

# YILLIK

Annual of Istanbul Studies

2024

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Görkem Akgöz,  
*In the Shadow of War and  
 Empire: Industrialisation,  
 Nation-Building, and  
 Working-Class Politics in  
 Turkey.* Leiden: Brill, 2024.  
 xviii + 374 pages, 4 maps,  
 32 figures, and 1 table.  
 ISBN: 9789004416741

State-led industrialization was central to the Kemalist project of modernization and development. Yet the literature on this process, particularly on workers at state-run factories, has long remained limited. Celebratory portrayals of these factories have dominated popular and academic narratives, and even critical studies of labor have argued that workers at state-run factories held a favorable position thanks to relatively high wages and social benefits.<sup>1</sup> However, growing interest in the social history of modern Turkey has prompted some scholars to adopt a more critical stance towards state-led industrialization. Over the last two decades, a growing body of research has challenged the traditional view of state-run factories.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, until recently, there has been no monographic study of a state-run factory in the English-language academic literature. Görkem Akgöz's *In the Shadow of War and Empire* changes that. Her book explores both Ottoman and republican industrialization by turning our gaze to the Bakırköy Cloth Factory, where she reveals that workers were not mere passive agents of political and economic processes of macro-level change. The book follows the factory from its founding in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Ottoman Empire sought to overcome its underdevelopment through industrialization, to the mid-twentieth century, when Turkey, after a long period of single-party rule, transformed itself into a multi-party democracy aligned with the Western bloc.

This periodization, along with the choice of Bakırköy Cloth Factory, stands out as one of the book's major successes. Despite the existing

studies on both Ottoman and republican state-led industrialization, the connections between them are underexplored. Bakırköy Cloth Factory, founded in 1845 by the Ottoman Empire and reconstructed as a republican industrial success in the 1930s, represents an ideal case study. The book's opening chapter, "The 'Turkish Manchester,'" presents a meticulous examination of this connection. Akgöz situates the Ottoman Empire within a semi-colonial framework wherein industrialization was conceived as a means of transforming the position of the empire in global commerce by fostering native production of previously imported goods. She posits that this project ultimately failed. One might be reluctant to use the term "failure," since many narratives of failure or decline in Ottoman history have been challenged in recent decades, including the one about the decline of Ottoman manufacturing in the nineteenth century. While Akgöz acknowledges this, she nevertheless asserts that state-led industrialization was unable to create a mechanized Ottoman industry and transform the terms of global commercial exchange for the Ottomans. Consequently, it failed to attain its initial objectives (pp. 35–38).

The second chapter, "A 'Home-Grown Plant,'" argues that the principles of etatism—that is, state-led industrialization—took shape in response to the global economic and national political crises in the early 1930s, with motives similar to those behind Ottoman state-led industrialization. State-run factories were established with the intention of producing essential consumer goods to offset Turkey's trade deficit. Akgöz defines this period as a window to jumpstart industrialization because the tariff limitations imposed by the Treaty of Lausanne were lifted and the global crisis loosened the grip of major capitalist countries on semi-peripheral ones (pp. 80, 87–88). It is not difficult for the reader to make the connection between the Ottoman aim of overcoming semi-coloniality and the republican aim of establishing autarky. However, Akgöz should have clarified and emphasized this point, which would have strengthened her

argument about Turkey's place in the global economy. This chapter also addresses two principles of etatism that are pivotal for her argument in the subsequent chapters. The 1936 Labor Code, a result of fifteen years of drafting, was emblematic of both principles. First, it was anticipated that state-led industrialization would facilitate the establishment of capitalist relations of production within the country, with the creation of labor markets and capital being key elements in this process. The code's recognition of individual contracts between employer and employee precluded collective organization and bargaining, thereby establishing a precedent for further capitalistic development. Second, these practices sought to eradicate class as a meaningful political category, thereby reinforcing the discourse of the Turkish nation as a unified political entity devoid of class distinctions.

Chapter three, "Smokestacks of 'Atatürk's Minarets,'" focuses on the spatial dimension of state-led industrialization, examining the site-selection processes for newly established factories. According to Akgöz, these processes reveal an important aspect of etatism because the decision-making was not driven solely by the logic of commercial capital. Instead, the pursuit of a civilizing mission emerged as a significant influencing factor (pp. 119–120). Apart from two main commercial considerations of proximity to raw materials and connectivity to the railway network, commercial concerns were of less importance than the potential for fostering growth in underdeveloped regions. However, many factories suffered from a shortage or instability in the labor force, partly due to the fact that they were established in areas that had previously been vacant (p. 114).

After providing a national overview in the preceding chapters, Akgöz turns in chapter four, "The View from the Factory," to the question of what was happening on the factory floor. Her research on Bakırköy Cloth Factory demonstrates that the labor relations system in place was characterized by authoritarianism and irrationality, in stark contrast to the plans and propa-

160 ganda put forth by the Kemalist ruling elite and managers. This was a process of accumulation through intensive exploitation, and resistance to this exploitative “patriotic service” may have been “isolated and individualized,” yet it existed (pp. 155, 157). Akgöz illustrates that the factory management was arbitrary and irrational in many senses. For instance, there was a lack of standardized remuneration for wages and standardized procedures for hiring and promotion. In this context, foremen exercised strict disciplinary control over the workforce on the shop floor (pp. 175–176, 181–182). She rightly conceives a high rate of labor turnover in this period as part of workers’ individual resistance, a conception shared by other labor historians. However, she also documents that, based on an analysis of workers’ files, many workers left the factory with excuses related to harvesting agricultural products, yet their timing did not align with the agricultural rhythm (p. 203). She argues that industrial welfare policies in Istanbul’s state-run factories came as a response to this pervasive individual resistance but remained inadequate, as the emergence of *gecekondu*s proves. As exploitation in the factory increased throughout the 1940s—alongside inflation, housing problems, and an authoritarian factory regime—workers’ discontent also grew.

Chapter five, “Voices from the Shop-floor,” demonstrates how workers expressed this growing discontent, and how this was inextricably linked with the immediate postwar political crisis in Turkey and national and global postwar liberalization. Akgöz argues that the ruling Republican People’s Party opted for a synthesis of Kemalist developmentalism and global social welfarism in response to the transformation of the labor question into a social question during the war, when the option of simple repression was no longer viable (pp. 227, 237). The shift in workers’ language in petitions proves they quickly seized opportunities provided by the political transformation. The use of deferential language persisted, yet petitions also exhibited indications of a shift towards a more asser-

tive and demanding tone. Moreover, they portrayed a growing sense of positive identification with workers as a class, according to Akgöz (p. 229). Nevertheless, the labor regime remained characterized by repression, and labor regulations continued to be restrictive. Consequently, the actual effects of individualistic resistance remained limited.

The next chapter, “Textures of Struggle,” seeks to identify instances of collective politicization and resistance at Bakırköy Cloth Factory. Mainly, this chapter argues that political citizenship in Turkey expanded to the working class through the recognition of workers as a social and political category in the late 1940s (pp. 265, 315). Akgöz posits that workers’ politicization in this period took place and was shaped overwhelmingly on the shop floor, and this politicization showed signs of visions and strategies for political and organizational alternatives (pp. 264–266). This politicization found expression through different channels, as the transition to multiparty politics and a parallel increase in freedom of political and civil associations provided workers with a greater range of options. Despite the continued existence of legislative restrictions on subversive political activity and labor organizing, as evidenced by the limitations placed on trade unions through a funding system dependent on the government and the absence of direct legal rights to represent workers in collective bargaining, labor organizations nevertheless played a notable role, as revealed by the experiences of Enver Tenşi and Ahmet Cansızoğlu. The former was a nationalist worker, and the latter was a communist worker, but both assumed controversial roles in different unions and parties as labor activists (p. 265). Both individuals were persecuted because of their labor activism by various parties, including their unions, political parties, the management at their factory, and the government. However, Enver only experienced significant difficulties as a result of the military coup against the Democrat Party, whereas Ahmet’s life was severely disrupted by the prevailing anti-communist sentiment (pp. 314–315).

It is noteworthy that Ahmet, following the annulment of his contract in 1955 due to his arrest, continued to apply for positions at the factory until 1967, the year he died. Furthermore, Akgöz states that he encountered significant challenges in securing stable employment throughout this period (p. 313). This raises a significant but unanswered question: why did this persecuted communist worker choose to work in this state-run factory under problematic conditions and a repressive atmosphere, and even continually apply for a job there for a decade? The recent literature on state-run factories has rightly challenged celebratory and nostalgic accounts because a substantial body of evidence suggests that these factories were considerably worse than how they were portrayed in contemporary propaganda. Akgöz also dedicates a significant portion of her work to substantiating this assertion. However, Ahmet’s insistence on being reemployed in the factory demonstrates that the secure employment and social benefits these factories offered continued to be a source of attraction for many. Therefore, one needs to recognize that many workers, including even Ahmet, were drawn to these factories by the prospect of stable employment, that perhaps even more conformed to the idea of patriotic service, and that these workers are as significant a part of labor history as are those who exemplified politicization and resistance to Kemalist developmentalism.

Akgöz’s lens shifts between different scales and spaces throughout the book, a method that enables her to offer insights into global and national politics as well as individual and small-scale collective histories. Nevertheless, this method seems at times arguably restrictive. For instance, Akgöz argues in chapter five that the shop floor played a pivotal role in workers’ politicization and struggle, and the shop floor remains her principal concern throughout the chapter. However, a significant portion of the same chapter is dedicated to examining the extent to which Enver’s and Ahmet’s political trajectories were shaped by their personal networks and experiences in union and party meetings. Elsewhere, Akgöz’s own account

moves beyond the factory in sections regarding working-class housing. She demonstrates that Istanbul's factories did not offer housing, unlike their counterparts in Anatolia, except for barrack-style lodging for some single migrant workers. Consequently, many workers constructed *gecekondu*s in close proximity to the factory (p. 220). Nevertheless, she provides no elucidation of the potential impact of *gecekondu*s on workers' politicization and the city as a whole. I strongly suspect that a more detailed examination of *gecekondu*s might have prompted the author to identify a further example of workers' struggle and aspirations for a political alternative. It is notable that Akgöz herself states that by the end of the 1940s, residents had begun to form neighborhood associations (p. 220). Additionally, she notes that some families were reluctant to relocate to *gecekondu*s because of concerns about safety (pp. 222–223). This also suggests the possibility of intra-class conflict in the urban environment, which is likely to have been mutually reinforcing with the tensions within the factory. Finally, the distinctive nature of Istanbul's factories with regard to housing invites comparison with other factories to ascertain whether housing provision engendered mean-

ingful differences in workers' discontent. These aspects of workers' lives outside the factory cast doubt on the assertion that the predominant site of workers' politicization and struggle was the shop floor, although they do not refute any other major claims of the book. A more balanced approach between the two sides of the factory gate may well have proved more illuminating.

That said, pairing an account of Turkey's political economy in the first half of the twentieth century with an account of workers' politicization and struggle is a great achievement. Essentially, this work tests the premises of Kemalist developmentalism and modernism at their very heart: the factory. Akgöz demonstrates that the Kemalist regime prioritized fostering conditions of capitalist development and solidifying state-centered authority over workers' welfare and political and social rights. However, welfare provisions and a partial relaxation of restrictions on political and social rights emerged as a response to both the imagined threat of communism and the imminent danger of workers' increasing politicization and struggle. The Turkish economic and political regime between the 1920s

and 1950s was therefore negotiated between different groups of actors, and workers were a significant part of these negotiations, albeit in different ways at different times. Akgöz skillfully demonstrates this by using a variety of sources, including expert reports on factories, workers' personal files, and petitions, to weave together a comprehensive and successful account of Turkish state-led industrialization.

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<https://doi.org/10.53979/yillik.2024.14>

1 See, for example, Ahmet Makal, *Ameleden İşçiye: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Emek Tarihi Çalışmaları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2007), 159. Also cited by Akgöz on page 182, where she counters Makal's calculations about wages in state-run factories.

2 Can Nacar, "Our Lives Were Not as Valuable as an Animal: Workers in State-Run Industries in World-War-II Turkey," in "Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labour History," ed. Touraj Atabaki and Gavin D. Brockett, supplement, *International Review of Social History* 54, no. S17 (December 2009): S143–S166; Caroline E. Arnold, "In the Service of Industrialization: Etatism, Social Services and the Construction of Industrial Labour Forces in Turkey (1930–50)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 3 (May 2012): 363–385.

Batu Bayülgen and Turgut Saner, *Architectural Description of Byzantine Remains in Istanbul: Excavations and Surveys in the City within the Walls (1927–2021)*. Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2024. xxii + 696 pages, 44 plans. ISBN 9786259433493

Istanbul has seen significant urban renewal and expansion projects since the 1970s. These developments have yielded a wealth of archaeological data and created numerous opportunities to explore the city's complex settlement history. However, despite the potential of this new archaeological data and growing interest in Byzantium, the archaeology of Byzant-

tine Constantinople remains poorly understood because of a notorious lack of systematic publications, especially in recent decades.<sup>1</sup> Apart from well-documented sites like St. Polyeuktos, the Hippodrome, the Great Palace, Yenikapı, and Haydarpaşa, our knowledge of Istanbul's Byzantine archaeology remains considerably limited, particularly regarding miscellaneous remains discovered at tiny building plots throughout the city. However, if carefully documented and analyzed, these scattered archaeological records could significantly enhance our understanding of the Byzantine capital as a physical space and of past human life in the city.<sup>2</sup>

In their long-awaited *Architectural Description of Byzantine Remains in Istanbul*, Batu Bayülgen and Turgut Saner seek to fill this scholarly gap

by making previously unpublished physical evidence from the archives of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (IAM) accessible for further scientific analysis. This unique work, the product of nearly two decades of meticulous digitization, data analysis, and processing, features detailed descriptions of architectural remains and plans mapping the archaeological remains excavated within the Theodosian Land Walls. Bayülgen and Saner, both architectural historians trained at Istanbul Technical University (where Saner still serves as a faculty member), have digitized the IAM excavation files, covering fieldwork conducted between 1927 and 2021.<sup>3</sup> The extensive data presented in this much-anticipated work introduce new questions for Byzantine archaeologists and Byzantinists in general, and provide substantial material to