curricula: they tend to find issues that will not potentially cause controversy in the classroom, or do not give teachers opportunities to reflect their ideological/philosophical views to students through sensitive issues. But how is such a curriculum developed?

Every moment mankind lives through could be considered as history. What is lived today is a continuum of what was lived yesterday, last month, last year or within the last ten years. The words, concepts, proverbs, stories and legends we use today are the values of the past. For this reason, history is said to be the memory of the nations. We evaluate and judge today with this memory. When we carry out an evaluation concerning a matter of today, the criteria we use is based on knowledge, concepts and values that were produced in the past. Then it is impossible to understand today without taking the past into account. We should not forget that we learn history for ourselves not for the people of the past. Past people played their roles and passed away from the world. The problems they were faced, the methods they used to solve these problems, their achievements and failures are sources of inspiration and information for today's people. This is the very reason that history is worth studying and historical events are worth researching.

If we learn history for ourselves, in order to gain maximum benefit from this effort, students should be taught about the events as accurately as possible, therefore giving them opportunities to draw relevant conclusions. If the causes of an historical event are not presented truly, it is impossible to understand why it really occurred and in turn, it is impossible to understand its effects. Such a situation would limit the benefit that would be gained through history learning. When looked from this point of view, recounting false, fictional, arbitrary history would not change the truth but it would impair students and society at large. If a state changes the history arbitrarily,

it turns the knowledge system of the society up side down. This leads people to draw wrong conclusions from the wrong knowledge.

Totalitarian regimes usually change history in false and arbitrary ways. Such regimes use the science of history as a tool to shape the society with respect to certain political attitudes and ideas. This prevents the society from having a healthy social structure. However, it is impossible to use the science of history as a tool for brainwashing and indoctrination in democratic societies.

On the other hand, explaining and understanding what happened in history objectively, is to show loyalty to the memories of those people who had roles in the past. Political choices should not prevent us from understanding and teaching history as it really happened. Historical events are all about the political, economic, social and military choices of people of that time. These choices firstly are concerned with the era it happened, and depending on its effects they might interest other generations too. Future generations do not have to make the same decisions that their ancestors made. However, knowing history makes people learn lessons from common pains and failures of the past and lead them not to do wrongdoings again. For example, if people did not have the lessons of the Fascist/Nazis movement, those societies that were at war against each other long before, could not come together under the organisation called the European Union which is based on democracy, human rights and mutual dependence. The grandchildren of those, who were trying to protect and extent the national borders, are today giving decisions that make the borders that once were thought to be sacred not very meaningful anymore. Would those people who were living after the World War II imagine that one day people could cross the border between Germany and Belgium and France easily? What today makes this possible? What made this possible are the decisions of today's people who find past people's decisions, choices and dreams untenable. Those people who came together to share a common destiny in the context of the European Union have also decided to understand their histories in a way that they could share and further clinch this ideal. The controversies in history have been scrutinised critically so they do not allow historical controversies to cast a shadow over today. They decided that what are needed most are not controversies but compromises and mutual dependence. Therefore, when past events were taught, a tendency to understand the other and empathise with the other led to a strong sense of compromise and peace between societies.

Looking at the history curricula from such a perspective in Turkey has recently started. The membership negotiation process between Turkey

and the EU started a fundamental change both in administrative staff and society, in fact consolidating the change. "Turkish History Theory" has been hegemonic in Turkish history teaching for a long time. The main principles of this theory are based on a perception that all countries were enemies of Turkey and they continually make allies with each other to divide Turkey. When a conflict between Turkey and a European country emerges, the first thing to be reminded of was of the Ottomans' collapse so stressing that the main policy of foreign countries was to write Turkey off from the map. Therefore, a new generation was brought up with a view that today's representatives of those countries that contributed to the fall of the Ottomans still pursue the same ideal. "The Treaty of Sevres is being resurrected" was the slogan used to understand every disagreement which involved European powers. What is meaningful today is that those who oppose Turkey's membership to the EU in Turkey still justify their views using this slogan. This viewpoint acted as a barrier to Turkey in its international politics despite the fact that it is actively engaged with various European organisations and NATO.

But history does not have such a duty. While it is supposed to be a tool to open us new horizons, on the contrary, it has shaped politics for a long time. Other countries were approached with a sense of untrustworthiness and question marks. In other words, historical events became fetters tied on the feet of Turkish politicians. People who have gone through such history education inevitably developed biases towards others in their sub-consciousness. Politicians, even if they did not believe in something, pretended to believe it through the fear of reaction expected from society.

We observe here also of the fact that the science of history is interpreted very narrowly. History is not only about conflicts, adversaries and wars; it is much more about all the deeds of humankind without exception. For this reason, we talk about the history of law, economy, religion, science and sports as much as political history. Conflicts and wars are not ordinary but exceptional human activities. Humankind might have had wars in every five or ten years but they produced, consumed, sold and bought things, told stories, married, divorced, committed a crime etc. in every minute.

While a society was carrying out these activities, they had a continuing cooperation and interaction with other societies. The name of "America" in an ordinary Turkish person's mind firstly meant "a type of cloth" rather than a political power. There are regional globalisations that could be considered as miniature examples of today's globalisation process in history. For this reason, telling about one nation in history means telling about other nations as well. For example, how can the very popular topic of the Dardanelle War in Turkey

be taught without taking Great Britain, France and Russia into account? Could this war be explained without considering people gathered from colonies and brought to Gallipoli to fight? Could the use of new technologies in Turkey be understood without knowing about Birmingham's industrialists and James Watt's inventions? In sum, what is needed from history teaching is to bring societies together through a common past rather than a separating past. The responsibility of history is to research more about common values; and in turn, the responsibility of history education is to provide true and useful perspectives to people in terms of a common past. Another aim of the history curriculum should be of being a medium to understand today. To understand today begins with understanding the events that affect today mostly. Then this question arises: to what extent should we cover the recent (or most recent) events? What would be the proportions of old and recent events in the curriculum? When we have to make a choice, what would be our selection criteria?

The answers to the above questions could be summarised as follows: it is to the extent of what we want youngsters to remember after five or ten years following their graduation from the secondary school. Such histories as population, economy, culture, art, media, science and technology, daily life and sports should be covered in addition to political-military history. When the aim is to understand today, the history of XXth Century emerges as a necessity to be covered. XIXth and XVIIIth Centuries then have respectively secondary and even less significance in terms of understanding today. Undoubtedly these eras will have to be taught, but it should be in a way to only meet the needs of primary and secondary school pupils.

However, in such situation we then have a problem that teachers find it hard to teach about recent events. There might be chaotic atmosphere in the classroom when the events of ten-fifteen years ago are taught. This might be so because students might have learned about the events differently from their families or even a member of their families might have been involved in the events. But in spite of such risks, we should not give up teaching about the recent events. This is not a problem only Turkey has because as Stradling (2003: 82-90) asserts every country has their own sensitive issues.

On the other hand if recent sensitive and controversial issues are learned outside school there might be more harm. Scrutiny of recent events in the classroom is more valuable than information that students might bring into classroom if it is not scientifically produced. Young people have a right to learn about events that affect the times they live in. The State has a responsibility to prepare students for life and if it does not live up to these expectations then this might be considered as violating human rights.

The traditional methods used in history teaching have been questioned for a long time in Europe. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, debates regarding the aims, content and pedagogy of history education got more intense. Minorities, women, workers, neighbouring countries and recent events started to occupy larger parts of the history curricula. The history curricula of many countries were changed by bringing recent events into the curriculum. For example, the history curricula of Germany, France and England used to cover events till 1936, 1939 and 1945 respectively. But things changed in the 1970s and in many countries the curriculum started to cover events dating back only ten or fifteen years ago. At present more than half of the history curricula of most of Western countries contain events of XXth Century.

A Positive Attempt: Contemporary Turk and World History

We drew attention above that one of the significant shortcomings of the Turkish history curricula is that European and world history were not covered adequately. When we think that for the last two hundred years Turkey has been so connected with Europe; that Turkey has been one of the European countries since 1856; and that Turkey has been involved in almost all organisations constituted within Europe after World War II, to understand Turkey in XXth Century, there is a need to cover more European and world history in history lessons. Otherwise people will have a limited perspective through which to evaluate today's and the future's political, economic and cultural issues. In fact, the majority of those who oppose Turkey's membership to the EU in Turkey do not know much about Europe and consider the relationship between the two from a 1920s perspective.

Turkey was under the influence of West Europe and the USA during the years of Cold War. Every aspect of life from politics to education and cinema to technology was shaped by this influence. It has been so intensive that today those who oppose the EU in Turkey have an attitude that Turkey should keep cooperating with Europe in areas such as sports (e.g. European football cups), cinema, and fashion. Such irony in attitudes indicates that the issue is not known very well. The most important responsibility in this respect falls upon the shoulders of social studies and history teachers and in turn those who prepare the curricula of social studies and history. The beginning of accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU is a sign that the relationship between the two will be durable. Every public administrative institution has already constituted units in order to adapt itself to the EU's legislation. It is not only because of Turkey's relations with the EU, but also because of the Globalisation process, Europe and the world will occupy more area in the

future lives of students. Therefore, Europe and the world need to be learned well by Turkish students.

Educators in Turkey have criticised more the lack of European and world dimensions in history education. The standards that attempt to develop such skills as critical thinking, empathy (to understand others) and multiperspectivity and see history as a tool not to separate but merge people which developed in Europe, have started to be noticed in Turkey. In this context, the Ministry of Education introduced a new lesson, “Contemporary Turkish and World History” to overcome the shortage mentioned above. Although this is a very positive initiative, it is still inadequate because it is only taught in year 12 and only to students who opt to study Social Sciences Learning Area in secondary schools. The number of students opt to study this area is very limited. It is not right to teach the events before 1945 to every student while teaching after-1945-events to a few. Besides, when the curriculum of this lesson is scrutinised, as can be seen in Table 3, usually foreign policy issues are included in the curriculum to prevent politics from getting into classroom (Birinci, 2008, 16). All world history topics appear to be purposely related to Turkey. Likewise, the textbook and teacher manual of this book written by History Foundation also did not give much significance to the domestic developments (Alpkaya, 2004; Kahyaoğlu, v.d., 2007). But students should first and foremost be taught about the social, economic and political developments of Turkey.

Table-3. Units and Proportions of Contemporary Turkish and World History

Year	No of hours per week	Name of the unit	Topics	Proportion (%)
XII	4	The World in the Beginning of XX the Century	Paris Peace Treaty The treaties after World War I and new borders The policies of the USA after World War I USSR. The foundation and resurgence of Soviets Basmacı Movement: The resistance against Bolsheviks in Turkistan Sharing of Middle East. The independence of the states ruled under English and French mandate Development in Japan and Meiji Reforms Economic depression of 1929 and dark Thursday Hyper inflation in Germany Community of Akvam (Cemiyet-i Akvam): Turkey in between 1923-1938	19

		World War II	<p>Re-emergence of Germany Seeds of war implanted by peace Sides of the war and treaties of alliance The start and spread of World War II Actors of the war Steps of the war Barbarossa Campaign Attack of Pearl Harbour Conferences leading to peace Foreign policy of Turkey during World War II Political, social, cultural and economic developments occurring in Turkey during the World War II</p>	14
		Cold War era	<p>Cold war Iron curtain countries Berlin Crises/Depression (1948) NATO and Warsaw pact Development of Europe Schuman Plan: Borders draws by scale Balfour Declaration New order- New States Third world countries African Union Organisation Korean war - Turkish soldiers in Korea European Council Political, social, cultural and economic developments occurred in Turkey during the cold war era Democratic Party Adnan Menderes</p>	20
		Detente era and aftermath	<p>Architects of detente (the easing of tensions between nations) Beijing visit Helsinki Final Bill Sports and politics Third bloc Islam Conference Organisation Cyprus Peace Campaign New Turkish state</p>	22
		Globalising world	<p>Glasnost / Perestroika Gorbachev Independent Turkish states Alma-Ata Declaration From two Germanys to one state Road from Economic Union to European Union European Union From Skopje to Kosovo Palestine Liberation Organisation Cinema awards World cups</p>	25

The existence of such a curriculum should make us hopeful for the future. The following words taken from the objectives of the curriculum indicate that the minds of those in a position to affect the Turkish education system are being transformed (Birinci, et al, 2008, 6):

“To investigate, in a globalised world, political, social, cultural and economic events in their multi dimensions and complexity through different viewpoints. To allow students to gain skills to respond and project the needs of changing demands of the 21st Century”

Conclusion and Implications

The works undertaken to develop new history curricula by increasing the quality with modern perspectives and methods were completed in 2009. This is quite an important improvement. We undoubtedly cannot reach quick solutions for the problems by changing a curriculum immediately. Thousands of history teachers need to go through in-service training and learn to embrace this curriculum’s requirements.

The topics of 20th Century should be included in the curriculum of general and compulsory history lessons that all students go through. These topics should be proportionally 60-70 per cent of all content. The time span should be brought to 1990 even 2000.

The curriculum should not only cover impartial issues which are usually related to foreign policy and on which political parties and groups have consensus on, but also, and even more, it should cover the events affecting people’s daily lives directly. Students are better prepared for life if they are taught about issues taken from every parts of life such as politics, state governance, educational systems, economic structures, cultural life, art, fashion, cinema and globalisation.

We should not be afraid of teaching students about domestic developments and government’s policies. We should not treat students as “children” any more but treat them as “young adults” and trust them. Besides we should not forget that students gather information about those issues through different media, most notably ICT technologies, and they do talk and debate about the issues among themselves. It is certain that learning about these in the classroom through a genuine environment provided by teachers or textbook would be preferred to the sources that could be not controlled in terms of their reliability and genuineness.

Teachers should not impose their “rights” and “opinions” onto students while teaching about sensitive issues. They should provide them with data/information that is accepted by everyone. Students could reach their own

“right answers” through further critical readings. The duty of the teachers is not to brainwash but prepare students for life. For this reason, students should know what happened during their parents’ generation so that they can comprehend the reflections of it into today’s life.

History is not something which consists of a series of events created by only Turkish people. To understand a historical event requires understanding of all sides of the event. Events should be taught through principles of multiperspectivity and multiculturalism. Topics should be covered to include from near to distant pasts and from the most influential to the least influential issues. Therefore, the place of the UK in the curriculum should not be the same with of Mexico as Turkey’s relations with the UK is much denser than with of Mexico.

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