

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

KWC-25

c/o American Express
15 Sharia Kasr El Nil
Cairo, Egypt
18 January 1985

Change in Rural Turkey:
An Overview

Mr. Peter Bird Martin
Institute of Current World Affairs
Wheelock House
4 West Wheelock St.
Hanover, N.H. 03755

Dear Peter,

The following is intended as an overview of changes -- or to use a value-laden term, 'modernization' -- in rural Turkey in the past 50 years. It is based on extensive interviews in eight villages.

I achieved an interesting balance in my research between European and Asian Turkey. Two of my villages were in western Thrace, near the Sea of Marmara, and the rest in Central Anatolia near the city of Kayseri. This was part design and part happenstance.

My original idea had been to write about a village in Central Anatolia, the Turkish "heartland." Several people suggested the Kayseri area, Kayseri being the largest city in the region. Both the Turkish writer Mahmut Makal and the British anthropologist Arthur Paul Stirling had written about villages in the area. Makal's A Village in Anatolia (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1965) is a marvelously informal account of his experiences teaching primary school in the late 1940s; Stirling's Turkish Village (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965) is a serious, scholarly study based on research conducted at the same time. I thought it might be interesting to compare village life as described by Makal and Stirling with what I found in 1984. As it turned out, so many improvements have come to rural Turkey since the 1940s -- electricity, piped water systems, farm machinery, secular education, and so on -- that it was almost as if Makal and Stirling had been describing life on a different planet.

Although I had my eye on Kayseri from the beginning, my actual choice of villages depended entirely on my interpreters. Knowing only a little "travel" Turkish, I could do nothing without them; I was as dependent as a blind man with a seeing eye dog. My methodology for visiting villages consisted entirely of finding someone who a) spoke good English, and b) was willing to take me to a village where he had relatives or friends. Eventually, I ended up working with five different individuals. The first one lived in Istanbul, where he taught English for a living, and took me to the two Thracian villages. He gave me a letter of introduction to a friend of his, another English teacher, in Kayseri. I worked with this fellow for a while and through him met the other three. The two English teachers were excellent interpreters, two of the others were okay, and one almost worthless.

Kenneth Cline is a Village Reporting Fellow of the Institute studying rural life in Turkey



Finding good interpreters during my Turkish village research was a difficult problem. But Ihsan, at left, was excellent. He teaches English at a private language institute in Istanbul and took me to visit his friends in the Thracian village of Gölcük.

Unfortunately, the least qualified one (he taught high school French and had taken only two years of university English) was the only one who actually lived in a rural community. I spent five days with him in Sariöğlan trying to arrange an extended stay, but the quality of the interviews was so poor that I abandoned the project.

In the other villages, I would arrive with my interpreter, find people he knew and talk with them, usually in tea houses or after lunch in the interviewee's house. In those cases where I was working with my two English-teacher interpreters, I collected some long stretches of informative dialogue with nice nuances of humor and feeling, as will become obvious in this and subsequent reports.

Dealing with the Turkish government on permits was an exhausting, time-consuming business. But eventually, I received permission from the Ministry of the Interior to visit villages in the Kayseri region, and also in Thrace. I found the people at the Turkish press office (information ministry) to be exceptionally friendly and helpful; I warmly thank them for their assistance.

The following are the villages I visited in Turkey and some of their general characteristics:

I. Thrace

1. Gölçük. Pop. 800. Located 10 km northwest of Şarköy, a small resort town on the Sea of Marmara, just off a paved road coming up from Şarköy. Topography consists of green, rolling hills covered with scrub bushes and some clumps of trees, part of the lovely Thracian downs that extend from Istanbul's Byzantine Land Walls out into northern Greece. The farmers grow wheat, grapes, sunflowers, and raise goats, sheep, cattle and water buffaloes (a smaller version of the Egyptian gameosa that apparently doesn't need to loiter about in canals). Has a primary school, since the early 1920s; electricity since 1980; and takes its water from communal fountains. Before the Turkish-Greek population exchange of 1923, the village was inhabited by Greeks. People from the Salonica (Greek Thessaloniki) area replaced them during the exchange and some ethnic Turks from Bulgaria joined them in 1935. This was the prettiest, most romantic village I've ever seen. When the shepherds take their sheep and goat flocks into the hills, they play on wooden flutes to entertain themselves; you can hear the sound of this beautiful music, as well as the chimes from the goat bells, echoing through the Thracian dales.

2. Kumbağ. Pop. 750. Located on the Sea of Marmara 13 km west of Tekirdağ on a paved road from Tekirdağ. Sits on a stretch of coast with a range of hills hemming it in to the north. Has a small fishing port and local farmers grow wheat, sunflowers, and onions and cultivate orchards of apples, cherries, and pears. Has had a primary school since the early 1930s; electricity since early 1960s; and piped water in all homes since 1983. The area was inhabited by Greeks before the population exchange. The most significant recent development has been a tourism industry that began six years ago. Tourist villages on the beach east of town attract both Turks and foreigners during the summer, providing summer employment for residents.

II. Central Anatolia

1. Güzel Köy and Kayabağ. Güzel Köy, pop. 300, and Kayabağ, pop. 650, face each other across a wooded ravine, essentially blending together, about 20 km northeast of Kayseri off a paved secondary road coming from the Kayseri-Sivas highway. The few remaining farmers grow wheat and raise pigeons. Kayabağ has a primary school; both villages have electricity; some houses have piped water taken from the area's abundant springs. During Ottoman times, the villages had Armenian and Greek populations and a large, partly-ruined Greek church still stands in Kayabağ. The Armenians were forced to leave in 1915, apparently with those departed from eastern Turkey to Syria, and the Greeks left in 1923. The local villagers still use the old name Darsiyak (a modification of the Armenian Der Ishak, or "Father Issac") for Kayabağ and Nize (perhaps an Armenian name) for Güzel Köy. At the present time, both villages are inhabited mostly by elderly people; many former residents, who live and work elsewhere, spend their summer vacations there.

2. Incesu. Pop. 7,000. A major commercial center located off a paved road 30 km west of Kayseri. Farmers grow wheat, grapes, and vegetables. Has several primary schools, three high schools (academic, vocational, and religion); electricity came



In Gölcük in Thrace, a farming family returns from their fields.

from a generator after 1955, from hydroelectric sources after 1966. Incesu is an old town; it has a mosque, caravansaray, Turkish bath, and madresse (Koranic school) all dating from the 17th century. Until 1923, it had a large Greek community, but few Armenians; one large Greek church remains. The old town is a fascinating tangle of narrow lanes fronted by houses built of cut stone with projecting balconied windows.

3. Akkişla. Pop. 5,000. Located off a paved secondary road coming in from the Kayseri-Sivas highway in a ravine 70 km east of Kayseri. Major crops are wheat, apples, and vegetables, particularly tomatoes. Has three primary schools (the first since 1934) and a middle school since 1968; electricity since 1970; (no information on water). Akkişla is particularly noted as a home for Turkmen, former nomadic people who take their animals up to the yayla (high plateau) for three months every year beginning in April.

4. Sariöğlan. Pop. 3,500. Located amidst rolling plateauland golden with wheat (quintessential Anatolian landscape) just off the Kayseri-Sivas highway 65 km northeast of Kayseri. A large farming community here grows wheat, sugar beets, and barley. The town features a grain silo served by the Kayseri-Sivas railroad. Extensive animal husbandry. Has several primary schools (the first since 1934) and two high schools (one adademic, the other religious). Sariöğlan had a small Armenian community before World War I and one Armenian doctor works there now.

5. Gunesli. Pop. 1,000. Located 30 km northeast of Kayseri off a small, paved secondary road leading off from the Kayseri-Sivas highway. Farmers grow wheat, sunflowers, potatoes, and cultivate apple orchards. Has had a primary school since 1934 and a middle school since 1979. An agricultural high school opened in 1975. Electricity came in 1968; piped water for houses since



A Gölcük family unloading harvested sunflowers preparatory to extracting the seeds by hand.

1974. Many of the Turkish families now here came from Greece during the population exchange.

6. Eskiömerler. Pop. 750. Located off a winding dirt road 55 km northwest of Kayseri in treeless, rolling plateau-land. Farmers grow wheat, vegetables, and raise chickens. The government recently supplied a female teacher to instruct local girls in carpet-weaving. Primary school since 1941; electricity since 1973; water comes from wells. This was the poorest village I visited. Most of the houses were built of dried mud rather than cut stone or cinderblock. But even here, tractors and threshing machines were in evidence; an enormous yellow Sperry Holland threshing combine was parked outside the mayor's house.

* * *

An October dawn in the central Anatolian town of Sarioğlan.

As the first light coaxes the golds and browns from the undulating hillsides and wide steppes, amplified prayer calls sound from the minarets of four mosques. Women bundled against the chilly morning in sweaters and baggy trousers appear first in the streets. Wearing mouth veils and headscarves, they unhurridly drive their cattle to the municipal water troughs.

Islam and veiled women -- so far, a traditional Anatolian scene.

But as a visitor takes up a post near the town square, where a stern bust of Ataturk perched on a pedestal in front of the municipality building deurlly contemplates the headquarters of the ruling Anavatan (Motherland) Party across the street, he soon hears a low mechanical rumble all around him. From all sides they come, the tractors rearing down the intersecting roads near the square,

heading for the fields, some towing wagons filled with men and boys, stoically enduring the cold in their drab caps and jackets.

Later, troops of children pass down these same roads on their way to primary school, all of them wearing French-style school uniforms of black smocks and white collars. Older boys and girls in street clothes walk to high school in sexually segregated groups, the girls wearing western-style skirts and blouses with sweaters -- no mouth veils for them.

Tractors and secular education for both males and females -- such phenomena would have been unthinkable in the Turkish "heartland" of Anatolia before the 1930s. But now they are such a part of everyday life that nobody finds them remarkable. Old customs and costumes existing side by side with western-style technology and dress -- that's the rural Turkey of today, neither European, nor wholly Eastern, but always a bridge between the two worlds, as the country's great city on the Bosphorus has always been.

Much of the traditional life remains in Turkey's 36,154 villages. But with each passing decade, more features of the old world disappear. Considering the condition of rural Turkey in 1923, when Ataturk founded the republic, the changes since then have been truly revolutionary. Tractors and threshing machines have replaced cow-driven plows and threshing boards. Electricity powers television sets, radios, and videos, destroying the villages' traditional cultural isolation. Piped water systems have largely replaced the traditional walk to the well for village women in some places. Some youngsters still study religion in special schools, but the overwhelming majority attend secular public schools where "Kemalism," Ataturk's stern, secular philosophy, is enshrined as the state's guiding dogma. Several generations of Turkish school-children have been taught that Turkey should emulate the "civilized" countries of the west.

The westernization process has gone so far that some traditional art forms are in danger of being lost (see my KWC-23, "The Lost Art of the Anatolian Headdress"). Mübeccel Kiray of Istanbul's Marmara University, one of Turkey's most distinguished anthropologists, says traditional folk dances are being forgotten. A student once told her nobody could be found to teach a dance known as Western Anatolian Zabek. "Now you need experts, folklorists who have studied the customs, in order to re-teach the university students," says Mrs. Kiray.

It is true that any tourist can travel to eastern Turkey, the country's poorest region, and find villages where life hasn't changed much since the last century. But generally, rural Turkey no longer conforms to the stereotype of the dusty, impoverished Middle Eastern village where time stands still. Search out the poorest Anatolian village and you are likely to find the ubiquitous dull orange Turkish-made Massey-Ferguson tractors.

Today's Turkish farmers will try anything that works; the scientific, technological revolution no longer has to struggle for converts.

"We put all the old equipment in a museum," says Beker Şahar, 67, of Garipçe, a village near Incesu. A grey-haired farmer with a face as strong as sculptured rock, Şahar means the remark as a joke, but just barely. "Perhaps if you go into the mountains, you might see a cow pulling an old plow," he suggests. In the Incesu area, 100 percent of the farmers use tractors, he says.



Beker Şahar of Garipce, near Incesu. Mr. Şahar owns 50 acres of land and grows wheat, grapes and vegetables. "I don't have any problems," he says. "I'm working freely selling grapes and wheat; that's enough for me. All my money is in my pocket -- enough for me to live on until next year." One can safely generalize about Turkish farmers: they are independent, and they are tough.

Eighty-year-old Emir Tuncer of Kayabağ held out longer than most. He and his two elderly brothers did not let government agricultural experts persuade them to use chemical fertilizers until the early 1970s, and they did not buy a tractor until 1975. Since then, they have seen their wheat production increase five-fold.

Disfigured by an enormous boil on his neck (he says it gives him no pain), but alert and spry, Tuncer takes a visitor a short distance from his house to a corral where he has stored his old farming equipment. The old plow and threshing beards lean against a stone wall, slowly rotting away since left there in 1975. As proud as a museum curator showing off his prize pieces, Tuncer pulls each one out, gives its Turkish name, and explains its use. "We are thankful to Ataturk," says Tuncer. "Because of his leadership, Turkey has the opportunity to use modern equipment."

It has gotten to the point that some Turkish farmers get downright offended if you imply that they might not be entirely modern. Mehmet Sahli, 62, of Incesu fairly bristles with indignation when asked if Turkish agriculture will ever become as advanced as European agriculture. "We are making modern agriculture here!" he exclaims, revealing his many missing front teeth. "What kinds of different materials are the Europeans using? They have much rain, but we have only a little. So we are installing pipe systems to get the water to the fields. Other than that, we are practicing modern agriculture."

Mr. Sahli is not entirely correct, as agricultural



The weekly market for area farmers in Incesu's restored 17th century caravansaray. Note the clothing styles of men and women. The men would look comfortable in any Balkan setting, even though this is Central Anatolia. But some of the women would not be completely out-of-place in an Arab souk (market).

technician Ismail Kirek in Sariöglan will admit. Turkish agricultural productivity does lag far behind that of Europe, he says in an envious tone of voice. But when a visitor suggests that Turkey is still doing quite well when compared to the Arab countries, he looks amazed. "We don't compare ourselves to the Arab countries!"



The livestock market near Sariöğlan. It was while watching these men buying and selling animals that I realized they can no longer be called 'peasants.' These are free farmers, wheeling and dealing in the marketplace as free men anywhere. Turkey is not the Nile Valley, where government regulation stifles the farmers' initiative, and an exploitative price system keeps them dependent and poor.

Mr. Kirok says with disdain. 'We look to Europe and America.'²
Down on the farm in Turkey, people look in only one direction when they want to improve their lives -- to the west.

* * *

A livestock market in a village near Sariöğlan.

Every week, farmers of the region bring their bulls, cows, sheep, goats, and donkeys to an open area outside the village to sell them. They bring the animals in by pickup truck, loading and unloading them with great effort. Once a man has coaxed and pulled his animals out of the truck, he stands with them, waiting to be approached by a prospective buyer. Bargaining is done in classic Turkish style. Two men begin negotiating by firmly clasping right hands and pumping vigorously while shouting prices at each other. If they agree, they shake hands more gently to clinch the deal; if they don't agree, they let go of each other's hand with a sharp downward movement and complain about how unreasonable the other has been.

Watching them, it suddenly becomes clear that these people are no longer peasants, despite the colorful costumes and partial veiling of some of the women. In anthropological theory, 'peasants' are defined as people tied to the land by a complex

web of social obligations and who deal with urban markets not as free, independent entrepreneurs, but as dependent people bound by exploitative relationships. This is still true of farmers in the Nile Valley who are unfairly taxed by the government pricing system, but not true in Turkey.

"We are now almost one-and-a-half generations away from the old peasantry," says Mübeccel Kiray. "Turkish peasants stopped being peasants in the 1950s," she says, referring to the change from subsistence farming to cash cropping that occurred at that time.

During Ottoman times, most rural Turks were subsistence farmers, producing mainly for their families. Large-scale cash cropping had existed in Turkey since the early 19th century, but only in a few areas of the fertile south. The situation changed dramatically after World War II because of mechanization.

Turkey wisely sat out World War II as a neutral, but after the war aligned itself with the west. Anxious to keep Turkey strong against the new Russian menace, the Americans extended Marshall Plan aid to Turkey. For the rural areas, this meant thousands of tractors at low prices. The farmers were able to afford the tractors because they had accumulated some surplus wealth since 1923. With the peasantry devastated by 10 years of war and economic dislocation, the new republic gave up collecting the old Ottoman usur tax in rural areas. "This was an extremely courageous step," says Mrs. Kiray. "It gave the peasantry a chance to pull itself together."

By the early 1950s, many Turkish farmers could afford to make some investments. By 1953, Turkey had 6,000 tractors, compared to only 350 in 1945. Today, the figure is 431,000 tractors.

People still remember those tractors in Sarioglan, which received hundreds of them. "The Marshall Plan was very good for developing Turkey," says Talib Kalinkara, 58, a retired government employee. "The price of the tractors was very cheap, but at that time" -- making a little joke about the eternal decline of the Turkish lira -- "Turkish money was important."

"We were rich then," says farmer Ali Soydan, 50. "The conditions of life got better and production increased 20 times."

Villagers left out of the Marshall Plan tend to be bitter about it. Gunesli, for example, is closer to Kayseri than Sarioglan, but more isolated. "We didn't have any information about the Marshall help coming to Turkey," grouses farmer Cemil Atas, 52. In even more isolated Eskiömerler, later American aid is confused with the Marshall Plan. "President Kennedy sent wheat to us and I got 15 kilos -- they told us, 'this is Marshall help,'" remembers farmer Mustafa Kaya, 60.

Not everyone was enraptured by the Marshall Plan. In Incesu a middle-aged man who refused to give his name complains that "the Marshall Plan helped the rich people become rich and it" -- using a colloquial expression -- "'made us upside down' because we had to pay back what we had borrowed." The same man was suspicious of American intentions. "The Marshall Plan wasn't" -- another colloquial expression -- "'for our nice eyes and face.' The US wanted something from us -- that's why they helped. After the Marshall Plan, we had lots of US bases. Later, we went to Korea and the US said, 'please enter NATO.'"

Many Turkish academics feel the same way, although the issue "cannot be separated from ideology," says Ferhunde Özbay, a demographer at Istanbul's Bogaziçi University. Per capita

income and agricultural production increased, but income distribution was skewed furthermore to the detriment of the poor," says Ms. Ozbay. "Many people lost their land and migrated to urban areas; many now have smaller lands."

Mübeccel Kiray agrees that the mechanization of the early 1950s did drive people off the land, both because the poorer farmers could not afford the new inputs and fell farther behind, and because the new machines decreased the demand for agricultural laborers. "One tractor moves about 10 people off the land," says Mrs. Kiray. "In just five years, more than one million people had to leave the rural areas for the cities. And so after 12,000 years, it all started with the Marshall Plan."

In 1927, the year of the first republican census, 80 percent of Turkey's population lived in the countryside; today, the figure is 56 percent. Almost a quarter of Turkey's people live in the urban sprawls of Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. The government has estimated that rural depopulation contributed 42 percent to urbanization during the 1960s; by the next decade, the percentage had climbed to 63 percent.

"People who migrate are not the rich ones in the extended family," says American anthropologist Ronald W. Casson, now teaching at Istanbul's Boğaziçi University. "The people who go to Istanbul or Ankara are poor people, people with a little bit of land, less than five hectares or so, or none at all."

But then look at the positive side.

The Marshall Plan tractors of the 1950s, combined with high-yielding "Green Revolution" seeds in the 1960s, revolutionized Turkish agriculture. Today, Turkish agriculture is a resounding Third World success story. The country is one of only seven in the world able to feed itself. Compare that with Egypt, which has to import half its food at an enormous cost in foreign exchange (\$2.5 billion a year), and you begin to grasp the magnitude of the Turkish triumph. A foreigner traveling in Turkey with previous experience of other Middle Eastern countries is astounded by the abundance, variety, and low prices of Turkish food. The Turkish economy has many weaknesses -- particularly in the industrial, commercial, and



An old gentleman at the Incesu caravansaray. He has no doubt seen some astounding changes during his lifetime.

financial sectors -- but nobody in this country goes hungry.

More than technology is involved in this. Unlike so many African and Middle Eastern countries that heavily tax their farmers to provide subsidized food to their urban populations, Turkey lets its farmers get the best price they can for their products. For crops such as vegetables and fruits, the farmers deal with the free market. For major grain crops, such as wheat, they can take advantage of government support prices -- if they want to. In Gölcük, farmer Nebi Kaya, 52, says he generally sells to the government at its "roof" price, "but sometimes, a rich businessman comes here to buy our crops over the government price."

British anthropologist Arthur Paul Stirling has written that the guaranteed price system "is perhaps the greatest single benefit the government has conferred on Turkish village agriculture." The farmers wholeheartedly approve of this and other government policies. "There are no problems here," says Ali Soydan in Sarioğlan. "The government buys our grain at a good price and provides us with tractors and threshing machines."

"If the government doesn't give aid to the farmers, they can't continue their lives as farmers," says Nebi Kaya in Gölcük. "You can see our life here. We are very comfortable and" -- using a colloquial expression -- "'our faces are not frowning.'"

Only Mehmet Aydin, 39, in Güneşli complains about government support prices not being high enough. But even he expresses general satisfaction with life in the village. "We are more comfortable than people living in the city," he says. "If you work as a farmer, you can buy a tractor in two years. But if you work in the city, you can never afford a tractor."

* * *

Successful it may be, but Turkish agriculture is not without its problems. Marketing -- the familiar gremlin of Turkish industry -- is not what it should be, which is why you see Libby's canned beans in North Yemeni or Egyptian groceries rather than some Turkish brand.

Technology could improve. "We don't have the best quality seeds and agricultural machines at the required levels," says Mehmet Paydas, 29, an agricultural technician in Kumbağ. Some experts estimate that Turkey's crop production could be doubled or tripled if European levels of technology were uniformly applied. For example, Turkey's use of fertilizer, 8.32 kg per hectare, is quite low when compared to Holland's 431.85 and West Germany's 132.68.

The question of "appropriate" technology also comes in here. Refik Gundöğar, a 31-year-old agricultural expert working in Kayseri, observes that farmers in his region "have been using improved seeds for 20 years, but the soil conditions and climate here are different from Europe. The Europeans may get high levels of production, but that doesn't mean we can get the same in Turkey. We're just on the point of researching the efficiency of seeds in our own land.

"Buying new equipment and methods from abroad is not good every time," Mr. Gundöğar adds, "because climate, techniques, and customs are different here. We should try to develop our own techniques."

More irrigation would help. At present, Turkey has some four million hectares of irrigated land. When the great Ataturk Dam is completed on the lower Euphrates in southeastern Turkey about the year 2,000, another two million hectares will be irrigated. In the Kayseri region, where rain is only about 360 mm a year, lack of water seriously hinders agriculture. But at least in the Güzel Köy-Kayabag area, the ground is so hilly and rocky that irrigation systems are not cost-effective.

Small holdings in Turkey tend to hinder agricultural efficiency, particularly in the use of machinery, but there doesn't seem much the government can do about Islamic inheritance customs. In fact, the republic has had a deliberate policy of discouraging large farms. The land reform bill of 1945 nationalized all landed property in excess of 500 donum (123.5 acres), although the limit was raised to 5,000 donum in 1950.

Today, Turkey is overwhelmingly a land of small holdings. More than 68 percent of farms are less than one hectare and these take up 24 percent of the arable land. The 1,472 farms larger than 250 hectares account for only .05 percent of the total number and take up only 4.3 percent of the land. "In Turkey, one-fourth of an acre is considered a decent farm," says Mübecceç Kiray.

Gundoğar finds that the size of farms in the Kayseri area is always changing. "If a farmer buys some new fields, he can make a larger farm. But after 10 or 20 years, his sons will divide the land again. This is a problem in Turkey. The government would like bigger farms, but this is a social problem. Some laws will have to change if the government is to do this."

Mrs. Kiray believes the government is afraid of agribusiness. "They tend to favor small enterprise and small enterprise can never really be very successful," she says. "Anything that's in an organization reminds them of socialism and they get very frightened. I don't know what kind of dreams they have at night."

* * *

It's not immediately obvious to a foreign visitor, but Turkish village life has its dark side.

"At least 45 percent of the rural people are living in very poor conditions," says Ferhunde Özbay. "There are too many seasonal workers, or what we call 'rural marginals.' They have a little bit of land, but they cannot really live on it. So some members of the family go outside and become agricultural laborers."

On the average, per capita incomes in Turkish villages lag behind those in the cities by 20 percent. Ms. Özbay is particularly concerned about high infant mortality rates in rural areas, which she attributes to the harsh Anatolian winter and poor sanitation; children generally die of pneumonia or diarrhea.

Turkey's peculiar position as a bridge between east and west shows up strikingly in mortality rates. Death rates for adults are comparable to Europe; a Turk will generally live into his 60s, a European into his 70s. But Turkish infant mortality rates for 1982 were 83 deaths per thousand babies, much higher than the usual European range of 20-30, and close to the Egyptian rate of 116 (1976). At least, Turkey's rate has greatly improved since

1960, when it was 184 deaths per thousand.

Medical care generally is improving in Turkish villages, but has a long way to go. In theory, every two or three villages are supposed to have a doctor and midwife assigned to them. "Free medical services exist on paper, but actual conditions are very poor," says Ms. Ozbay.

Educational levels for village women are still very low. According to 1975 figures, the illiteracy rate for Turkish women is 52 percent, compared to 25 percent for men. Turkish sociologists have found that girls do attend primary school in large numbers in western regions, but not in the more traditional-minded east. One study showed 61 percent of village girls near Kırklareli in the west attending primary school, but only two percent near Mardin in the east.

Still, only about 1,000 of Turkey's 36,154 villages now lack a primary school. Before 1924, only five percent of the villages had traditional Koranic schools and none had modern secular ones.

Yakup Toker, 83, of İncesu began teaching primary school in 1927, when the Turks were still using Arabic letters. "The Latin alphabet is so easy to read and write, while the Arabic is difficult," says Toker, who retired from teaching in 1967.

"One point I really like is that everybody can read and write now," says Toker, exaggerating a bit in his enthusiasm. "Before, people used fingerprints to sign their names, but now everybody can write their own names. The literacy rate in our district is 85 percent; we made good progress on that. Rich and poor -- everybody goes to school and reads newspapers. Before, only rich people went to school." That's why Toker himself had been able to get an education during the Ottoman period -- his father had been one of the biggest farmers in İncesu.

One odd phenomenon puzzling Turkish demographers is a decline in the fertility rates of rural women. In 1960, they bore between six and seven children in their lifetimes; today, the number is down to four to five. "We don't know why," says Ms. Ozbay.



Bedriye Kaya from Gölcük. Turkish village women are a lot less reticent about having their photos taken than Arab village women. Mrs. Kaya was very eager for me to photograph her sitting on this horse; the idea gave her great amusement.

Only 40 percent of married rural women use birth control. Pills and IUDs are available, but withdrawal is still the most common method, says Ms. Özbay. Village women frequently rely on self-induced abortions, she adds. In a November news conference, Health and Social Services Minister Mehmet Aydın announced that 5,000 women a year lose their lives from self-induced abortions.

A positive phenomenon noted by Turkish researchers is that rural people today "are very aware of national or international events, which is quite a difference from 30 or 35 years ago," says Ms. Özbay. For example, "in the 1950s, not many villagers had even a radio, while in 1970 almost every family we interviewed had one."

Ms. Özbay finds that villagers get most of their news from television or radio. "When I watch television, I learn what's happening in the world," says Beker Şahar in Incesu. One disadvantage of that is both those media are state-controlled in Turkey and tend to eschew balanced reporting in favor of making the government look good.⁴ Turkish newspapers are very free by Third World standards, but are not often read by the villagers.

"I don't read the newspapers daily," says Nebi Kaya in Gölcük. "I know my own business, farming, and I deal only with that."

* * *

To appreciate how far rural Turkey has come in the last half century, it is useful to go back to the terrible times from 1914-23 when the Ottoman Empire was destroyed in the maelstrom of World War I and Ataturk's new Turkey struggled to emerge in Anatolia during the War of Independence. A Turkish expression describes this period as a time when "the world was boiling."

Kayabağ sent 80 men to fight for the old empire in 1914; only four returned at the end. "For the first time, the women went to the mosques to pray for the dead because the men had gone to war," says Emir Tuncer. For those who remained in the village, conditions were harsh. "We ate only grass for a long time," says Tuncer, who was born in 1904.

Kayabağ's Armenian and Greek populations suffered the most. The Armenians were forced to leave in 1915, apparently deported to Syria with the Armenians of eastern Turkey, a tragic exodus during which hundreds of thousands died from disease and banditry. Ahmet Alkaya, 68, of Güzel Köy remembers hearing stories of how "some Armenians took their treasures with them, and others tried to hide their treasures in wells and under rocks."

The Greeks left the area during the 1923 population exchange. Today, a half-ruined Greek church still commands Kayabağ's side of the ravine, a mournful reminder of the vanished people.

During World War II, conditions in rural Turkey took another dip after having improved a bit during the 1930s. World trade was disrupted during this time, but also unfavorable weather produced some bad harvests. Ali Soydan identifies 1942 as the last bad year in Sarioğlan when people were actually hungry. "In that time, we had a big rain," he says. "Then it was cold -- that's why we had problems."

"During World War II, in 1942, we were in difficulty again, but not like World War I," says Emir Tuncer.

For Beker Şahar in Incesu, "the last bad time was 1941-43. Instead of bread, we ate potatoes; we used pekmez" -- boiled grape juice -- "instead of sugar. During those years, the government couldn't help us enough. The weather was not good -- not enough rain. That never happened again. Now, production goes up and down, but it was never bad like that again."

The residents of Gölcük in Thrace remember the World War II years as particularly harsh because Turkish troops guarding the border (the Germans had overrun Greece) camped out in their fields and disrupted their agriculture. Those soldiers did not have an easy time of it either. Mustafa Kaya of Eskiömerler recalls being stationed in Thrace near Edirne. "I was waiting on the Turkish side of the border, and the Germans were on the other side," he says. "We didn't have enough bread to eat. I had a hard time."

"I had such a difficult time during World War II," says 78-year-old Veli Isik of Incesu. "I couldn't find bread or fuel -- everything was so difficult."

Mr. Isik's story gives some idea of how harsh life could be in rural Turkey before the 1950s. Sitting in the barber shop of his 45-year-old son Mehmet, where he likes to spend most of his day, Isik looks haggard and defeated. "I always had a hard life," he says. "I always worked and I don't remember any happy days. When my fields gave me good products, those were my happy days, but I don't remember which years they were."

Isik's grim story began in 1911, when he was five years old. His farming family lived in the small village of Orengar, east of Incesu, next to a river. One day, a flash flood swept away the family's house, killing his mother. Two brothers were killed in the Gallipoli campaign of World War I. In 1918, came the greatest calamity of all -- Isik's father died. The 12-year-old boy had to go to Incesu to live with a brother-in-law, a poor farmer like his father. For the rest of his life, Isik worked as a laborer for other men, "sometimes for money; sometimes for food in the stomach."

His one attempt to leave Incesu and seek a better life for himself in Adana, 200 km away to the south, ended in failure.

"Once, I went to Adana to work in a cotton field for a textile company. I was there 25 days, then got ill and came back. I had gone to Adana on foot, and I came back on foot."

Illness has dogged Isik all his life. He went to Kayseri in 1926 to do his military service, but sickness sent him home after 20 months (the usual term of service then was 36 months). "When I walk, my knees hurt me," he says.

Isik "retired" in 1968. When his wife died in 1974, he was left alone, except for his two sons. "I can't cook, and I can't work, and I can't always visit my sons," he says. "Otherwise, life is okay."

Isik and his wife had seven children, of which only two lived into adulthood. Both live in Kayseri. Mehmet works as an errand boy in an office fetching coffee and tea for the employees; he works in his Incesu barbershop only on weekends. The eldest son, who is 58, used to work as a driver in Kayseri, but presently does not have a job. When asked about the main changes he has seen in his life, Isik replies that when he was young, "I would go to Kayseri and stay in a caravansaray. Now,

I stay in an apartment with one of my sons -- that's the difference."

Despite all his difficulties, Isik has lived a long time and is proud to tell you why. "I never smoke, and I eat lots of yoghurt," he says. "I wake up early every day and go to bed early. If I go to the coffee house, I sit outside, not inside. In the summer, I go to the grapefields."

(b) In Akkişla, Ismail and Khamir Metin remember the difficulties of former times. "We did not have any coal then, so we cut wood in the mountains," says Mrs. Metin. Ismail remembers that it took the men half a day to carry the wood on their backs down from the mountain. Harvesting and threshing grain once took three months, "but with tractors and threshing machines, the hardest worker can do it in three days, the laziest in 10," says Mrs. Metin.

The Metins, and many of their neighbors in Akkişla, are Turkmen, former nomadic people who have settled in villages. Every year, beginning about mid-April, the Turkmen take their sheep, goats, and cows up to the yayla (high plateau) for three months. While encamped on the plateau, the Turkmen people live in tents. Formerly, they would transport the tents to the yayla in cow-driven carts, but now use tractors.

Mechanization made the difference in Gölcük, as well. "Life is getting easier and easier because of mechanization," says Bedriye Kaya (photo on p. 14). "Formerly, we used to get up in the summertime as soon as the sun rose and go to the fields. Now, we still get up early, but we take everything easy and aren't worried about things as we once were."

For Gölcük, the first big improvement came in 1951, when the government built a paved road up from Şarkey. "Formerly, things were difficult because of the limited transportation," says Bedriye's husband Nebi. "After the road was built, people going by stopped here and bought feed and animals. Firms selling machinery came here. And we found the opportunity for marketing, especially grapes, to places like Şarkey."

With the road came government agricultural technicians



Villagers in Akkişla busily erecting a yayla cadiri (tent) purely for my benefit. These are Turkmen people, villagers who spend three months a year encamped on the yayla (high plateau) grazing their animals and living in these tents. I had been asking the Metin family about these tents when, all of a sudden, they decided to put one up; many of their neighbors joined in the fun. The women played a major role in this operation and one of them joked, "We don't need you men -- we can do it ourselves!"



Turkmen villagers in Akkişla erecting their yayla tent, providing me with an extraordinary photo opportunity. The women even built a fire to show me how they cook when they're on the plateau.

who "showed us how to use fertilizers," says Mr. Kaya. "They convinced us to buy them. We didn't use fertilizers in my boyhood, but now we are addicted to them. We can say yields have gone up 10 times."

By the 1960s and 1970s, services that had previously been restricted to the cities -- electricity, piped water systems, and telephones -- began to reach the countryside. "When I was young, the situation of Turkey was so bad," says Beker Şahar in Incesu. "Now, we have electricity and water and much food in the house. I never imagined that Turkey's economic situation would improve so much. Now, we have lots of material improvements such as television, washing machines, radios, and refrigerators."

Kadir Tasaci, 52, has worked as a barber in Incesu for the past 34 years. "Social life and economic life changed -- always in a positive way," he says. "I remember when there wasn't any transportation between Kayseri and Incesu. Now, there are lots of buses and taxis. If I have an illness, I can reach Kayseri in 15-20 minutes. The train station here was finished in 1932 and people can go by train. There is an airport in Kayseri and I can fly anywhere. About 500 homes here now have telephones; I can telephone any far-away-place if I want to. Almost every home has a black and white television and people are now buying color.

"We came to this point, but how much farther we can go, I don't know," says Mr. Tasaci. "Lots of other countries such as Japan have gone higher than us."

"Incesu was such a small town," marvels Yakup Toker, pulling on a cigarette in a plastic holder, but never inhaling. "Now, lots of factories have opened near here. Electricity and piped water came under the republic."

Mr. Toker heartily approves of the republic. Having been born in 1901, he well remembers the Ottoman period. "We turned our faces westward, and the Ottoman mentality completely died," he says. "The people began to govern themselves. Before, what the sultan said was right. Democracy in Turkey is 100 percent right. If people don't like one government, they can take it away in elections where they can vote freely."

* * *

Life in rural Turkey may have improved. But this being an imperfect world, everybody has complaints. Turkish farmers are not happy about fertilizers, which the government manufactures and distributes.

"If you have money, you can get fertilizers," says Mehmet Sahli in Incesu. "But they are expensive, although you can buy on credit. I find fertilizer expensive, but I have to have it. If I don't use it, I get small production."

"Nowdays, we realize the value of fertilizers," says Nebi Kaya in Gölcük. "But we have problems using them; we are using the most expensive ones because we think they are the best. We haven't had any soil tests done here, so we don't know what kind of fertilizer is most beneficial for our land.

"We don't do the tests, partly because of our timidity and partly because it takes a long journey to the laboratory in Istanbul. Also, to have soil tested, the farmer must get a sample from at least six different parts of his field. We find this difficult, and so don't do it."

The farmers in Guneşli also "need some soil analysis to show us what fertilizers to use," says Cemil Atas, adding that the high price of fertilizer is the farmers' worst problem.

Government agricultural experts see the situation differently. "I don't agree that fertilizer is expensive," says Refik Gundog̃ar in Kayseri. "If you can find a market for your crops, it's not expensive. Fertilizer may be considered expensive by the farmers, but 20 percent of the cost is subsidized by the government. The only problem is whether they can market and get a good price. If they can, they will never mention the word 'expensive' in regard to fertilizer."

Mehmet Paydas in Kumbag̃ says the government gives the farmers credit to buy fertilizer and that the government purchase price for certain crops takes into account the price of fertilizer. "The government sells fertilizer at a high price and buys the crops at a high price," he says.

Indicating that Gundog̃ar and Paydas may be right, the second most common complaint of farmers is marketing.

"I have trouble with marketing," says Cemil Atas. "I produce sunflower seeds and potatoes, which the government doesn't buy at the guaranteed price. I have to sell to businessmen in Kayseri and the prices change from year to year."

Omer Öztürk, 48, has an apple orchard of 100 trees outside of Guneşli. He had no trouble marketing his apples this year, but last year had to put them into underground storage. "Apple prices are low, and I can't get them to other places to sell," he says. "I have a tractor, but no time to market. I don't know which places need apples."

In Akkişla, İsmail Metin complains that a fruit juice factory was offering to pay orchard farmers only 12 TL (three cents) a kilo for their apples. "It's nothing, but what can we do with our apples?" he asks.

Although they are a bit more self-sufficient because they grow some of their own food, villagers suffer from Turkey's 40 percent inflation rate the same as city people. The high cost of living is a common complaint.

"If you work on a salary, inflation takes it away," says a hoca (religious teacher) in Mr. Tasaci's barbershop in Incesu. Turkish hocas often receive government stipends.

An old man named Ahmet Bilgin in Güzel Köy gets so excited about the subject that he claims people now eat less meat than they used to because of high prices. "Our ancestors were healthier than we are," he says. "They had no problems except how to live and farm. Now, we have to think of the cost of living."

* * *

Large-scale migration from the countryside to the cities began in the early 1950s in Turkey.⁵ During the next two decades, Turkish men in search of work began ranging farther afield — to Europe and, more recently, the Middle East. The largest number went to West Germany during that country's economic boom of the late '60s and early '70s. Today, some 1.2 million Turkish gastarbeiter, "guest workers," in Germany send 4.5 billion DM (\$1.5 billion) to families back home each year.

Because of the economic downturn and high unemployment,

the West German government has been encouraging Turkish workers to return home by offering them financial incentives. In 1983, 60,000 workers and family members returned; the number for 1984 was expected to be 320,000. German tourists in Turkey have no problem getting around because they are always running into someone who speaks some German.

In Gölcük, only five men had gone to Germany; two have since returned. "Only poor men go," says Nebi Kaya. "They stay for 5-10 years. When they come back, we can't say that they're rich, but they do have the capital to buy a car and a new house."

Family ties in Turkey are so strong that people hate to leave home unless they absolutely have to. "Foreign places are difficult to live in," goes a Turkish expression. "The farmers have a fear of going to Germany for reasons nobody can know well," says Mr. Kaya. "They feel some fear, but don't know why."

But some men have no choice but to go. "When I was young, I didn't even have enough money to buy cigarettes," says Ali Soydan in Sariöglan. "Then I went to Germany and worked 10 years in a plaster factory in Munich. My family stayed here and I sent them money. It was difficult being away from my family because" -- using a colloquial expression -- "'only Allah can live alone.' I was bored there. But when I came back, I bought a house and furniture, a television, and a refrigerator. I also built a barn and bought some animals."

One thing Mr. Soydan did not bring back from Germany was a sophisticated knowledge of German culture. When asked what the main differences are between Turks and Germans, he says the Germans drink much beer and eat pigs, horses, and donkeys, which the Islamic religion forbids the Turks from doing.

Exposure to European culture and habits does have an effect, although this varies with the individual and is difficult to assess.

"Young people can stay in Europe, but the adults certainly come back," says Mehmet Aydin in Gunesli, who worked five years in a German Opel factory and one year in France. "It depends on a man's customs whether he returns from Germany. If a man believes and acts Turkish customs, he can live in a village here. But if he liked the life in Germany, he will have to choose the German life because he will be unhappy in Turkey."

Even when they return, men may assume some European affectations. In Akkisla, where people wear typical Anatolian garb, one man stood out conspicuously in a brown leisure suit and white fedora. Sure enough, he had been to Germany.

In Eskiömerler, some 100 families are now working "outside," says Ahmet Lulic, 43, the village mayor. Mr. Lulic, a stout man in a light green safari suit, himself spent eight years working in a chemical factory and then a pipe factory in Dusseldorf before returning in 1972.

Over the years, 350 "rich men" from Eskiömerler have returned from Germany and then moved to Kayseri instead of living in the village, he says. "They said they couldn't live here anymore. They rented out their fields to other people to work and then bought houses in Kayseri.

"The children of these people had studied in Germany, where they learned professions such as painting and building. We haven't any place here for these children to work.

That's why they left -- because of the children.'

According to Mehmet Aydın, a man's decision on whether to stay in the village after his return from abroad "depends on what he has got in the village."

Cemil Atas of Guneşli spent 12 years in Germany working on a ship. Returning five years ago, he bought a tractor, some fields, and opened a small shop. He says he stayed in Guneşli instead of moving to Kayseri because, "If I had stayed in Kayseri, I could only have bought a house or a flat there. All my capital would have been spent on the house. I want my children to lead an easy life."

It is still not clear what effects returning migrants are having on village society. Social researchers have yet to do a comprehensive study. Mübeccel Kiray has a theory that social changes will occur because women are left alone in the villages when their husbands go abroad. Ferhunde Özbay says she doubts that the women are actually becoming more independent. "But I did observe that the villagers' consumption patterns changed quite radically," she adds.

Ms. Özbay participated in a Turkish study done in the town of Ereğli on the Black Sea coast. She noticed there that "many returned migrants built apartment houses in the middle of farms, but the houses lacked piped water, or any infrastructure at all. They even buy bathtubs and fill them with water that they carry from a well. They hope that sometime the government will provide the infrastructure.

"This need for a bathtub is a completely new phenomenon," muses Ms. Özbay. "For sure, they've seen it abroad and they're trying to imitate the life they lived there. But unfortunately, they don't realize that infrastructure is more important than having a bathtub."

Another odd discovery was to find "both men and women complaining that if they didn't have certain consumption goods, like furniture and televisions, their neighbors would not talk to them," says Ms. Özbay. "One man wanted to save for a new house and did not want to spend his money on these things. But the neighbors would not talk to his wife because they think they're not a proper family without anything in their house. The wife had a really hard time and cried because the neighbors said so many bad things. At the end, the man just got his money from the bank and bought furniture, a TV set, and other things."

* * *

So pronounced is the migrating phenomenon in the Kayseri region that some villages have ceased to be proper farming communities and have become instead holiday resorts for former residents. That's the case with Güzel-Köy-Kayabağ, which has been declining as an agricultural center for the past 30 years. Today, only five families in Kayabağ still farm, none in Güzel Köy.

This never was a rich agricultural area. The land is hilly and rocky. Since irrigation is not cost-effective, the farmers depend entirely on rain, which is about 360 mm a year. With no opportunities left in the village, the young people leave for the cities of Turkey or they go abroad.

Güzel Köy-Kayabağ is now mostly a community of old



In the ravine between Güzel Köy and Kayabağ. From left to right, Nilufer Düşün; Ali Düşün; their friend Erdal San from Kayabağ; and one of my interpreters.

people. The primary school in Güzel Köy had to close a few years ago because of lack of children. Elderly, pot-bellied Ahmet Bilgin discloses that fact to a visitor one afternoon while chatting with some middle-aged women at Güzel Köy's communal even. "Why don't you produce more children so we can set up another primary school?" one of the women asks him. "My battery has run dead," Mr. Bilgin replies, to the hoots and cackles of the women.

Ali Düşün, 57, is rather typical of Güzel Köy natives. His father had owned 35 acres, "the biggest farm here," he says. "But the fields brought only enough food to feed our six oxen. One day, my father stopped farming and became a builder."

Neither Mr. Düşün nor either of his two brothers stayed on the farm. In 1941, he went to Ankara to work in an aircraft factory. Later, he worked in the construction business in various Turkish cities. Finally, he established a jewelry shop for his son in Ankara, also buying him a Mercedes. After having an operation on both his eyes, Mr. Düşün retired. He and his wife Nilufer now spend half the year in Güzel Köy in the old family house, which he and his brothers maintain.

Despite all the years he spent away from the village, Mr. Düşün still has a special feeling for this piece of ground. "Wherever I go in the world, I can never find a place like this," he says. "There is no noise or air pollution here, no gossip, and no stress. What I find is fresh air, friendly atmosphere, fresh water, and being with nature. The most important thing is that I feel myself together with my roots."

But Mr. Düşün fears that his family's attachment to this rocky land with its old stone houses and ancient memories will not continue after him. "When I die, my son and his children will not come here."

* * *

Many young people also have strong emotional ties to their villages, but their problem is making a living. Nobody wants to be a farmer anymore.

In Kumbag, Halil Koner, 19, and Recep Sağlam, 20, are both tall, muscular fellows with a common interest in football (soccer). Recep is presently a professional player with the Tekirdağ Spor team; Halil would like to play professionally after he completes his military service.

Halil's father is a small farmer who also runs a small grocery store in town. If Halil doesn't make it in football, he may help in his father's store. He definitely would like to stay in Kumbag if he could. "Living in another city is difficult," he says. "It's a matter of courage. We young people dream of going to the big city, but can't."

"The young people in this village prefer to open a shop rather than continue farming," says Recep, whose father is also a small farmer. "Farming is very difficult. The young generation prefers to stay in the village and try to make money from other things, such as running a shop, fishing, and so on.

"My parents didn't teach me to be a good farmer; they never took me to the fields. Parents don't want us to work in the fields because they know the farming life is difficult."

Despite all the advances of the last 50 years, farming in rural Turkey is still viewed in negative terms -- as something you do when you can't do anything else. "We are able only to do this job," says Mustafa Tuncer, Emir's 75-year-old brother. "We thought that if we went to the cities, we would become hungry. We are professionals only at farming."

"We want our children to get a higher education and make themselves known in society," says Ismail Metin in Akkişla. "We want them to go to school. If they don't, their only chance is to become farmers and feed animals."

* * *

Throughout the period of my interviews in rural Turkey, I was struck by the sense of optimism and pride in accomplishment expressed by middle-aged and elderly villagers. Except for a few complaints -- the high price of fertilizer, problems of marketing, and inflation -- they generally seemed satisfied with the economic and social conditions of their villages. Having lived through difficult times in their youths, they seem happy with the material improvements of the last 50 years. For them, life has never been better.

This spirit is in marked contrast to the gloomy discontent I often found among young, educated, urban Turks. The stagnation of Turkey's industrial sector offers them few opportunities. The country's wobbly democracy, which requires periodic military intervention to suppress chaos, does not inspire confidence. Traditional rules of social behavior, both

relations between the sexes and the deference that must be accorded elders and superiors, can be stifling.

I discussed this phenomenon with Mübeccel Kiray, asking her if Turkish people in the villages could be considered happier than those who live in the cities. Her answer was surprising and, I also thought, rather wise.

"The old people in the villages have such cheerful lives because they have put the major responsibilities of life -- children, family, and work -- behind them," she replied. "The family leaves them secure enough so that they don't worry about being left out in the cold.

"There is no doubt that life is much more comfortable in both villages and urban areas than it was 30 or 40 years ago. But for the young people with responsibilities, life is uncertain. Change is very real for them. They lack stability. They can lose their jobs. They can build their lives up to a certain point and then lose everything. This instability brings anxiety and dissatisfaction.

"But," she added, "this dissatisfaction is not entirely bad, because it becomes a motive for improvement and development."

Turkey can only hope that its young people respond as positively to change as its older generation.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Cline

FOOTNOTES

¹Such is the Turkish deification of Ataturk — his countenance appears on postage stamps, all denominations of the currency, and upon the wall of every shop and business in the land -- that a foreigner wonders if the Turks are really serious about all this. I was surprised to find that they are. Even young, educated Turks who had been slightly leftist during their university days spoke of Ataturk with respect, if not adoration. The one exception was a Muslim fundamentalist who did not care for many of Ataturk's secular reforms. But he declined to say anything, good or bad, about Ataturk personally. My conclusion is that a foreigner should not underestimate the profound held Ataturk still has on the Turkish soul.

²Progress is quite relative. I came to Turkey after having visited Egypt and North Yemen. At the American embassy in Ankara, an official asked me for my impressions of Turkey. I rattled on about how prosperous, clean and modern the country appeared. He looked quite astounded. "Where have you been?" he asked.

Both Egypt and North Yemen had once been incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. I was interested to investigate Turkish attitudes toward the Arabs. In my unscientific sampling of opinion, I found that Turks generally thought the Arabs to be backward, quarrelsome, and somewhat brainless. Despite the common religion and cultural similarities (particularly as concerns the role of women), there does not seem to be a lot of sympathy between the two peoples.

"The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the secular Turkish Republic meant that Turkish and Arab peoples, whose lives had been intertwined for so many centuries, were now on separate courses," wrote British journalist Peter Mansfield in his book The Arabs (New York: Penguin Books, 1983). "Ataturk's personality and modernizing reforms attracted widespread interest throughout the Arab world, especially among university students and the professional classes, but the concern was not mutual and there was remarkably little intercourse between the two nations. There was antipathy between Turks and Arabs derived from the former imperial/colonial relationship, and Ataturk's policies were aimed to persuade the Turkish people to forget the past glories of the Ottoman Empire and Islam and to concentrate on developing a strong modern state on European lines." (p. 230)

During the summer of 1984, Arab tourists suddenly discovered that Turkey was a great place for a vacation; they descended on Istanbul in record numbers, about 500,000, always in enormous family groups. About the same time, the Turks noticed that the Arab world provides an excellent market for Turkish agricultural exports (Turkish construction firms have been active in the oil countries for several years). Finally, observers have noticed indications of resurgent Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey in recent years. These three phenomena encouraged Turkish and foreign journalists to write about Turkey's sudden lurch back to Islam and the east.

I would read those kinds of news stories with a cold, dubious eye. Turkey shares borders with three Islamic states -- Iran, Iraq, and Syria (the last two being Arab). With none of those countries has Turkey's past relations been

outstandingly friendly, and they are not so now. In fact, Prime Minister Turgut Özal told parliament on October 10 that Kurdish rebels now operating in eastern Turkey had been trained in Syria. Sure, the Turks want to sell more of their products in the Arab world -- who doesn't? -- but when it comes to the really big economic and strategic issues, they look to the west, which is seen as not only more powerful, but also more reliable.

In early November, the Turks hosted a meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization. The English-language Turkish Daily News, an independent newspaper, ran an editorial deploring the divisions in the Arab and Islamic world, particularly the Iran-Iraq war. The paper expressed the hope that "Islamic nations display the maturity and feeling of responsibility that will elevate them to the level of the industrialized world."

The Turks don't see the Arabs as worthy of emulation in cultural matters either. On August 21, TDN carried an AP story about Turkey's Arab tourist boom. "Turks have mixed feelings," the story said. "Some worry that western visitors will confuse them" -- the Arabs -- "with the indigenous population of the country, believing this 98 percent Moslem country is less westernized than it is. Travel agency officials say that several luxury hotels, which cater to mostly European and American clientele, admit Arab guests with reluctance. Tourism Minister Mükerrrem Taşcıoğlu" -- who is much given to dramatic hyperbole -- "has threatened to 'smash the head of anyone who does not treat properly our white-robed guests.' He added: 'We shall recover the money spent by our people who go on the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.'"

Earlier, on August 14, TDN had described the effect a group of Arab tourists had on the seaside resort of Fethiye. "The other day, a group of Arab tourists were in town," TDN quoted the mayor of Fethiye as saying. "Many of the women had covered their faces with perdah (veils). You should have seen the reaction of the local people. They were amazed; they thought that Fethiye had been invaded by creatures from outer space."

Ms. Özbay thinks sex inequality in primary school attendance is not the real problem in Turkish education; eventually, Turkey will achieve 100 percent primary school attendance, she says.

Of more concern to her is the male/female gap in secondary schools and higher and what this says about class inequality in Turkey. "The class differences in higher school attendance are much more important than sex differences in Turkey in general," she says. "The gap between males and females is closing up in primary school, but another inequality starts becoming more important in terms of higher education." For example, in western Anatolia, Turkey's most "progressive" region, only eight or nine percent of rural children attend higher schools; within that group, the differences between males and females is only one percent. But in urban areas, the attendance figure is about 60 percent for higher schools. "The gap between urban and rural becomes quite important in secondary schools," says Ms. Özbay. "In the upper middle class, all the females are educated. But only two percent of females graduate from a university in Turkey, so this two percent is only among the upper middle class."

When I left Turkey in December, a fierce controversy was raging in the Turkish press about the blatant

FOOTNOTES 3

partiality that state-owned TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) displays toward the ruling Anavatan (Motherland) Party. TRT rarely gives opposition politicians an opportunity to express their views; intelligent panel discussions of news events, with opposing viewpoints, are absent from Turkish television. TRT is, in fact, your typical Third World government mouthpiece. The Turks seem rather resigned to this; at least their newspapers, which are extremely lively by Third World standards, give them alternative news and opinions.

But in November, a prominent Anavatan deputy resigned from the party after a quarrel with Prime Minister Özal. The Turkish newspapers gave this incident front page coverage, but TRT did not mention it at all on the evening news.

There was a feeling in the country that TRT had gone too far this time. On November 18, TDN columnist Cem Sevin blasted away. "Being a journalist and having an opportunity to learn what had in effect actually happened at the end of the day, I am truly amazed at the way the TRT reflects the incidents inside Parliament," wrote Mr. Sevin. "When we know that all is not well in Parliament that day, we are told that all is milk and honey and are shown film footage of serious discussions and gentlemanly behavior among parliamentarians. Sometimes, we are not shown anything at all. Why? Why is the TRT hiding the things that will be shown on the covers of the newspapers the next day?"

Mr. Sevin concluded his column with a most perceptive and useful question: "Will Premier Özal show the courage to allow privately-owned networks to start broadcasting?"

Turkish people have been emigrating for a long time. At the turn of the century, America was the place to go. Today, there are 51,915 US residents originally born in Turkey (compared to 210,998 Greeks).

In Guneşli, one of Mehmet Aydin's prize possessions is a charcoal drawing taken from an old photograph. It shows a serious, clean-shaven young man wearing a suit that would have been fashionable about the time of World War I. The long, squarish face does not appear particularly Turkish, but this is Mr. Aydin's uncle Paşa.

Paşa immigrated to the United States in 1917, and apparently became a plumber -- he worked with pipes in a municipal building. The family in Guneşli did not hear anything from Paşa until 1955, when a Turkish man from a nearby village returned from America and visited them, bringing the small photo of his friend Paşa and a \$2,500 check. He said Paşa, who had never married, was dead. Mr. Aydin does not know where his Uncle Paşa lived or is buried in the US. His father had once copied down his brother's address in a notebook, but Mr. Aydin cannot now find that notebook.

In Kayabağ, the villagers speak of a man named Hilmi who had gone to America. Supposedly, Hilmi "built many factories there and was rich." Five years ago, Hilmi returned to his village, nearby Efkere, to "raise 50 or 60 chickens" in his retirement. He died in Efkere. The villagers still refer to him as "the American."

Maybe Thomas Wolfe was right -- you can't go home again.