



Changing Jewish Communities

Number 63

January 6, 2011

<http://jcpa.org/article/the-slow-disappearance-of-turkeys-jewish-community/>

The Slow Disappearance of Turkey's Jewish Community

Rifat Bali

- Turkey's Jewish community is one of the few remaining Diaspora communities in a country with a Muslim majority. Despite its apparent dynamism, its long-term viability is doubtful. The community does not have any influence or play any role worth mentioning in Turkey's cultural, political, or intellectual life. Furthermore, in recent years the entire community has become the target of much resentment and hostile rhetoric from the country's Islamist and ultranationalist sectors.
- Another problem concerns the question of identity. In Turkey, a "Zionist" education—stressing both Jewish tradition and a connection with Israel—is used to prevent Jewish youth from further assimilation. But such an education is extremely difficult to impart under the conditions prevailing in Turkey. Jewish parents counsel their children not to display Star of David necklaces in public, and to remain silent and if possible completely ignore the constant, hateful, often slanderous criticism of Israel in the Turkish public sphere.
- The *Mavi Marmara* incident was an acid test for Turkish Jewry. It came as no surprise that the public perceived the incident as the murder of Muslim Turks by the Jewish army and started asking Turkish Jews whose side they were on. The incident also triggered a wave of anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories in the Turkish media and among public figures. For the most part, the Turkish Jewish leadership found itself unable to address the issue publicly.
- For the situation to change, Turkish society would have to veer away from the current insular nationalist and Islamist atmosphere and move in a more liberal, democratic,

multicultural direction. Turkey could then both come to grips with the darker aspects of its past and work for a different and better future. At present, the indications that such a transition might occur are mixed at best.

A Low Profile and a Shrinking Community

Turkey's Jewish community is one of the few remaining Diaspora communities in a country with a Muslim majority.[1] For any researcher or journalist seeking information about this community and its current state, two of the most important accessible sources are the community's sole remaining paper, the weekly *Şalom*, and the community's lay and religious leadership. If such a person were to peruse *Şalom* for the cultural activities held by the community's various organizations and speak with the lay leaders and the Chief Rabbinate, the impression he would receive is that, despite its relatively small numbers, Turkey's Jewish community[2] is extremely dynamic and has even been undergoing a certain cultural renaissance in recent years.[3]

Yet, for all of the community's apparent dynamism, a number of factors would dampen optimism for its long-term viability. Among these is that the community does not have any influence or play any role worth mentioning in Turkey's cultural, political, or intellectual life. Although a small number of Turkish Jews served in Turkey's Grand National Assembly from 1946 to 1961,[4] since then they have largely disappeared from the political scene.[5] Furthermore, in recent years the entire Jewish community has become the target of much resentment and hostile rhetoric from the country's Islamist and ultranationalist sectors.[6]

The relations between Turkey's Jewish community and the state of Israel have, by their very nature, remained ambiguous and highly sensitive. In the current Turkish situation, where anti-Americanism[7] and anti-Israeli sentiment often cross the line into outright anti-Semitism and a popular demonization of both Zionism and Israel, it is inconceivable for a Turkish Jew to express pro-Israeli sentiment openly. As a result, community leaders and others who publicly declare their "Turkishness" are careful to keep all personal and institutional relations with Israel very low-key and far from the scrutiny of the Turkish media.

Another problem concerns the question of identity. In Turkey, the educational approach that is used to prevent the youth from further assimilation and for the preservation of Jewish identity—one of the primary concerns of all Diaspora communities—is a "Zionist" education. Its central tenet is the maintaining of a connection with Jewish tradition on one hand and the state of Israel on the other. But such an education is extremely difficult to impart under the conditions prevailing in Turkey. Because of the strong current of hostility toward Israel and Zionism, Jewish parents counsel their children not to display Star of David necklaces in public, and to remain silent and if possible completely ignore the constant, hateful, often slanderous criticism of Israel in the Turkish public sphere.

Finally, the demography of Turkey's Jewish population presents little to encourage optimism. In 1927, the year of the Turkish Republic's first general census,[8] the community numbered 81,872. Eighty years later it had dwindled to somewhere between one-fourth and one-fifth of that figure.[9]

The Reasons for the Present Situation

Turkish Jewry has faced far fewer problems than other Jewish groups living in Islamic lands. Why, then, has this community, which still appears so dynamic in some regards, arrived at such a state? There are a number of clear reasons for the situation.

The first major demographic turning point for Turkey's Jewish community since the founding of the Republic was the establishment of the state of Israel. From 1945, there was every indication that the Turkish Republic would permit the founding of new political parties and enter a freer period of multiparty democracy. Yet, by the autumn of 1948, close to half of Turkey's Jews had left for the new Jewish state.[10] Thus, Turkey's Jewish population fell from 76,965 in 1945 to 45,995 just three years later.[11]

There were several factors behind this large-scale emigration. First and foremost, because of a series of bitter experiences over the first two and a half decades of the Turkish Republic's existence, Turkish Jews had lost all hope of being considered equal Turkish citizens. Second, they realized that they could fully live their Judaism only in Israel. The Turkish government had always required a single unambiguous loyalty of its citizens, one that brooked no whiff of external affiliation to a religion, ethnicity, or even a voluntary organization. Lastly, many young Turkish Jews who had received a Zionist education saw Israel's establishment as fulfilling the national dream of the Jewish people.

Conditions during the Single-Party Period (1923-1945)

Around the time of Israel's establishment, the prospects both for Turkey and its Jewish population looked favorable. For many of Turkey's Jews, however, this was not enough to erase the memory of twenty-two years of single-party rule under the Republican People's Party. During that time they were repeatedly exposed to anti-Semitism, discrimination, and chauvinism on the part of the intellectual elites or the authorities. They were subjected to heavy pressures toward "Turkification"-assimilation into Turkish society-from the Kemalist political and intellectual elite. This elite claimed to regard all who lived within the new Republic as Turkish citizens possessing equal rights, regardless of language, religion, and race; at the same time, they expected the various non-Turkish and non-Muslim inhabitants to wholeheartedly adopt Turkish customs, language, religion, and culture. Moreover, Turkey's Jewish bourgeoisie was constantly forced to contend with the jealousy and resentment-sentiments that often morphed into anti-Semitism-resulting from their far greater economic success than their Muslim counterparts.

One of the reasons for the ongoing pressure to assimilate and speak Turkish, which was directed at non-Muslims in general during those years, concerned the special situation of the country's Jewish population. From the viewpoint of the Kemalist elites, the "national language" of the Jews was Hebrew. In actuality, the principal languages of most Turkish Jews were the Judeo-Spanish dialect known as Ladino and, as a result of several generations of educating their youth at Alliance Israélite Universelle schools, French.[12] Only those fervent Zionists intent on immigrating to Palestine had some grasp of spoken Hebrew.

Nevertheless, those Jews who failed to sufficiently devote themselves to learning and speaking Turkish became, along with their distinctive accents, an indispensable subject for satire in the popular press, and more seriously, the subjects of ongoing public pressure to do so. Coupled with their economic success, the relative failure of Turkish Jewry to fully “Turkify” themselves led much of the country’s elite to view them as an ungrateful minority. Some four hundred years after the Spanish Expulsion, they still refused to learn the language of their tolerant and magnanimous hosts, preferring to continue speaking the language of their former oppressors or even French, all the while exploiting the true sons of the nation, the Turks.[13]

The reality underlying such a notion was the impossibility of abruptly transforming the collective attitudes of the Turkish Republic, built as they were on the ashes of six hundred years of Islamic rule. Regardless of the Western concepts of citizenship and secularism enshrined in the Turkish Constitution, Turkey’s Muslim majority continued to look upon its Jews not as Turks but as Jews and, therefore, dhimmis, persons by definition not entitled to the same privileges as its Muslim inhabitants. Because of this perception non-Muslims in general were considered inherently unreliable, fostering discrimination during both their military service and daily life.

Although the existing legislation specified that a public servant needed only to be a “Turk,” those responsible for applying it consistently acted in line with the aforementioned perception. That is, while the state required unswerving loyalty from its citizens, the loyalty of non-Muslims was always closely monitored for any sign of divergence. Despite the demand that they thoroughly behave as Turks, they were never truly considered as such. For the authorities and most of the public, the term Turk was understood as synonymous with Muslim and/or “ethnic Turk,” inevitably producing discrimination against non-Muslims.

Thus, in the public sphere non-Muslims were unable to obtain employment as public servants, police officers, or noncommissioned officers in the Turkish army.[14] A more proactive form of discrimination against non-Muslims in the early years of the Republic was the imposition of strict legal quotas on the number or percentage of non-Muslims whom foreign-owned companies could employ. Until that time these companies had almost exclusively employed non-Muslims, since they had the requisite linguistic and commercial capabilities. In the summer of 1923, the Commerce Ministry ordered foreign companies to fire 50-75 percent of their non-Muslim staff and replace them with Muslims.[15]

During the first decades of the Republic, three landmark events in particular marked the collective memory of Turkey’s Jews. The first of these was the anti-Jewish riots and looting of June-July 1934, which have come to be known as the “Thrace Incidents” (*Trakya Olayları*). The events of the last days of June and first days of July that year, in the cities and villages of Turkey’s European provinces of Edirne, Çanakkale, and Kırklareli where there were large concentrations of Jews, began with a boycott of Jewish artisans and merchants. In subsequent days the Jewish neighborhoods of these areas were besieged by Turks from the surrounding villages, local residents, and students. The mobs threw rocks at Jewish houses and shops and harassed Jewish women and young girls.

As events unfolded, the local Jews fell into panic and sold their businesses, houses, and possessions for next to nothing, or simply abandoned them in attempting to flee the area for

Istanbul. Despite the flood of Jewish refugees into that city, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, in a speech to the Turkish parliament on 5 July, would only publicly make mention of these events to condemn them and announce that an investigation had been launched. Until that point the Istanbul press had not run a single story on the incidents. Even after İnönü's speech they were portrayed as minor, or used as pretexts to call on the Jews to assimilate more quickly and to learn and speak Turkish.

Following the prime minister's statements, a committee was formed headed by Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya. It was to investigate the locales where the disturbances had occurred and submit a report to the Council of Ministers. In light of the report, an official communiqué was issued on 14 July 1934. It presented a full account of the events and declared that the guilty parties would be brought to justice.

In light of the available archival documents, one can tentatively conclude that the incidents occurred for a number of reasons. One was the accumulated resentments and jealousies of the local population toward the Jews of Thrace, who had not learned Turkish and whose merchants dominated the region's economy. In addition, the Turkish regime and army increasingly desired to remilitarize the Bosphorus Straits and surrounding area-which the 1923 Lausanne Treaty 1923 had demilitarized-and to reestablish Turkish military bases and presence there. Both the politicians and military chiefs tended to view both the local non-Muslim inhabitants and those with foreign citizenship who lived in the region as unreliable, and hoped somehow to relocate them. The method ultimately employed was a slow but constant campaign of attacks, harassment, and intimidation against the area's Jews in the hope of compelling them to leave. Yet the hatred against the region's Jews proved harder to keep on a low heat than supposed, quickly generating the large-scale disturbances that finally erupted.[16]

The second event was the formation of "labor battalions" out of non-Muslim conscripts in May 1941. In that month it was suddenly decided to draft all non-Muslim males aged 27-40 and station them in the various provinces of Anatolia. Even so, these recruits were segregated from their Muslim fellow recruits and provided with neither weapons nor uniforms, instead being ordered to work in the construction of roads and air bases.

In essence, this was a reprise of the old Ottoman practice. During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), for instance, the Ottoman state, facing the rising tide of ethnic and regional nationalism, began to view its non-Muslim soldiers as a potential fifth column. Hence they were given picks and shovels instead of weapons and sent off to build roads.[17] These units composed of non-Muslim recruits became known as the "labor battalions."

Thus, the actions of May 1941 were a repeat of a thirty-year-old practice. The German army, having conquered most of the Balkans, was now threatening to attack Turkey. The Turkish Council of Ministers, fearful that in the event of a German invasion the country's non-Muslim minorities (particularly the Armenians) would serve as a fifth column for the Nazi-led forces, decided to intern the entire male populations of the respective minority communities. The soldiers in question were decommissioned in July 1942, barely one year into their service.[18]

The last of these incidents was the Capital Tax Law (Varlık Vergisi Kanunu), along with its discriminatory implementation against non-Muslims. Even after the decommissioning of the country's non-Muslim males, they would receive a second blow only four months later, this time an economic one. In response to the excessive profiteering and wealth of the black marketers and speculators who emerged as a result of Turkey's wartime economic conditions, on 11 November 1942 the Turkish legislature passed the Capital Tax Law, which was intended to tax these profits. While not discriminatory in its conception or wording, in its arbitrary and selective implementation that is what it became.

The committees formed to determine the amount of taxes that the country's citizens would be obliged to pay divided the taxpayers into four categories: M (Muslim), GM (*gayri Müslim*, or non-Muslim), D (Dönme),^[19] and E (*Ecnebi*, or foreigner). The rate at which those non-Muslim-Turkish professionals, merchants, and industrialists were to be taxed was set at four times that of their Muslim counterparts. In the event that they were unable to pay the full amounts assessed, they would be legally obligated to work off their outstanding debt through physical labor.

As a result, over the course of the law's existence hundreds of non-Muslim males were sent to the small eastern Anatolian village of Aşkale to labor under severe winter conditions. In contrast, not a single tax delinquent from the M or D categories (i.e., Muslims or Dönmes) was ever sent east, while the tax burdens assessed to those in the E category (foreigners) were usually lowered retroactively through the intervention of their respective diplomatic missions.

In 1943 Cyrus L. Sulzberger, a *New York Times* reporter, published a four-part series on the tax and its discriminatory implementation.^[20] Three months after these reports and only a few days before the Cairo meeting between the Allied leaders Roosevelt and Churchill, Prime Minister İnönü announced that the delinquent taxpayers then in Aşkale would be freed. A new law pardoning them and releasing them from their outstanding debts was passed on 1 March 1944. Yet, ultimately, the Capital Tax Law was a great economic blow to Turkey's non-Muslim bourgeoisie. As a result of the huge and often impossible tax burdens it placed on them, a great number of non-Muslim merchants and industrialists went bankrupt or had to liquidate their businesses or sell them for next to nothing to Muslim counterparts.^[21]

These three events have assumed an almost mythical quality among Turkish Jewry. Each is representative of the general discrimination that they constantly faced during the single-party period.

Despite the initial mass wave of emigration in 1948-1949 that came in response to these harsh experiences, there was no further out-migration of such a scale. Nevertheless, the country's Jewish population, which stood at 45,995 in 1955,^[22] kept declining over the next decade to 38,267^[23] in 1965, a trend that would continue unabated to the present, with the community now numbering approximately seventeen thousand.^[24] One difference between then and now is that, whereas the preferred destination of Turkish Jewish youth was once Israel, these days, like their Muslim fellow citizens, they prefer to both study and live in the United States. There are also many Turkish Jews to be found in Turkey's business, media, and academic sectors. Nevertheless, while the discrimination of the single-party period has not returned, the

community continues to live with something like a siege mentality. Emigration, if at a lower rate, continues, and the issue is why.

The answer lies partly in how Turkey's population and its political, social, and intellectual elites view its Jewish citizens. The struggles between the country's various ideological streams have also had repercussions on the Jewish population.

The Situation During the Multiparty Years (1946-)

During the first two decades of the Republic, one of the principal goals of the Kemalist cadres was to secularize a society that had for centuries been run on the basis of Islamic shari'a law. This was an encouraging development for the country's non-Muslims, who saw the prospect of being treated for the first time as full members of society, possessing rights and duties on par with those of the Muslim majority.

Despite the failure of this promise to materialize during the single-party period, the transition to multiparty democracy following the Second World War gave renewed hope. The years from the establishment of the Democratic Party in 1946 to its coming to power in 1950 fostered an optimism reminiscent of the initial enthusiasm following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. There were grounds for believing that the equality promised by the 1924 Constitution but never fulfilled would finally be implemented, ensuring that non-Muslims would be both viewed and treated as full members of Turkish society and allowed to participate in all areas of Turkish life.

It is ironic, then, that Turkey's march toward greater democratization and liberalization has brought such meager long-term benefit to the country's Jewish community. In fact, the multiparty period has witnessed a clear, if uneven, veering away from the staunch secularism of the early Republic. Political parties jockey for the support of Turkey's largely uneducated rural voters by using populist tactics and appealing to their more traditional and religious sentiments.

The Rise of the Islamist Movement

Within the new democratic paradigm even the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP), the steadfast proponent of an authoritarian, top-down secularization of Turkish society, found itself forced to soften its approach to Islamic tradition in an attempt to cater to voters' wishes. During the last CHP government (1946-1950) this trend was already apparent. Courses for new imams and Islamic preachers began to be held again, faculties of divinity were reopened, parents were given the option of religious education for their children at the primary- school level, persons going on the Hajj were granted special appropriations, and the tombs of twenty of Turkey's most famous saints were reopened to visitors by a law passed on 1 March 1950.

This would turn out to be insufficient, however, as the party was decisively defeated in the first truly democratic elections of 14 May 1950. But this was not merely an electoral tactic, as once in office the first measure the Democratic Party took was to allow the *ezan*, or Islamic call to prayer, to be read in Arabic again for the first time in almost three decades. Subsequently the new regime also revoked the previous ban on broadcasting religious programs on the state-run radio station, effectively allowing, among others, Qur'anic and other religious recitations.

In addition to the greater social latitude permitted to Islam, the liberalization also eventually led to the phenomenon known as political Islam. This initially took the form of the National Order Party (Millî Nizam Partisi), founded in 1970 by a professor of mechanical engineering, Necmettin Erbakan. Over the following three decades Erbakan promoted his National Viewpoint (Millî Görüş) ideology through a series of political parties,[25] the most recent of which was the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP). All of these, apart from the Felicity Party, were closed down by the Constitutional Court for acting contrary to the principle of secularism.

Upon the closure of the SP-predecessor Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) in 2001, the movement founded by Erbakan split into two factions. One was the SP, which faithfully continued its founder's ideology. Other SP members, however, left it to found the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP). It depicted itself as a "Muslim democratic" party, something akin to Europe's various Christian Democratic parties, while in fact still largely adhering to Erbakan's National Viewpoint ideology.

The Islamist Movement and the Turkish Jews

The steady growth of Turkey's Islamist movement that accompanied the country's transition to multiparty democracy has brought with it a growing trend of public anti-Semitism. Over the past decade this has appeared constantly in the ultranationalist and the Islamist press, gradually becoming a defining tenet of both ideologies.

Whereas during the single-party period the main catalysts for anti-Jewish sentiment were a certain class resentment and a perceived resistance to full assimilation on the part of the Jews, during the multiperiod the phenomenon would continue while undergoing certain transformations. From 1946 to 1980, resentments over income and wealth disparities continued to foster anti-Semitism. However, the birth, survival, and even prosperity of the state of Israel, despite attempts to destroy it in 1948, 1967, and 1973, added to the mix a general Muslim frustration and humiliation at their inability to do away with such an entity in their midst.

In the period from the military coup of 12 September 1980 to the present, Turkey's liberal economic policies have largely eliminated the financial and monetary gaps between Muslim and Jewish entrepreneurs and businessmen, and hence also the economic motivation for Turkish anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, while this resentment at least had some basis in the material world, it has been replaced by a more virulent strain, intractable in nature: the widely held belief that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the secular Turkish Republic, and the creation of Israel were all part of a vast Jewish plot to weaken Islam, the Muslims, and the mighty Turkish nation.[26] Zionists, Dönmes, and Freemasons, all seen as branches of Judaism or "Jewish World Government," are believed to play a greater or lesser role in this enterprise.

As elsewhere in the world, this brand of anti-Semitism has intensified in parallel with growing Islamic radicalization. Two of the more recent manifestations in Turkey were, first, the murder of the Jewish dentist Yasef Yahya (1964-2003) in August 2003-by his assailants' admission, for the crime of being Jewish. Second, three months later Islamic radicals carried out suicide bombings against two of Istanbul's main synagogues, Neve Shalom in the Galata district and Beth Israel in the Osmanbey neighborhood. These and other acts have proved the physical

threat that this form of anti-Semitism poses to the individual members and institutions of Turkey's Jewish community. The lack of further acts in the succeeding years, however, has allowed both the authorities and the media to largely ignore the phenomenon. They claim that the attacks were isolated events carried out by extremist individuals (preferably portrayed as foreigners), and dismiss the ongoing anti-Semitic diatribes as marginal rhetoric.

The Situation in the Wake of the Second Iraq War

A major development in Turkey since the First Iraq War has been the rise in both anti-American and anti-Israeli sentiment. This is usually accompanied by conspiracy theories featuring American Jews or Israelis as the operation's main planners, usually on Israel's behalf. This conspiratorial anti-Semitism achieved a new level of respectability with the publication of Soner Yalçın's books *Efendi* (2004)[27] and *Efendi II* (2006) by Doğan Book Publishers, a subsidiary of Turkey's largest media group Doğan Holding.

According to the first work, which had record sales for nonfiction in Turkey with almost 150,000 copies sold,[28] all of the important positions in Turkey have been occupied by the Dönmes since the founding of the Republic—including even the founders themselves, effectively making Turkey a “Jewish Republic.” The sequel, which was less well received, went further, claiming that even the country's dervish orders and religious institutions had been completely infiltrated by the Dönmes. Although any criticism of the secular regime and its founders was liable to win favor with the country's conservative elements, this allegation proved a bit excessive. But these books, and to a lesser extent those of the Marxist economics professor Yalçın Küçük, almost single-handedly brought anti-Semitism out of the Islamist and ultranationalist circles to which it had been largely confined and made it an acceptable part of the broader parlance.

Moreover, Turkey's Jews have had to face almost wholly negative rhetoric about Israel and Zionism from Turkish society and its elites, where the terms are often used in conjunction with such descriptors as “imperialism” and “rogue state.” Nor is this rhetoric limited to the rightists and Islamists; it is found with equal frequency in leftist and even traditionally sympathetic Kemalist circles.[29] Numerous claims in the Turkish press that Mossad agents were active in northern Iraq in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion[30] have greatly augmented the tendency. So has the perception that, particularly in Iraq, Turkish and Israeli interests were increasingly at odds.

Today it is virtually impossible to find someone in Turkey who will give even a neutral view of either Israel or Zionism, much less a favorable one. For public figures in particular, such a statement would be tantamount to political suicide, evoking accusations that the person had “sold his soul to the Zionists.” Faced with the prospect of even more extreme reactions including violence, Turkish Jews prefer to remain silent.

The Dual-Loyalty Accusation

Historically, Turkey's non-Muslim (and certain Muslim) minorities have often been suspected of disloyalty to the Turkish state and, in the case of the Jewish population, of dual loyalty or, more precisely, greater loyalty to Israel than Turkey. In such a situation of constant suspicion, the

Chief Rabbinate and most Jews have feared to utter any positive public statement about Israel. Perhaps the most cogent manifestation of this can be found in an article by Ankara University political science professor Baskın Oran. In concluding this piece, which appeared simultaneously in July 2004 in the Turkish leftist daily *Birgün* and the Turkish Armenian weekly *Agos*, and which strongly criticizes the antiminority and anti-Semitic publications in Turkey, Oran offers this admonition to Turkish Jews:

Israel's disgraceful actions have made it easier for some of our racists to attack the Jews of Turkey. These [actions] must unquestionably be prevented...and will be.

Nevertheless, our own Jews may undertake efforts to excuse Israel, which is a "pariah state" in the full sense of the word, whether because of their "blood ties" [with its inhabitants] or [their] kneejerk reaction [to any criticism of Israel]. Now, hold on just one minute! Let's call a spade a spade!

Our task is to protect our own innocent Jews from our own racists, not to defend racist Israel. There [should be] no tolerance for that.[31]

Similarly, whereas it is legal for a Turkish NGO either to operate internationally, collaborate with a foreign organization, or establish a Turkish branch of such an organization,[32] in such a climate it is unthinkable in practice for any specifically Jewish organization[33] to set up shop and be active in Turkey. Hence, Turkish Jewish religious and lay leaders avoid speaking of the intensive collaboration they have undertaken in the United States-and in response to the Turkish regime's urging-with Israel and American Jewish organizations to block the annual Armenian-genocide resolutions submitted to Congress.

The Acid Test for Turkey's Jewish Community: The *Mavi Marmara* Incident

The acid test for the Turkish Jewish community was the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) attempted interdiction of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla on 31 May 2010. The flotilla was organized by the Free Gaza Movement and the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Relief (IHH).[34] The IDF's intervention on the largest ship in the flotilla, the ferry called the *Mavi Marmara*, resulted in the deaths of eight Turkish nationals and one Turkish American.[35] It was inevitable, regarding the Turkish Jewish leadership, that the Turkish media would inquire "whose side they were on," with its implied questioning of where their loyalties lay.

The Chief Rabbinate reacted succinctly a few hours after the reporting on the incident began:

We are distressed to learn of the military intervention carried out against the ship Mavi Marmara, which was heading toward Gaza.

The fact that, according to the first reports we have received, there have been dead and wounded in the intervention, has increased our sorrow all the more.

We fully share our country's reaction generated by the stopping of the aforementioned [relief] effort in this manner and our sorrow is the same as that of the general public.[36]

The incident was extremely serious, since it was the first time in history that the IDF had killed Turkish nationals. In a country where widespread anti-Israeli resentment and anti-Semitism already exist, it came as no surprise that the public perceived the incident as the murder of Muslim Turks by the Jewish army and started asking Turkish Jews whose side they were on. The incident triggered a wave of anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories in the Turkish media and among public figures. These conspiracy theories included the motif that Israel was behind the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party's (Parti Karkerani Kurdistan, PKK) latest attack on a Turkish military base in Iskenderun, which coincidentally occurred a few hours after the IDF's intervention on the *Mavi Marmara*.^[37]

A poll in Turkey shortly after the latter incident found 45.2 percent believing the IDF had attacked the ship to "put PM Erdoğan in difficulty in Turkey and abroad and wear him out," with 60.7 percent affirming that "Turkey's reaction to Israel was insufficient."^[38] Another development was the siege and blockade of the Israeli consulate in Istanbul and of the Israeli embassy in Ankara by Islamist activists, both of which went on for a number of days. The *Mavi Marmara* incident caused such an uproar in Turkey that the producer of the famous film *Valley of the Wolves* decided to produce an episode exclusively devoted to it.^[39]

Although Turkey is marked by sharp ideological divisions, antagonism toward Israel and Zionism, which are perceived as the source of all evils, is one of the few matters where Islamists, nationalists, liberals, leftists, and Kemalists agree. Thus it was no surprise when petitions circulated against Israel and Zionism, which was called "another form of racism" by Turkish pundits and intellectuals^[40] and by the liberal-leftist faculty of the Istanbul Bilgi University.^[41] The Turkish media immediately demanded a statement from the only Jewish newspaper, *Şalom*, and from the community's spokespersons on how Turkish Jews felt about the incident. The community's leadership limited itself to the above-noted Chief Rabbinate's statement and decided to make no further comment. This sharply contrasted with its decision a year earlier to reach out to Turkish society in the hope that this might change the widespread negative perception of Jews.^[42]

This reticence by the community's leadership of course attracted media attention. Murat Yalnız, editor in chief of *Newsweek's* Turkish edition who a year earlier^[43] had run a cover story on the community's attempt to reach out, mildly criticized the leadership for "closing up" at a time when it was even more necessary to open up to Turkish society as a whole.^[44] Another journalist, Perihan Çakıroğlu of the daily *Bugün*, wrote that none among her many high-level Jewish friends wanted to speak out on this subject as they did not know what to say. She claimed that the community leadership had imposed a ban on them.^[45]

The void created by this unofficial ban would be filled by two Turkish Jewish public figures: the Trotskyite poet and columnist for the *Taraf* daily, Roni Margulies, and the well-known novelist Mario Levi. Margulies's attitude toward Israel was by then familiar to the Turkish media: he considers Israel a racist and illegal state. The media rushed to ask his opinion as it had in similar situations. In a lengthy interview to the liberal-leftist daily *Radikal*, Margulies stated that he approved of the Gaza Flotilla, disapproved of Israel's raid, and wished he could have been

there. He also remarked that “for a Jew, Israel is the most dangerous place to live in the world and Israel is a danger to world Jewry.”[46]

As for Levi, in an interview to the Italian daily *La Repubblica*[47] he declared that “as Jews of Istanbul, we are in solidarity with the people of Gaza.” He added that “personally, I have no impression that anti-Semitism exists in Turkey” and that “Netanyahu is a chauvinist prime minister, Lieberman a fascist foreign minister, Ehud Barak a stupid defense minister.” Naturally his words were immediately translated and published in the Turkish press.[48]

Both Margulies’s and Levi’s statements were very well received by the Turkish media. Ali Bulaç, a writer and an Islamist intellectual for the *Zaman* daily, which is known for its support of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish Islamist leader living in Pennsylvania, applauded Levi’s words and reiterated the false but widely believed notion that Islam is free of anti-Semitism, which is a product of Christianity.[49]

In reaction to the wave of anti-Semitism in the Turkish press, several articles in the international press asserted that Turkish Jews feared physical attacks against individuals or the community’s institutions.[50] This obliged the government to state forcefully that the Islamist activists protesting against Israel should differentiate between the Israeli government and the Israeli people, and between Turkish Jews and the state of Israel.[51]

The *Mavi Marmara* incident showed once again that for the Turkish public and media, a good Jew is an anti-Zionist Jew critical of Zionism and Israel, while a bad Jew is a “Zionist Jew.” It was, therefore, impossible for the leadership to keep reaching out to Turkish society unless they adopted the rhetoric of “good Jews.” However, adopting such rhetoric was in itself problematic, since Zionism and an attachment to Israel are the two main themes taught to Turkish Jewish youth to help them preserve their Jewish identity.

Wikileaks, Israel, and Conspiracy Theories

The release of the diplomatic correspondence of the American embassies and consulates with the State Department by Julian Assange of the nonprofit media organization Wikileaks, created another wave of conspiracy theories where the “villain hero” was again the state of Israel and the “Jewish lobby dominated by neocons” in Washington.[52] Dr. Yalçın Akdoğan, a top political adviser of Prime Minister Erdoğan,[53] the Islamist press (*Yeni Şafak*, *Milli Gazete*, and *Yeni Akit*), Interior Minister Beşir Atalay,[54] Hüseyin Çelik, deputy chairman for media and publicity of the AKP,[55] and Mehmet Ali Şahin, president of the Turkish parliament,[56] all concurred that Israel was behind the leaked documents that concerned Turkey.

The “logic” behind this assumption was that all the released diplomatic correspondence showed that the U.S. diplomatic mission in Ankara did not trust Erdoğan and regarded him and his colleagues as potentially dangerous Islamists. Some of the reports were prepared while Eric Edelman, an American Jewish diplomat, was U.S. ambassador in Ankara (August 2003-June 2005). In addition, a report prepared by Richard H. Jones, U.S. ambassador in Tel Aviv, described a meeting where Under Secretary for Political Affairs William H. Burns and Mossad chief Meir Dagan were present, and Dagan asked “how long Turkey’s military-viewing itself as

the defender of Turkey's secular identity-will remain quiet.”[57] These facts were used as “ultimate proofs” that these leaked documents were a conspiracy engineered by Israel with the aim of discrediting Erdoğan and the AKP.[58]

Conclusion

The claim that a given community is disappearing cannot be proved merely through demographic evidence. Even if this community is clearly small and getting smaller all the time, if its cultural and community life remain vital-perhaps even more so than in previous years-then it is in no way “dying” as a community. When looked at in this light, Turkey's Jewish community is still far from disappearing demographically-yet close to doing so culturally and sociologically.

If one examines the manner in which Turkey's Chief Rabbinate and the community's only remaining press organ, *Şalom*, have responded to the series of crises that have beset the community over the past half-century, two things are readily apparent. First, the community's leaders have regularly had only limited options both socially and politically. Second, the only solution they have found is simply to continue their traditional low-profile policy and wait for the various storms to pass.

These Turkish Jewish leaders have concluded that, in the eyes of the Turkish Republic, they have no real significance apart from collaborating with the Turkish Foreign Ministry and various American Jewish organizations to block the annual resolutions submitted to Congress calling for official recognition of the events surrounding the 1915 Ottoman deportation of its Armenian population as a genocide. Recently the Anti-Defamation League, after decades of opposing these resolutions, declared that the events in question “were indeed tantamount to genocide.”[59] This is an alarm signal that the battle to define what happened as massacres and not genocide, which has long been lost among the American and European intelligentsia, is on the way to being lost among the American Jewish organizations as well. Should this happen, it will be a serious blow to the perceived “added value” of the Turkish Jewish community for the Turkish establishment.

Furthermore, the present climate in Turkey of mounting anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-Israeli sentiment, buffeted by the ever-present Turkish ultranationalism, Islamic radicalism, and growing antiminority and anti-Semitic rhetoric, have all led to increased violence against the community as a whole and, in some cases, as individuals. Among such instances are the attempted assassination of Quincentennial Foundation president Jak V. Kamhi on 28 January 1993; the aforementioned murder of the Istanbul dentist Yasef Yahya on 21 August 2003; the attempted assassination (by bomb) of the president of Ankara's small Jewish community, Prof. Yuda Yürüm, on 7 June 1995; and the aforementioned suicide-bomb attacks against two Istanbul synagogues on 15 November 2003. Christian and Armenian figures have also been murdered.

In such a milieu, the prospects for a small minority community to continue leading a dynamic cultural life are meager indeed. Thus Turkey's Jews, who more and more feel forced to isolate themselves from the larger society, and dare not speak publicly of any general Jewish concerns

pertaining to Zionism, Israel, or world Jewry, are leading a truncated and, in many ways, conditional existence.

For this to change, Turkish society would have to veer away from the current insular nationalist and Islamist atmosphere, and the resulting “culture of conspiracy” that dominates its public space, and move in a more liberal, democratic, and multicultural direction. Turkey could then both come to grips with the darker aspects of its past and work for a different and better future. At present, the indications that such a transition might occur are mixed at best.

* * *

Notes

[1] These countries are Iran (10,000 Jews), Syria (100 Jews), Tunisia (1,000 Jews), Yemen (200 Jews), Egypt (100 Jews), Morocco (5,600 Jews), and Iraq (200 Jews). Sergio Della Pergola, “World Jewish Population 2002,” *American Jewish Year Book* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2002), 102, <http://www.jewishagency.org/>.

[2] Among the census questions once asked by Turkey’s Institute of Statistics (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu) was that of religious affiliation. This question has not been asked, however, since the 1965 general census. Hence there is today no official figure for the number of Jews in Turkey, though spokespersons for the Chief Rabbinate continue to give an estimate of twenty-six thousand. Other sources give a more realistic figure of around seventeen thousand persons. There are both psychological and political reasons for such discrepancies. The fact is that the community’s numbers have continued to dwindle as a result of emigration to Israel, Europe, and the United States. The Rabbinate, however, continues to hold by the figure of twenty-six thousand because the ongoing decline would seem to contradict the official line repeatedly voiced by both the Rabbinate and government representatives: that the country’s non-Muslim minorities live in a climate of tolerance and tranquility.

Today nearly all of Turkey’s Jewish population lives in Istanbul and, to a lesser extent, Izmir (approximately two thousand).

[3] The Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews opened its doors to the general public in November 2001 amid great fanfare and with then-prime minister Mesut Yılmaz in attendance. Since 2003, the European Day of Jewish Culture long held among Europe’s Jewish communities has also been celebrated in Istanbul. In 2006, the week-long Karakare Film Days was held for the first time with the aim of commemorating the Holocaust through movies. Since 2005, Turkey’s Chief Rabbinate has also held a Jewish cultural festival every autumn called Limmud (Hebrew for “learning”). The Ottoman Turkish Sephardic Culture Research Center began functioning at the end of 2006 with the aim of preserving the Sephardic cultural heritage and the Ladino language.

Additionally, a number of musical groups in Turkey perform traditional Ladino songs, and various cultural associations stage events with the aim of encouraging Turkish Jewish youth to continue Jewish culture and traditions. The private Jewish High School in Ulus, one of Istanbul’s most modern districts, provides twelve years of instruction in the English language, and also

teaches Hebrew as a foreign language. Finally, a number of extremely wealthy Turkish Jewish businessmen and industrialists make significant contributions to Turkey's economic life.

[4] Salamon Adato served from 1946 to 1954, Yusuf Salman and Isak Altabev both from 1957 to 1960, and Hanri Soriano from 1954 to 1957.

[5] The sole exception during this period was Cefi Kamhi, the son of industrialist and Quincentennial Foundation chairman Jak V. Kamhi, who served from 1995 to 1999 as a deputy for the center-right True Path Party (DYP). Kamhi's selection to the DYP slate was made at least in part on the assumption that his ethnic background and father's connections would allow him, with the active support of American Jewish organizations, the Turkish Chief Rabbinate, and the Quincentennial Foundation, to significantly contribute to Turkey's lobbying and public relations efforts among American media and political elites.

[6] The ultranationalist trend was manifested in the suicide attack on the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul on 6 September 1986 by Palestinians connected to the Abu Nidal terror organization, and the Islamist trend in the two suicide attacks on Istanbul synagogues on 15 November 2003 by radical Islamist Turks and Al-Qaeda sympathizers. Slightly earlier, in August 2003, a Jewish dentist named Yasef Yahya was murdered by radical Islamists because of his ethnoreligious affiliation.

[7] Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "America's Image Further Erodes, Europeans Want Weaker Ties," Washington, DC, 18 March 2003, 1; idem, "Global Unease with Major World Powers," Washington, DC, 27 June 2007, 3.

[8] T. C. Başvekâlet İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, *28 Teşrinievvel 1927 Umumi Nüfus Tahriri* (Ankara: Hüsnütabiat Matbaası, 1929), ix, lxxiv. [Turkish]

[9] Antoine Emmanuel Strobel, *Inscription de la Judéo-Hispanicité dans l'Espace Turc-Préliminaires*, unpublished MA thesis, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 2004, 29. [French]

[10] For a narrative of this emigration, see Rifat N. Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri Aliya: Bir Toplu Göçün Öyküsü (1946-1949)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003) [Turkish]; Şule Toktaş, "Turkey's Jews and Their Immigration to Israel," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42:3 (2006): 505-519.

[11] Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *İstatistik Yıllığı 1960-1962*, yayın 460, 78. [Turkish]

[12] For the influence of Alliance schools on Turkish Jews, see Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey 1860-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[13] For a detailed analysis, see Rifat N. Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri, Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 102-196, 269-322. [Turkish]

[14] Ibid., 196-239, 408-423.

[15] Ibid., 206-227.

[16] For a detailed study of these events, see Rifat N. Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008). [Turkish]

[17] Erik Jan Zürcher, "Ottoman Labour Bataillons in World War I," www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/Research/ej214.htm

[18] For a detailed study, see Rifat N. Bali, "*Yirmi Kur'a İhtiyatlar*" *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Nafia Askerleri Mayıs 1941-Temmuz 1942* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008). [Turkish]

[19] Dönmes or crypto-Jews are the descendants of the followers of Sabbatai Zevi, a rabbi from Izmir who in 1666 claimed to be the messiah. Upon the pressure of the Ottoman Sultan, he converted to Islam and his followers did so as well. However, although outwardly they behaved as Muslims, secretly they continued to carry on their Judaism and their belief that Zevi was the Messiah.

[20] *New York Times*, 9 September 1943.

[21] For a detailed study, see Rifat N. Bali, *The "Varlık Vergisi" Affair: A Study on Its Legacy with Selected Documents* (Istanbul: Isis Press), 2005; Rifat N. Bali, *L'Impôt Sur la Fortune (Varlık Vergisi)* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2010) [Turkish]; Faik Ökte, *The Tragedy of the Turkish Capital Tax*, trans. Geoffrey Cox (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

[22] Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *İstatistik Yıllığı 1960-1962*, 78. [Turkish]

[23] Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Genel Nüfus Sayımı 24 Ekim 1965*, yayın 537, 1968, 166-167, 185, 277. [Turkish]

[24] Emigration was prompted, for example, by the 6-7 September 1955 anti-Greek riots in Istanbul and Izmir, the 27 May 1960 military coup, the political and economic turmoil of the 1970s, and the military coup of 12 September 1980. For a detailed study of this emigration, see Walter F. Weiker, *The Unseen Israelis: The Jews from Turkey in Israel* (Lanham, MD, and Jerusalem: University Press of America and Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs/Center for Jewish Community Studies, 1988), 22.

[25] These were the National Order Party (MNP) (26 January 1970-20 May 1971), the National Salvation Party (MSP) (11 October 1972-12 September 1980), the Welfare Party (RP) (19 July 1983-16 January 1998), the Virtue Party (FP) (17 December 1997-22 June 2001), and the Felicity Party (FP) (20 July 2001-).

[26] "Antisemitism in the Turkish Media (Part I)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch no. 900, 28 April 2005, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=turkey&ID=SP90005>; "Antisemitism in the Turkish Media (Part II): Turkish Intellectuals against Antisemitism," MEMRI, Special Dispatch no. 905, 5 May 2005, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=turkey&ID=SP90405>; "Antisemitism in the Turkish Media (Part III): Targeting Turkey's Jewish Citizens," MEMRI, Special Dispatch no. 916, 6 June 2005,

<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP91605>; Şule Toktaş, "Perceptions of Anti-Semitism among Turkish Jews," *Turkish Studies* 7:2 (2006): 203-223.

[27] For a review of this book and the conspiracy theories concerning Dönmes, see Rifat N. Bali, *A Scapegoat for All Seasons: The Dönmes or Crypto-Jews* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008).

[28] This figure is all the more remarkable considering that it retailed at the rough equivalent of U.S. \$20, a major commitment for someone on a Turkish wage.

[29] Two unpublished studies on this topic are: Ali Çarkoğlu and Kemal Kirişçi, "Türkiye Dış Politika Araştırması," Department of Political Science and International Relations, Bosphorous University, March 2002, research conducted by Frekans Araştırma, İstanbul [Turkish]; Yusuf Ziya Özcan and İhsan Dağı, "Türk Dış Siyaseti Araştırması," Ankara, November 2003. [Turkish]

[30] Gary Younge, "Israelis Using Kurds to Build Power Base," *The Guardian*, 21 June 2004; Seymour M. Hersh, "Plan B: The Kurdish Gambit," *The New Yorker*, 21 June 2004. According to the daily *Cumhuriyet* it was Abdullah Gül, the foreign minister, who provided this information to Hersh (source: Michael Rubin, "Talking Turkey," *National Review*, 6 August 2004; Ertuğrul Özkök, "27 Mayıs sabahı yapılan kahvaltı," *Hürriyet*, 23 June 2004) [Turkish]. For a critical analysis of Hersh's writings, see Rael Jean Isaac, "Investigating Seymour Hersh," in Edward Alexander and Paul Bogdanor, eds., *The Jewish Divide over Israel: Accusers and Defenders* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2006), 234-248.

[31] Baskın Oran, "Dev Bir Adım, Ama Çok Dikkat," *Birgün*, 23 July 2004, *Agos*, 23 July 2004. [Turkish]

[32] Article 5 of the Law on Societies, dated 4 November 2004, no. 5253.

[33] For example, the ADL, B'nai B'rith, Hadasah, WIZO, the American Jewish Committee, or the American Jewish Congress.

[34] For more information on the IHH, see their official website www.ihh.org.tr/anasayfa.eng. For an Israeli report that claims the IHH "supports radical Islamic networks," see Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 26 May 2010, www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng-n/html/hamas_e105.htm.

[35] For this incident, see Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 5 October 2010, www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng-n/pdf/ipc_e127.pdg; "Gaza Flotilla Raid," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gaza_flotilla-raid. See also Manfred Gerstenfeld, "The Gaza Flotilla: Facts and Official Reactions," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism* (Special Issue), no. 102, 15 September 2010,

http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=4681&TTL=The_Gaza_Flotilla:_Facts_and_Official_Reactions. For the IHH's interpretation of the incident, see <http://www.freedomflotillafacts.com/>. For a pro-IHH view of the incident, see Moustafa Bayoumi, ed., *Midnight of the Mavi Marmara: The Attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and How It Changed the Course of the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (Chicago:

Haymarket Books, 2010). For the Turkish version of the incidents, see M. Şefik Dinç, *Kanlı Mavi Marmara*, (Istanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları, 2010); [Turkish]; Mediha Olgun, *Mavi Marmara'da Neler Oldu?* (Istanbul: Turkuvaz Kitap, 2010) [Turkish]; Bülent Akyürek, *Mavi Marmara Risalesi* (Istanbul: C4 Kitap, 2010). [Turkish]

[36] "Mavi Marmara Gemisine Yapılan Askeri Müdahale İle İlgili Açıklama," www.musevicemaati.com/index.php?newsId=72. [Turkish]

[37] See Sedat Ergin, "Did Israel Orchestrate the Terror Attack in İskenderun?," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 3 June 2010; Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "PKK İsrail'in taşeronu mu?," *Milliyet*, 21 June 2010. [Turkish]

[38] "İsrail saldırısı," June 2010, www.metropoll.com.tr/report/israil-saldirisi-haziran-2010. [Turkish]

[39] "Flotilla Ship Is Setting for Anti-Israel Movie," *Jerusalem Post*, 3 October 2010; Bünyamin Köseli, "Valley of the Wolves: Palestine," *Today's Zaman*, 15 August 2010.

[40] <http://www.israelyouareguilty.com/>. Although this website is no more active, on 11 June 2010 it had 8,600 signatures.

[41] "İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Çalışanları İsrail'e Artık Yeter Diyor," 8 June 2010, www.bilgicalisanlari.com/YazilarDetay.aspx?Yazi=11. [Turkish]

[42] "Research on Perception of Different Identities and Jews," September 2009, www.turkyahudileri.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/perception%20of%20different%20identities%20and%20jews%20in%20turkey%202009.pdf.

[43] Murat Yalnız, "Hahambaşı'dan Komşuluk Adımı," *Newsweek Türkiye*, sayı 34, 21 June 2009, 28-32. [Turkish]

[44] Murat Yalnız, "Kelebek etkisi," *Newsweek Türkiye*, 13 June 2010, 14. [Turkish]

[45] Perihan Çakıroğlu, "Musevi Cemaati neden suskun?," *Bugün*, 14 July 2010. [Turkish]

[46] Pınar Öğünç, "Ben niye o gemide değilim diye düşündüm," *Radikal*, 5 June 2010. [Turkish]

[47] "Noi, ebrei di Istanbul solidali con la gente di Gaza," *La Repubblica*, 2 June 2010. [Italian]

[48] "Yazar Mario Levi Gazzelilerin yanında," *Taraf*, 3 June 2010 [Turkish]; "İstanbul Musevileri Gazze halkıyla dayanışma içinde," *Zaman*, 3 June 2010. [Turkish]

[49] Ali Bulaç, "Anti-Semitism and Islam," *Today's Zaman*, 11 June 2010. The same opinion was also expressed by the conservative journalist Taha Akyol of the daily *Milliyet*, who concluded: "In fact 'antisemitism' is a European product! The antisemitic literature is either European racism or Christian obscurantism. There has not been a similar problem in the history of Islam or in the history of the Turk." Taha Akyol, "Yahudi okulunda," *Milliyet*, 9 November 2010. [Turkish]

[50] "26,000 Turkey's Jews Fear Anti-Semitism after Israel Reaction," *European Jewish Press*, 2 June 2010, www.ejpress.org/article/44267; Nichole Sobeki, "Turkish Jews Feeling the Heat," *Global Post*, 20 June 2010.

[51] Jonah Mandel, "Turkey Boosts Security for Jews," *Jerusalem Post*, 3 June 2010.

[52] Marc Champion, "First Come Leaks, then Conspiracy Theories," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 December 2010.

[53] Doç. Dr. Yalçın Akdoğan, "Küresel Yalanlar Yerel Gerçekler," *Star*, 6 December 2010. [Turkish]

[54] "Belgeler İsrail lehine görünüyor," *Hürriyet*, 3 December 2010. [Turkish]

[55] Sevil Küçükkoşum, "Israel Responsible for Wikileaks in Anti-Turkish Plot, AKP Member Says," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 December 2010.

[56] Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Erdoğan'a en yakın isim Yalçın Akdoğan: Wikileaks İsrail işi," *Milliyet*, 6 December 2010.

[57] www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/08/07TELAVIV2652.html. [Turkish]

[58] Hasan Cemal, "Mossad Şefi de 'darbe'den mi yana ?...," *Milliyet*, 4 December 2010. [Turkish]

[59] "ADL Statement on the Armenian Genocide," 21 August 2007, www.adl.org/PressRele/Mise_00/5114_00.htm.

* * *

Rifat N. Bali is an independent scholar, a graduate of Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Religious Sciences Division, in Paris, and a research fellow of the Alberto Benveniste Center for Sephardic Studies and Culture (Paris). He is the author of numerous books and articles on the history of Turkish Jewry. His most recent publication is *L'Impôt Sur la Fortune (Varlık Vergisi)* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2010). He also is the author of two articles published by the JCPA: "Turkish Jewry Today," *Changing Jewish Communities*, 17, 15 February 2007; "Present-Day Anti-Semitism in Turkey," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism, Special Issue*, 84, 16 August 2009.