

An Overview of Turkish Studies in China

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THIS article aims at drawing a sketch of Turkish studies in China since the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949. In the first place, it is necessary to note that this general introduction mainly concentrates on the areas of international politics and history. The article is made up of three parts: First part is a brief summarization of how modern Turkey was perceived by the Chinese during the period 1949-1978. Second is a brief introduction of Chinese scholarly research on Turkey from 1978 to the present. Lastly, I would like to put forth some problems and suggestions concerning the state of Turkish studies in China.

1. Chinese Perceptions of Turkey before the Reform and the Opening-up

For a very long time from the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949 until the reform and the opening-up process of 1978, the objective and liberal study of the humanities and the social sciences was quite limited in China. Moreover, due to the great influence of the Cold War and communist ideology, the academic community of China simply adopted the “revolution paradigm” and the works of Soviet scholars, which unavoidably led to various problems and limitations in the research scopes, fields and levels of the social sciences. Consequently, the first three decades of the P.R.C. witnessed a standstill and vacancy in strictly defined academic research on Turkey.¹ This situation of shortage may suggest that Turkey had not yet entered the Chinese vision due to the Cold War and Turkey’s relatively minor influence on China.² However, this does not mean that the Chinese totally ignored the existence of Turkey during the time.

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1 I searched the key Chinese academic journals of the time such as *Historical Research* (li shi yan jiu) and *Journal of Historical Science* (shi xue yue kan), but failed to find a single article about Turkey.

2 In 1934, **Kemalist Turkey established diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. As a sign of friendship,** President Chiang Kai-shek sent a picture of himself in uniform with his signature to Atatürk. The picture is now kept in **Anıtkabir (Atatürk Mausoleum).** **After the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949, Turkey went on keeping diplomatic relationship with Taiwan until 1971,** when the official diplomatic relations were established between Turkey and the P.R.C.. As a Chinese scholar once described: “In the background of Cold War, relationship between Turkey and the P.R.C. zigzagged for 22 years. The relation also became a sacrifice on the chessboard of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.” Huang Weimin, “A Historical Investigation and Analysis of the Relationship between China and Turkey [zhong tu guan xi de li shi kao cha ji ping xi],” in *West Asia and Africa (xi ya fei zhou)*, vol. 5 (2003).

Before the reform and the opening-up, the Chinese perceptions of Turkey were strongly affected by rigid political ideology and complex international politics of the era. From the perspective of ideology, Kemalism, viewed as a model of bourgeois dictatorship, was for a long time criticized by the high authorities of Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As early as in the 1930s, Chairman Mao had condemned Kemalism. At that time, the nationalist Kuomintang and the Chinese Trotskyites had deliberately dissolved the difference between Communism and the Three Principles of the People (*san min zhu yi*),³ preaching the so-called “One-Revolution” theory and trying to advocate “Kemalism” in China. In his famous work “On New Democracy,” Mao pointed out that;

The world today is in a new era of wars and revolutions, an era in which capitalism is unquestionably dying and socialism is unquestionably prospering. In these circumstances, would it not be sheer fantasy to desire the establishment in China of a capitalist society under the bourgeois dictatorship after the defeat of imperialism and feudalism?

Mao stepped further with reference to Turkey:

Even though the petty Kemalist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie did emerge in Turkey after the first imperialist world war and the October Revolution owing to certain specific conditions (the bourgeoisie’s success in repelling Greek aggression and the weakness of the proletariat), there can be no second Turkey, much less a ‘Turkey’ with a population of 450 million, after World War II and the accomplishment of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. In the specific conditions of China (the flabbiness of the bourgeoisie with its proneness to conciliation and the strength of the proletariat with its revolutionary thoroughness), things just never work out so easily as in Turkey. Did not some members of the Chinese bourgeoisie clamour for Kemalism after the First Great Revolution failed in 1927? But where is China’s Kemal? And where are China’s bourgeois dictatorship and capitalist society? Besides, even Kemalist Turkey eventually had to throw herself into the arms of Anglo-French imperialism, becoming more and more of a semi-colony and part of the reactionary imperialist world.⁴

From the perspective of realpolitik, until the diplomatic relationship between Turkey and China was established in 1971, the two countries remained in a state of unfamiliar hostilities. In this the Korean War had a share. As an ally of the U.S. and a member of NATO, Turkey sent an army to Korea. The Turkish army was one of the main forces within the so-called U.N. Army led by the U.S.. On battlefield, the armies of Turkey and China fought fiercely. Ironically enough, the first unexpectedly direct encounter of the two old nations occurred on the battlefield of the Korean War. Moreover, this war had negative effects upon both nations. As far as the Chinese side was concerned, Turkey had been long seen as a lackey of American imperialism. Especially during the Menderes period of 1950s, China kept on condemning Turkey’s political line as a lackey of American imperialism.⁵

³ *Three Principles of the People* is the creed of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s democratic revolution, including the Principle of Nationalism, the Principle of Democracy and the Principle of People’s Livelihood.

⁴ Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volume II (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 355-6.

⁵ Chairman Mao once mentioned that the largest imperialism of the world was that of the imperialist U.S.. Many countries became its lackeys. The one imperialism he supported was the one that the people looked

Due to this situation, Kemalist Turkey was regarded as a part of the imperialist bloc by the Chinese. At a time when countries were simply divided into camps as “revolutionary” and “anti-revolutionary,” Turkey of Kemalism was naturally sorted out as a reactionary force. During the Cold War, the contention of ideologies had great influence on every country in the world, including the Chinese perceptions on Turkey. In the 1960s, China had publicly supported the leftist movement in Turkey. CCP’s mouthpiece *People’s Daily* (*Ren Min Ri Bao*) also editorialized on this issue in order to display support for the Turkish people.⁶

Translation constitutes an important part of research. Contrary to China’s shallow studies meshed with politics, scholars of the Soviet Union conducted effective research on Turkey despite being also deeply influenced by its own ideology. Before the reform and the opening-up process in China, the Chinese translated some of the works of Soviet scholars on Turkey. Of these, A. F. Migele’s *A Concise History of Modern Turkey*⁷ might be recited as the most significant. This book, with reference to abundant sources, mainly introduced a portrait of Turkey in the first half of the 20th century. It was an excellent source for the Chinese to learn about the modern history of Turkey at the time. Of course, as a typical historical work written in the Soviet Union, this book allotted much space to the movement of workers and peasants in Turkey, the condition of the Turkish Communist Party and the relationship between Turkey and the Soviet Union. In my opinion, this book still represents a unique and valuable contribution to the field of Turkish studies.

In addition, in the 1960s, *Series of Translation on Asia and Africa* (*ya fei yi cong*) constituted another venue for the transmission of further research on Turkey by Soviet scholars. In particular, the fifth issue of 1960 was a special collection on Turkey and it consisted of five articles: “Turkey’s Road of Development,” “Nature and Impacts of the Turkish Plutocrat,” “Socioeconomic Relations in Turkish Agriculture after the World War II,” “Istanbul,” and “In Rural Areas in Turkey.” These studies and reports might be counted as the most detailed introduction and analyses about Turkey available for the Chinese at that time. Undoubtedly, however, their arguments were established in the background of the Cold War.⁸ In addition to this special volume, the journal also contained several articles about Turkey in other volumes. In the second issue of 1963, for example, a paper titled “National Capitalism of Turkey” was published (translated by Xu Xiang, originally published in the second issue of “*World Economy and International Relations*,” Soviet Union, 1962).

down upon. Rulers like Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, Kishi Nobusuke, Batista, Sayyedand and Menderes had already been overturned or would be soon overthrown by their people. See *People’s Daily*, May 10, 1960.

⁶ *People’s Daily*, May 5, 1960.

⁷ А.Ф. Миддер, *Очерки Новейшей Истории Турции*, Москва, 1948. The Chinese version was published in 1958.

⁸ For example, in “Turkey’s Road of Development,” the author argued that: “modern Turkey’s road of development is inconsistent. On one hand, it is one of the first eastern countries to struggle for national independency and gain its national sovereignty. On the other hand, it has become an epigone of colonialism in nowadays. The national bourgeois of Turkey who was the leading class of liberation revolution now is carrying out a reactionary policy... After several decades, Turkey has become the mainstay of the reactionaries.”

In brief, during the thirty years before the reform and the opening-up process, Chinese perceptions of Turkey were strongly affected by the political context and ideology of the time. The limited sources on Turkey accessible from China entailed mainly the judgments of political leaders and the articles translated from the Soviet scholars. Safely speaking, Turkish studies had not yet been put on the agenda by Chinese scholars.

2. Turkish Studies in China since the Reform and the Opening-up⁹

Thirty years since the reform and the opening-up in China, the academic community of China has progressed significantly in terms of Turkish studies, thanks to the expanding range of topics, the improving academic level, the flourishing publications,¹⁰ and the enlarging research teams. Since the reform and the opening-up, scholars such as Yang Zhaojun, Peng Shuzhi and Zhu Kerou demonstrated great efforts to lay a foundation for Turkish studies in China. Later on, some younger scholars such as Xiao Xian, Sun Zhenyu, Dong Zhenghua, Huang Weimin, Liu Yun, Chen Decheng, Bi Jiankang and Zan Tao have followed in their footsteps.

2.1. Reevaluation of the Turkish Bourgeois Revolution

As mentioned above, Chinese perceptions of Turkey were strongly influenced and shaped by the political context and ideology before the reform and the opening-up. In 1978, when the new policy of reform and opening-up was adopted by CCP under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, world-shaking transformations were about to take place, sweeping every corner of this large and old-line oriental country. The new era was also deemed as a spring board for the social sciences. The first task for Chinese intellectuals would be to bring the “revolution paradigm” to account. It could be said that the Turkish studies in the new era were also founded on the reflection, denial and the liquidation of the poison and legacy of the ultra-left political ideology. In this regard, two scholars’ works opened a new window. This is the contribution of Professor He Fangchuan and Lin Beidian of History Department, Peking University.¹¹

9 Bi Jiankang summarized the research on Turkish politics by Chinese scholars in the past thirty years. See Bi Jiankang and Jia Zhen, “Overview of Research on Turkish Politics in China during the Last Thirty Years [jin san shi nian lai guo nei Tu’erqi zheng zhi yan jiu gai lan],” in *West Asia and Africa*, Vol. 11 (2009). This part of my paper benefits a lot from Mr. Bi’s summarization.

10 On December 12, 2009, through the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), I searched *West Asia and Africa*, the most important journal on Middle East study in China under the keyword “Turkey” (Tu’erqi in Chinese). I found that in the journal of *West Asia and Africa*, there are 72 theses (with “Tu’erqi” in their title) published in the past thirty years. A further investigation shows that apart from the review articles and the general introduction, there are still over 60 analytical articles with topics ranging from politics and economy to society and religion.

11 Lin Beidian, “Accurately Evaluating National Bourgeoisie’s Role in Modern National Liberation Movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America [zheng que ping jia ya fei la min zu zi chan jie ji zai xian dai min zu jie fang yun dong zhong de zuo yong],” in *Trend of World Historiography [shi jie shi yan jiu dong tai]*, vol. 10 (1979); He Fangchuan, “On Nature and Influence of the Early Political Activities of Asian National Bourgeoisie in Modern Ages [lun jin dai ya zhou zi chan jie ji zao qi zheng zhi huo dong de xing zhi he zuo yong],” in *World History [shi jie li shi]*, vol. 6 (1984).

Lin Beidian pointed out that:

It is clear that the national bourgeoisie was the leader of national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America after the World War I and Russia's October Revolution. However, our view in the past was that the national bourgeoisie actually could not make great achievements in the revolution. That is to say, we once believed that the national bourgeoisie could not afford the mission of leading the national-democratic revolution. This prejudice had so deep influence in our nation that in our education and history texts that the national bourgeoisie just 'woke up' at the beginning of the twentieth century but suddenly disappeared in the history after the October Revolution. Even in the place that the national bourgeoisie appeared again later, they were just as 'minor roles' or 'antics' of history. In this condition, the national liberation movements led by Kemal Atatürk and Gandhi were counted as 'reverses'. For a very long time, our research on the national bourgeoisie of Asia and Africa was limited in the period of early modern, while the contemporary history has been ignored. To understand the role of the national bourgeoisie in the revolutions, it is necessary for us to step further to investigate the changes of the national liberation movements after the World War I and the October Revolution and under whose leadership they were won.¹²

As for expert studies on Turkey, Professor Zhu Kerou of the Institute of World History in Chinese Academy of Social Science made groundbreaking contributions and remains a most prominent scholar of Turkish studies in China. Professor Zhu's research on Turkey coincided with the new era of reform and opening-up. He spent a lot of effort in the reevaluation of the historical role of the Turkish bourgeoisie and fully affirmed its positive contribution to Turkish modern history. Two of Professor Zhu's papers were important in this aspect: "On Historical Role of the Young Turks,"¹³ and "Kemal Atatürk's Contribution to the Turkish National Liberation Movements."¹⁴

2.2. On Turkey's Experience of Modernization

Since 1980s, most Chinese publications on Turkey's modern history followed the paradigm of modernization studies. Turkish experience of modernization was deemed a significant and valuable reference/example for China. Since the late 1980s, partially as a result of Deng Xiaoping's new policy of reform and opening-up, modernization studies emerged in China as a new paradigm of the social sciences. This new attitude also changed Chinese scholars' perceptions of modern Turkish history.

Under Professor Luo Rongqu's supervision, Dr. Dong Zhenghua completed his master thesis titled "Essential Features of the Turkish Way to Modernization: A Study Centering on Atatürk's Reforms,"¹⁵ in which the author wrote: "Turkey's way to a mod-

12 Lin Beidian, "Revolutionary Role of Modern National Bourgeoisie in Asia, Africa and Latin America (xian dai ya fei min zu zi chan jie ji de ge ming zuo yong)", in *World History*, vol. 3, 1985.

13 Zhu Kerou, "On Historical Role of the Young Turks [qing nian tu'erqi dang ren de li shi zuo yong]," in *World History*, vol. 3 (1980).

14 Zhu Kerou, "Kemal Atatürk's Contribution to the Turkish National Liberation Movements [kai mo'er dui tu'erqi min zu jie fang yun dong de gong xian]," in *World History*, vol. 2 (1981).

15 This thesis is published in Dong Zhenghua, "Essential Features of the Turkish Way to Modernization: A Study Centering on Atatürk's Reforms [tu'erqi xian dai hua dao lu de ji ben te dian: yi kai mo'er gai ge

ern statehood is typically a way of constant reforms.”¹⁶ Dr. Dong’s thesis concludes that:

Atatürk’s reforms and the Turkish modern state have caused great influences. However, this ought not to be interpreted only through the lens of capitalist transformation, rather it must be explained from the perspective that how an underdeveloped country could find a proper way of development suitable to her own conditions.¹⁷

In the early 1990s, two Ph.D. dissertations on the modernization of Turkey were completed under Professor Peng Shuzhi’s supervision, and then were developed into two books.¹⁸ Professor Xiao Xian’s research group from Yunnan University also worked on a book of Atatürk’s reforms entitled *Severe Illness and Strong Medicine: Atatürk’s Reforms in Turkey*.¹⁹ In all of the works cited above, Atatürk’s reforms received highly positive evaluations.

As one of the key factors of the modernization process, the subject of secularization also entered the radar of Chinese scholars. Works of Sun Zhenyu and Zhu Kerou are noticeable in this regard. Specializing in religious studies, Sun’s book carried out a detailed investigation on Turkey’s religious sects, Islamic revivalism and the secularization policy of Atatürk.²⁰ So far, Sun’s book constitutes the most unique work that Chinese scholars have formulated on Turkey’s religion. It is important to point out here that most of his arguments were based on Turkish sources. Professor Zhu Kerou published two articles respectively on Turkey’s secularization reforms and Islamic revivalism.²¹ Zhu concludes on the following: Turkey’s Islamic revival benefited from the political democratization since 1946; Turkey’s Islamic revival is a threat to the secular regime, but it has no power to overthrow it; Turkey’s secularization is irreversible; Turkish secular regime would redefine the freedom of belief in religion, but would not change its secular nature; there is still the possibility of a military coup. Mr. Zhu cited many Turkish sources in support of his argument. His research offered a general framework for understanding Turkey’s political Islam, and remains as the most competent one in China.

2.3. On Turkey’s Foreign Policy

Turkey is one of the key actors on the stage of the international politics. In the field of Turkish foreign affairs, Professor Xiao Xian and his research group published a book

wei zhong dian],” in *Comparative Studies on Modernization of Various Countries* [ge guo xian dai hua bi jiao yan jiu], ed. Luo Rongqu, (Shanxi: People’s Publishing House, 1993), 336-362.

16 *Ibid.*, 336.

17 *Ibid.*, 362.

18 Huang Weimin, *Turkey (tu’erqi)* (Beijing: the Commercial Press, 2002); Liu Yun, *Political Modernization in Turkey* [Tu’erqi zheng zhi xian dai hua si kao] (Gansu People’s Press, 2002).

19 Xiao Xian, *Severe Illness and Strong Medicine: Atatürk’s Reforms in Turkey* [chen ke meng yao: Tu’erqi de kai mo er gai ge] (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2001).

20 Sun Zhenyu, *Tradition and Reality: Islam and Muslims in Turkey* [chuan tong yu xian shi: Tu’erqi de yi si lan jiao yu mu si lin] (The Ethnic Publishing House, 2001).

21 Yang Haocheng and Zhu Kerou, eds., *Historical Study on Hot Issues of Contemporary Middle East* [dang dai zhong dong re dian wen ti de li shi tan suo: zong jiao yu shi su] (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2000).

titled *Turkey's Relationship with the US*.²² So far, this is considered the best work by any Chinese scholar regarding the study of the relationship between Turkey and the U.S., although it is based on second-hand English sources. This book covers the period from the late Ottoman times to 2003. Through the analysis of geopolitics, Xiao Xian's study carries much value for the Chinese to understand why Turkey is important for America's Middle East strategy.

It is quite natural for Chinese scholars to pay special attention to the relationship between Turkey and China. In this regard, we could locate several articles: "Concise History of Friendship between China and Turkey (zhong guo he tu er qi you hao guan xi xiao shi);"²³ "A Historical Investigation and Evaluation on Relationship between China and Turkey (zhong tu guan xi de li shi kao cha ji ping xi, by Huang Weimin);"²⁴ "On Evolution, Problems and Future of Relationship between Turkey and China (zhong guo yu tu er qi guan xi de yan bian, wen ti yu wei lai, by Xiao Xian and Wang Wenzhang);"²⁵ and Zan Tao's "History of Sino-Turkish Relationship and Turkey's Perceptions on the Rise of China."²⁶ From these studies, we can surmise that the mainstream of Sino-Turkish relationship is based on friendship and communication, while the potential problems include the trade unbalance between the two countries as well as the sensitive East Turkistan issue.

In effect, for Chinese scholars of international politics, the main concern about Xinjiang's security situation often points to Central Asia, where Turkey pursues her own dream. As such, the constant Chinese interest in Turkey's policy towards the Central Asia is rather understandable. In this regard, there are at least two papers that need to be addressed: Yan Wenhui's "*Ethnic Problem of Turkey and Its Impact to Turkish Foreign Affairs* [tu er qi min zu wen ti ji qi ying xiang xia de dui wai zheng ce];"²⁷ and Chang Fen's "*The Effects of Geopolitics and Religion to Inter-states relations: an Analysis of Turkish and Iranian Influence to Central Asia* [di yuan zheng zhi he zong jiao yin su zai guo jia jian guan xi zhong de zuo yong: shi xi tu er qi, yi lang dui zhong ya di qu de ying xiang]."²⁸ Certain chapters of some books also deal with the relationships between Turkey and Central Asia. For example, Wang Jianping, Wu Yungui and Li Xinghua worked out an unpublished book entitled *Islam of Central Asia and its Link to the Outside World*, in which the authors devoted several pages to Pan-Turkism, Sufism in Turkey and their activities in Central Asia. The importance of this

22 Xiao Xian, Wu Qingling and Wu Lei, *Turkey's Relationship with the US* [tu er qi yu mei guo guan xi yan jiu] (Beijing: Shishi Publisher, 2006).

23 *West Asia and Africa*, Vol. 6 (1987).

24 *West Asia and Africa*, Vol. 5, (2003).

25 *Foreign Affairs Review*, April 2007.

26 Zan Tao, "History of Sino-Turkish Relationship and Turkey's Perceptions on the Rise of China," *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* (March, 2009).

27 Yan Wenhui, "Ethnic Problem of Turkey and Its Impact to Turkish Foreign Affairs [tu er qi min zu wen ti ji qi ying xiang xia de dui wai zheng ce]," *Henan Social Science*, vol. 5 (2004).

28 Chang Fen, "The Effects of Geopolitics and Religion to Inter-states Relations: An Analysis of Turkish and Iranian Influence to Central Asia [di yuan zheng zhi he zong jiao yin su zai guo jia jian guan xi zhong de zuo yong: shi xi tu er qi, yi lang dui zhong ya di qu de ying xiang]," in *World Economy and Politics*, vol. 3 (2001).

study lies in the fact that it suggests that Turkey's strategy to Central Asia depends much on cultural, ethnical and religious factors. As for Pan-Turkism in Turkey, Professor Pan Zhiping of Xinjiang Academy of Social Science did most of the work. In particular, Professor Pan has been working on the East Turkistan problem, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism for two or three decades, producing many works in this field.

2.4. Increase of Translated Works

In 1982, Bernard Lewis's *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* was translated into Chinese by Mr. Fan Zhonglian [xian dai tu er qi de xing qi].²⁹ This work was a big motivation for Turkish studies in China. So far, it remains the most cited work by Chinese scholars in the area of Turkish studies.

Professor Chen Fangzheng of Chinese University of Hong Kong encouraged the translation of two books on Turkish history.³⁰ In the "prologue," Mr. Chen expressed his ideal: "The history of Ottoman-Turkey and China resembles very much in many aspects. We need to reflect every of her dilemma and transformation in history... The lessons and inspirations of Turkey are not confined to the past, but also it points to the present and the future as well."

2.5. Other Important Topics of Turkish Studies in China

Apart from expert studies mentioned above and a few general studies,³¹ Chinese scholars working on Turkey often pick up from the following stream of topics: Turkish Islamic Revivalism, political democratization, Turkey's relationship with European Union, Kurdish problem of Turkey and civil-military relation in Turkish politics. These are important issues concerning the political development in modern Turkey, but Chinese scholars have not yet produced satisfactory research on these subjects.

3. Some Comments

In the following, I would like to offer some comments on the state of Turkish studies in China and conclude in a few words.

The problem of sources: Clearly it is very rare for Chinese scholars to use first-hand material such as in modern Turkish in their research, let alone conducting archival or field work. This poses a great problem, since the lack of first-hand material brings lack of originality. Professor Yang Zhaojun and Zhu Kerou stand as the exceptions, while almost nobody, unfortunately, has inherited their legacy.

The problem of paradigm: If the research paradigm before the reform and the opening-up process depended on the Leninist and Maoist political ideologies, the cur-

29 Bernard Lewis *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, trans. Fan Zhonglian (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1982).

30 Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968); Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). The Chinese versions of these two books were published by Xuelin Publishers in 1996.

31 In the early 1990s, Professor Yang Zhaojun finished his *Modern History of Turkey* [Tu'erqi xian dai shi], a general history book covering the period from World War I to 1980s. This is a unique general history of Turkey worked out by Chinese scholars based on Turkish materials.

rent scholars of China rely much more on the works of Anglo-American scholars (partly because most scholars can utilize only English material for research). It is necessary to point out here that although the perception of the leftists was shaped by political ideology, it is still one sophisticated paradigm of Marxist social science, which had close links to the contemporary neo-Marxism of the West. Their concern about the international communist movements, the relationship between Turkey and Soviet Union, the situation of subaltern Turkish society and their criticism of the capitalist model of development are still of great importance for today's understanding of the world and Turkey in particular.

Being unaware of the importance of academic history of Turkish studies: In 1979, Mr. Zhu Kerou published an article titled "An Introduction of Turkish Historiography in the U.S.,"³² but I found no mention of this article in the scholarship of the past thirty years. This demonstrates the fact that the Chinese younger scholars have not paid much attention to the development of academic history. They mostly pretend that they are doing original research. As Mr. Zhu has correctly pointed out, the great progress of American Turkish studies after the World War II was due to the use of first-hand material.³³ Today, we have to realize that the writing of academic history is in great urgency.

Translation is not enough: In recent years, Orhan Pamuk's novels have been translated into Chinese mostly from Turkish. In total, however, there are very few works of Turkish studies translated into Chinese, either from English or Turkish. The several available translated works date back to the 1960s-1970s. Hence, they are quite old.

Humanistic studies are weak: By humanistic studies, I mean history, philosophy and anthropology, which constitute the foundations of the social sciences. Without a good base of humanistic studies, it will be very difficult for Chinese scholars to produce and convey their own understanding of Turkey to the whole world.

In summary, Turkish studies in China have not yet been well-established. Most of the researchers are still working on the basis of second-hand sources (mostly in English). To remedy this situation, the Chinese should first fully understand the importance of Turkish studies in their country. Second they should train scholars with Turkish and Ottoman language skills. The Chinese intellectuals can establish their own unique tradition of Turkish studies since the early twentieth century due to a couple of reasons. Turkey, as a pioneer of reform and revolution, was once the example and reference for both reformists and revolutionaries in modern Chinese history.³⁴ Moreover, Chinese professors of the last generation, like Yang Zhaojun and Zhu Kerou, who were able to use first-hand sources to conduct Turkish studies in China, set good examples for the newcomers.

32 Zhu Kerou, "An Introduction of Turkish Historiography in the U.S.," in *Trend of World Historiography*, vol. I (1979).

33 *Ibid.*, 21.

34 For an introduction of Chinese intellectuals and politicians' interests in Ottoman-Turkish reforms and revolutions, see Dong Zhenghua, "Chinese Views of Atatürk and Modern Turkey," in *Uluslararası Konferans: Atatürk ve Modern Türkiye*, ed. Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1999), 669-675.

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Zan TAO

Abstract

In the past sixty years since the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) was founded in 1949, Chinese scholars of history and international politics have focused on the field of Turkish studies. Most of this research was carried out after China adopted the reform and the opening-up policies in 1978. Compared to what was accomplished in the thirty years before 1978, Chinese scholars have made great progress in Turkish studies in the past thirty years. Beginning with a reevaluation and reaffirmation of the historical role of the Turkish national bourgeois, Chinese academic community has expanded their interests from the Turkish national movement to the experiences of modernization in Turkey, from the military's role in Turkish politics to the Kurdish issue, from Islamic revival to the relationship between China and Turkey, and so on. However, generally speaking, the state of Turkish studies in China has not yet reached a competent academic level. On the contrary, it suffers from several vital problems, such as the absence of studies based on first-hand sources, the lack of translations from western and Turkish works, and the shortage of original research, all of which need to be urgently addressed.

Keywords: Turkey, China, Turkish Studies, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk