

# **DO's & DON'T s for Better Greek-Turkish Relations**

**A guide  
for those who want to avoid mistakes  
which create misunderstandings  
and aggravate inter-ethnic rapprochement  
(The guide may also be used conversely  
to create tension,  
to satisfy aggressive personalities  
and Greek and Turkish nationalists)**

**Prepared by: H. Millas**

*Dedicated  
to those few Greeks and Turks  
who can not readily be identified  
as the stereotypes in this guide.*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **PREFACE**

This guide was originally written in English with the purpose to be published in a third country, simply because each Greek or Turkish publication is perceived by the ‘other’ side as biased. Eventually another solution was found: the text circulates in Greece in English and in Greek and simultaneously in Turkey in Turkish. In case of doubt or disagreement the English text precedes; the others are translations.

All the views expressed here are my own and they do not commit any other person, group or organization. In other words there is no conspiracy. I also take this opportunity to declare, being fully aware of the consequences of this declaration, that, though I do not know why, I like *pasturma* as well as *souvlaki*!

H. Millas

## PROLOGUE 1

By: Üstün Ergüder

One of my few long time friends is Costas Catsaros, a red blooded Greek who had never been in Turkey when I met him at Manchester University in 1958. We played basketball together holding the University colors high in the English inter-university competition. We labored hard together to pass Italian, which we had both picked up to satisfy the language requirement of the University for the BA Administration degree. Our friendship developed further and we starting rooming together in a Manchester digs. It was Costas who introduced me to cooking. Our deal was that he would cook and I would do the dishes. Being an unskilled worker vis-à-vis a Greek did not bother my Turkishness. I had something to learn. The only difference in his style of cooking was that he would use olive oil for hot dishes. Hailing from Ankara, my palate was used to butter or margarine for the same dishes. I used to think that olive oil would only be fit for salads or vegetable dishes like *dolma*, fig leaves stuffed with rice. Costas changed all that and I must admit I liked it. Our friendship still continues. Costas is now a successful businessman who frequently travels to places like Gaziantep and Denizli. He is certainly more knowledgeable about the “Anatolian Tigers”, an emerging group of Anatolian businessmen and entrepreneurs, than many *Istanbullu* Turks including myself. His business interest in Turkey goes way back to 1980s and was not initiated by the **love affair** of the post earthquake period.

Did we ever talk politics? We recently do. As a good Greek he complains about Greek politics and as a good Turk I try to match him up with my views on Turkish politics. I don't, however, remember discussing Greek-Turkish relations with him. On various occasions I recall the expression of a mutual wish of ending this “stupidity” between these two nations. I have a very distinct memory of watching with him live on TV the events that led to Zurich and London agreements of 1959. My most distinct recollection was jointly seeing Adnan Menderes survive the plane crash in London on TV at the Manchester University student

union. We just watched it, shook our heads, made few comments, and went on to the basketball training session.

I often put myself in place of a Greek and try to look at Turkey with his eyeglasses. I do that when I have time to relax at Akyarlar (Bodrum) which is so close to the Greek island of Cos that one can get a good idea of what that small island town looks like. One is even tempted to swim there although those who are an expert on currents do not advise it. They also tell me that Cos is more distant than one perceives. Akyarlar used to be, during the 1980s, a place from which Turkish left wing and PKK dissidents took off in small boats for Cos and most found themselves at the Lavrion refuge camp near Athens.

What do I see when I look from Cos? I see a country that is bursting at the seams. She has a growing and young population of 67 million with 50 percent of the population 25 or under. Her cities are becoming more crowded. Statistics indicate that income distribution is going from bad to worse. She has political wisdom accumulated over ages but finds it difficult to adjust that wisdom to change that is a hallmark of our times. Policies of economic reform are held in harness by a governing system still carrying a traditional and ideological baggage of **etatism**. Furthermore, a political patronage system further reinforces concentration of authority at the center and prevents policies of “economic rationality.” Yet, many independent observers see her economic potential. This is a dynamic country but a politically sloppy one at the same time. Despite that sloppiness, she has a way of getting things done. She works herself into political and economic corners, but knows how to get out of them. I see a political paranoia caused by sitting on a piece of real estate which is both coveted by many and strategically at the center of almost all hot international conflicts. That paranoia has also historical roots. I see basically a Muslim country, but a country preoccupied with the West and Europe throughout her history. This, in turn, perhaps leads to an identity problem further contributing to that paranoia; a kind of paranoia that makes political rationality, political reform, and the generation of a **future vision** extremely difficult; a kind of paranoia that makes **security** an excessive concern. As a Greek I could very easily be concerned with what I see and Turkey might become a major preoccupation for me.

Sometimes I try and do the exercise in reverse. As a Turk I fail to understand the Greek preoccupation with the Turk. I think we are very similar in our tastes, habits and behavior. Before joining the EU, I observed a similar sloppiness in Greek politics to the one that befuddled Turkish politics. I look around Turkey and see Greece as potentially the least troublesome neighbor perhaps with the exception of Bulgaria. I see a nation of close to 11 million: no serious population pressure for territorial expansion. I fail to understand the mutual **war footing** of both

nations during the past quarter of a century. I see Turkey more preoccupied with “internal” and “external” dangers. I see Greece as only playing a tiny part in that equation of “dangers”. Political and cultural links of Greece with the West lead me to think that Greece is exploiting these links at the expense of Turkey. My traditional vision of Greece as the **spoiled child** of Europe is reinforced. Yet for me, the Turk, Greece is not a major preoccupation. Problems with Greece are nothing more than a nuisance among many that Turkey has. I, as a common Turk, feel that Turkey got entangled in Cyprus, only reluctantly, responding to Cypriot and Greek excesses. Both Aegean and Cyprus fuel my paranoia as I see it as encirclement.

I read Hercules Millas’ essay with excitement. Millas is a Greek-Turk who has grown up in Turkey, served in the Turkish army, and currently lives and teaches in Greece. He is a breed that seems to be disappearing from the Istanbul scene. I regret that. Turkish-Greeks were, or *Rums* as we called them without meaning any offense, a key element in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious city of Istanbul. My generation and the generations preceding could not imagine this exotic city of ours without the local Greeks. Their most obvious presence was in the Bosphorus fish restaurant scene and the associated *raki* and *meze* culture. Bosphorus fish, *raki*, and *meze* restaurants still flourish, most of them now under the management of Turkish apprentices who took over the restaurants from their Greek-Turkish bosses who departed for Athens. And, they do that very successfully. Yet, a favorite pastime for Turks of my generation visiting Athens is to look for former *Istanbullu raki* and *meze* experts who may have set up restaurants at the Plaka and Mikrolimano. Having a foot and a root in both countries, there is no one more qualified to look at our myths about the other more critically than Millas. A favorite myth, slogan, perception or whatever you might like to call it is “we Greeks and Turks are very similar. We are both Mediterranean.” For a Turk being Mediterranean means everything to our West: Greek, Italian, Spanish with the French omitted for reasons that I am not aware of. Greeks figure prominently when Mediterranean similarity is underscored because we all drink *raki* (after all ouzo is no that different), eat *meze*, and share the same cuisine. Southern and Eastern Mediterranean is avoided totally in that feeling of “sameness,” similarity, or “affinity” if you will.

Millas does a superb job in questioning those claims that I always felt to be an oversimplification. Yet, all oversimplifications hide certain facts or truths. Post-earthquake developments show that “claims” of similarity are not without a base. Perceptions are important and some Greeks and Turks continue to perceive similarities. This in turn has had an impact on people to people relations with important and much needed spillover

effects into politics. But, it will run into problems if you treat those claims emotionally and romantically, as we tend to do around this part of the world, and forget they are oversimplifications. Millas in **DO's & DONT's for Better Turkish-Greek Relations** warns us against the pitfalls we may fall into with oversimplifications and myths. It is a very useful handbook for anybody on both sides of the Aegean engaged in promoting better Greek-Turkish relations. In this day and age of post-earthquake "love affair" and increased contacts of two peoples, this is a valuable guide for those who want to get things done whether they are in tourism, business, second track diplomacy, and cultural and educational exchanges. I personally believe that the future of better Greek-Turkish relations lie in developing future oriented projects were the outcomes could be win-win for both nations. I strongly believe that such an approach in itself is a win-win situation. The strategy of increasing contacts, joint projects will, I am sure, will serve in time to decrease the importance of the historical baggage of conflict that we seem to carry.



## PROLOGUE 2

By: Theodore A. Couloumbis

Some years ago – in the early 1990s – I attended a conference in Melbourne, Australia which was focusing on the problems and prospects of contemporary Hellenism. The audience comprised mostly Greek-Australians and the presentations were made by academic persons from the Greek diaspora, including a number of Greek-Americans. At that time most people in Greece was singularly preoccupied with the dispute over the name of what is formally referred today as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Passions were then running high – especially in diaspora communities – and there were long diatribes emphasizing history, language, culture, politics and diplomacy. The question appeared to have been reduced to the notions of rights and ownership. In other words, who had the “exclusive” right to the use of the name “Macedonia”? Harsh words were being exchanged, Alexander the Great was figuratively exhumed and placed under a microscope, economic sanctions (an embargo) were employed, the EU and the U.N. became highly engaged, a series of third party facilitators sought to channel relations toward compromise, and Greece came close to becoming part of the Balkan post-communist problem rather than a part of its solution.

In September 1995 a deal (referred to as the interim agreement) was fortunately struck between the two countries. It left the issue of the “name” of FYROM open to a future negotiated settlement, but it opened wide gates for trade, investment and other modes of bilateral cooperation. Nearly seven years have passed since the interim agreement and the issue of the “name” remains unresolved. But relations between Greece and FYROM have bloomed. The promotion of economic development, political stability and territorial integrity in a pluralist and democratic

setting in FYROM, are all among the top objectives of Greece's foreign policy priorities in the Balkans. In sum, the Greek-FYROM relationship of the past decade is excellent proof that so-called "historic conflicts" are not necessarily timeless and that the peoples of the Balkans are not prisoners of history doomed to behave in the future as they have behaved in the past.

Hercules Millas' volume – written with considerable tongue in cheek – is designed to contribute to a climate of mutual understanding and gradual reconciliation between Greece and Turkey, two long-time adversaries in the Balkans. Millas – paradoxical as it may sound to our unaccustomed ears – is a "Greek-Turk" or a "Turk-Greek"<sup>1</sup>. Born in Ankara and brought up in Istanbul, a member of the Greek minority of that great city, educated and educating the young in both countries, having served in the Turkish army and teaching in Greece, Millas has the rare ability of being sensitive to the fears, needs, expectations as well as the biases of both Greeks and Turks.

His work is a manual on political correctness/incorrectness. It is realist and pessimist in its orientation, pointing out, sadly, that victories of one side are seen as defeats by the other. National holidays in Greece commemorate disasters in Turkey and those of Turkey commemorate catastrophies in Greece. Despite its light-hearted style of expression, the book raises the somber warnings of a chorus of an ancient tragedy.

Millas' guide of Do's and Dont's will prove extremely helpful to both Greeks and Turks in social gatherings or during tourist exchanges. It will help them avoid abrasive and/or controversial statements. But for the author, the pain remains deeply marked in the memory and myth of both countries. The reader, therefore, will often wonder whether the gap can ever be bridged and whether both peoples are doomed to protracted conflict.

As Hercules Millas informs us in his epilogue, the bulk of his book was written before "earthquake diplomacy" and the Helsinki EU Council meeting of December 1999 that opened the prospect of Turkey's EU membership. Since that time the obvious affinity between foreign ministers Cem and Papandreou, proliferating low politics agreements, civil society contacts, growing volume of trade, renewal of bicomunal negotiations in Cyprus, incremental confidence – building measures, and the cementing impact of the September 11, twintower tragedy in New York, are all opening a window of opportunity for Greek-Turkish peace and cooperation in the Aegean and Cyprus.

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<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, when we get accustomed to using "Greek-Turk" as a hyphenated designation as in the case of "Greek-American" or "Greek-Italian", we will have advanced far on the road to reconciliation.

What many well-meaning people are trying to do in this early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to disaggregate Turkey's and Greece's disputes and to address, initially in terms of confidence building measures, some of the so-called low political questions. In my view, as societies are integrating, their low politics (e.g. tourism, environmental protection, terrorism, cross border smuggling and criminal activity) will be placed on the top of foreign policy agendas. We are gaining time in a strategy that is called "step by step", emphasizing confidence building measures and leaving difficult questions in the Aegean for later resolution.

The most poisonous problem between our two countries is the question of Cyprus. By moving it, integrating it, into a wider context, we may be able to facilitate the Cypriot peace process as well. The wider context is clearly offered by the European Union. The promise of accession of Cyprus and of Turkey could have a self-restraining effect on the behaviors of Greece, Turkey and of the two communities of Cyprus.

I often remind my students of all the troubles, civil and international, that we in Greece faced in the turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century. We have experienced the Balkan Wars, the World Wars I, the Greek-Turkish war and the exchange of populations, the World War II, the Axis occupation and, sadly, our civil war which delayed our integration into the European Communities for at least 20 years. But then I remind them that the rest of Europe was not immune to similar problems either. We were not unlike Portugal, not unlike Spain, not unlike Italy in the inter-war period, not unlike the whole environment in South Eastern Europe.

Our main problem in the Balkans has been the syndrome of the "greater": "Greater Albania, Greater Bulgaria, Greater Greece, Greater Macedonia, Greater Romania, Greater Serbia and Ottoman nostalgia (that would be equivalent to Greater Turkey)". We had all been trying to be "greater" at one another's territorial expense. But because, at one time or another these territories became "apples of discord", we had a chain of bloody, irredentist confrontations.

It is high time for us to redefine the concept of "greater". Greater is a country that has 2% inflation, less than 3% of GDP budget deficit, and 60% or less of GDP public debt. These are the Maastricht criteria. If we add to them consolidated democracy, respect for the environment, women and minorities, tolerable levels of unemployment, and safety nets against poverty, homelessness and disease, we can define "greatness" as being a part of the European Union and of the wider Euro-Atlantic Community.

## INTRODUCTION

I was born in Turkey and lived there for thirty years as a member of the Greek community of Istanbul. Starting from childhood I was, in a way, informally trained to do and not to do certain things, in order to survive as an individual and as a member of an ethnic minority. In the second part of my life, I spent another thirty years in Greece, keeping my Turkish nationality. Little by little, I came to the conclusion that I tended to behave differently from most Greeks and Turks when I discussed issues that concerned both parties. Probably due to my upbringing and 'training', I refrain from certain anticipated 'ethnic' attitudes and/or I prefer distinct approaches.

I believe that my approach is more effective in dealing with conflicting bilateral issues. The ethical aspect, however, of a set of pre-determined and programmed behavior, irrespective of its efficiency is really disturbing. Insincerity is part of the whole idea, since part of the game is not to do or not to say the first thing that comes to one's mind. The enterprise may remind one of the Phanariots. The Phanariots were the rich and influential Greeks who lived in the Phanar quarter of Istanbul during the Ottoman period and served the state. Much later, they were judged as ambitious and double-dealing by most Greek and Turkish historians. It is true that they never sided wholeheartedly with either party when nationalistic fervor swept the Balkans. It is also true that my home was close to the Phanar; but on the other hand, I am not really rich and I am quite averse to serving states.

As my introspection kept me uneasy on these matters of sincerity, to my great relief I found out that some methods had been developed by academics with the purpose of resolving inter-ethnic conflicts. These

academics developed some guidelines of behavior; very pragmatic, almost Phanariotic. My guide of 'DO's & DON'Ts is not a contribution to this scientific approach for 'conflict resolution'; it only presents some observations with respect to my environment. It may help both Greeks and Turks who wish to have better relations with one another.

Very often, a conduct that disturbs one of the two main parties - in our case the Greeks and the Turks - may also originate from a third party. Naturally, this guide may help third parties, too.

The guide can also be used in the reverse. Those who do not care for developing better relations with the other side, but mostly care about satisfying their ego by attacking and making the other side feel miserable may read the guide differently, inversely: they should not try to do what I recommend as 'do' and they should do the 'don't's. After all, what benefits one is what gives him satisfaction. Frankly, I have more trust in this inverse use of the guide, since it is always easier to frustrate 'the other side' than to foster an atmosphere of confidence.

The guide may also be of some help, indirectly and only after creatively adapting the advice to their own situation, to other groups and individuals who face a conflict or hate each other. For example, couples who are no longer in love, successful business partners who are sick of seeing each other, families who decided at an unfortunate moment to spend the vacations with some friends and then feel frustrated, neighbors who feel the people next door are the worst in the world, citizens who have to live with immigrants, with refugees or with other 'outsiders', in short, all those who face a situation which resembles the one of the Greeks and Turks, may benefit. The problematic sides of the Greeks and of the Turks can be apprehended as examples which others could try to refrain from imitating.

The DO's & DON'Ts will hopefully highlight some basic features of the two sides too. National sensitivities, after all, are related to matters of national identity, social aspirations and regional worries of legitimacy and sovereignty. Sensitivities are part of our ethnic character and they act as a kind of national destiny.

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In this 'guide' it has been assumed that the reader has a relatively good knowledge both of the history and of the present status of Greece and Turkey. References are not included in this text, which does not aspire to be an academic work. Instead of references some of my related publications and conference papers are presented in the attached 'bibliography' to provide further information to the readers.

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## Chapter 1

### BAPTISMAL SKIRMISHES

(names, toponyms etc. )

Greek children are formally named at baptism. Later, as grown ups, if so desired, they may acquire any name they like. There is plenty of liberty actually in choosing one's name. There is no apparent difficulty in this respect in Turkey either. There is not even a ceremony; people simply register the name of their children and if they wish, change their names as adults. The same is true with toponyms, which may be changed by the local authorities.

However problems arise when names are associated with 'identities'. Up to the last two decades, the Church of Greece did not allow babies to be baptized with ancient Greek names. (Without acquiring a name one could not obtain an identification card, go to school, etc.). The Church first in 1819 suspected that secular circles, and much later the Marxists, were challenging the pious tradition by introducing pagan names. In Turkey, Kurds faced serious limitations when they attempted to choose Kurdish names for their children.<sup>2</sup>

There are presently a series of skirmishes with respect to certain toponyms and nomenclature of the present and/or ancient Greeks and

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<sup>2</sup> I know a Greek couple who, as communists and atheists, wanted to give ancient Greek names to their children. Because of the objection of the Greek Church and its imposition of Christian names, they ended up giving their daughters Russian names: Natali and Tatiana. In Turkey, one may meet Kurdish nationalist activists with the surname of 'Turk': Ahmet Türk.

Turks. It is wise if the Greeks, the Turks and third parties are aware of the dangers of using or not using them. In English, things appear simpler: there are Greeks and Turks. However in Turkish and in Greek there are various ways of referring to these groups of people. There are cases where the two parties either use different names for the same group of people, or each side uses the same name for groups identified differently by the other side. Each side conceives the contradiction in these uses as a challenge, a defiance, an insult and an open rejection of many things: from sovereignty rights to respect for one's intelligence.

The Greeks, in Greek, call themselves Hellenes. They don't object to the use of 'Greek' (in English). There are Hellenes/Greeks in the USA, in Cyprus, in Istanbul etc., irrespective of whether their legal status is one of a foreign citizenship. The Turks call Greeks 'Yunan' in Turkish, and 'Greek' in English. However, in Turkish they use a different word for 'Greeks' who do not hold Greek citizenship: Rum. This term was traditionally used in the Ottoman Empire by both the state and the grecophones themselves for Orthodox Christians and is derived from the word Roman.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, for the Turks there are no Greeks in Cyprus but only 'Rums' (when they use Turkish). The members of the Orthodox grecophone minority of Istanbul are seen as Rums and they are so called. The Patriarch is the religious leader of the Rums, etc. The Rums of Istanbul are of course Turkish citizens and contingently are either 'Greeks', 'Rums' or 'Turkish citizens'. For the Turks, the names 'Greek' and 'Rum' are not synonymous and/or substitute; they would not, for instance, accept to host a 'Greek/Hellene' (Yunan in Turkish) minority or Patriarchate in Istanbul.

The Greeks call the modern Turks simply Turks. The Muslim-turcophones of Western Thrace however are denied this ethnic/national identity and are identified only as 'Muslims'. Lately there are some signs of differentiating 'Turks', 'Pomaks' etc. As a result, the 'names' of the ethnic (Greek/Turkish) groups become an issue. Any mistake has negative effects on bilateral relations.

The matter becomes a complete jumble when a historical dimension is introduced. For Greeks, ancient Greeks are simply Hellenes/Greeks (same as the modern Greeks), but the Turks may use for the same ancient people a variety of words (in Turkish) which are not clearly defined: Greeks, Hellenes, Ionians, Yunan, sometimes with or without the word 'ancient' in front of these words. For the Greeks, the Byzantines are clearly

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<sup>3</sup> The Greeks also use the word Rum/Romios but in a different meaning: as synonymous to Greek (Hellene). For example, the Prime Minister of Greece as well as the (Turkish citizen/national) Patriarch may be both characterized as 'Romios'.

‘Hellenes’; The Turks would use Greek, Hellenes, Rums, Byzantines, Orthodox, East Roman or Roman. Interestingly, even the Greeks and the Turks themselves are not aware of the confusion, but they simply feel ill at ease every time they sense the ‘other’ side is using an unfamiliar and ‘strange’ nomenclature. The historic dimension of the matter will be discussed anew under a different heading. For the moment, we will deal with the present-day situation, which is confused enough in itself.

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Never try to convince the other side (if you happen to be a Greek or a Turk), or any of the parties (if you are out of the controversy, i.e., you are a third party) that he/she uses a wrong name or an inappropriate word. You will be immediately conceived as a prejudiced ‘opponent’ and, depending on the degree of insecurity of the person, even a biased enemy. Do not try to hint that ‘names’ are not of importance; you may sound like a sneaky hypocrite. Even if you calmly suggest a more consistent use of names, by merely introducing such an argument gives the impression that you are ‘sensitive’ in this matter. ‘Why should one be sensitive unless he is bothered with what I say, unless he thinks like the other party?’ is the question that normally comes to mind.

If you happen to be in a meeting with Greeks and Turks and you would really like to interfere in order to appease only your own frustration, you may say the first thing that comes to mind. This (no. 1) choice is surely the most drastic act. It always works. In a few moments, the tension will rise considerably to convince you about the correctness of your choice. If you jump up and interrupt the ‘other’ correcting him/her the tension will be even higher. A milder controversy will occur if one pretends that he/she does not notice the ‘strange’ and ‘controversial’ (according to him/her) use of the words and he/she goes on participating and discussing the issue, whatever that is, as if nothing really serious (or unacceptable) is happening. And when one’s turn comes, one may introduce the terminology of his/her own. The risks are worth taking if one judges that the person on the other side of the fence is of a conciliatory nature.

If one does not seek tension there are different choices. If the ‘other’ is a hard-liner, one had better stick to the ‘other’s’ choice of words, if one can bear it (choice no. 2); or skip the ethnic adjectives altogether (choice no. 3). For example, one may avoid the ‘Muslim’, the ‘Turkish’ or the ‘Greek’ controversy regarding minorities by talking only of the minority of ‘Western Thrace’ and/or ‘Istanbul’.

Using the terminology of the ‘other’ side might seem like a submissive approach but in reality it is a shrewd one. It should be done with the



greatest possible apathy. Your gains may be considerable provided you can act well, not disclosing your tactical intentions to the other side.

A: The 'other' will be so shocked by your easy acceptance of what he/she assumes you obsessively reject, that for a while he/she will be thrown off balance and perplexed (this surprise may last from a few minutes to several years). You may find ample time and few opportunities to make up for the initial concession.

B: You may impress third parties following the discussion; you may create the image of a very mature personality interested in contributing to a conciliatory approach, not adding oil to the fire.

C: The other may feel inferior vis a vis your magnanimity and may reciprocate with some 'concessions' on his part, too.

An alternative may be to use the words of the 'other side' but putting them in quotation marks, either in writing or by waving two fingers of each of your hands, preferably with a jocund smile (choice no. 2B). Now, the smile is very important. It should not be a grimace showing contempt or mockery. It is no use for a Greek to say the 'Turks of Western Thrace' with a sneer on his/her face. The use of quotation marks is probably the best solution when parties carry an official position and they are not allowed readily to accept any name used by the other side.

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The above are defensive tactics to be employed in situations where controversy already exists. It is obviously preferable not to reach that point. A prerequisite is to know the terminology and the names the other side uses.

In general, another useful practice is to avoid the use of the words 'Greek' or 'Turk'. The difficulty is apparent; but so are the pejorative connotations of these words. In Greek 'Turk' means, apart from an ethnic group, according to the context, 'savage', 'furious' or a verbal insult. In Turkish 'Greek' (Yunan or Rum) brings to mind the 'enemy' or someone mean. A few years ago, a well known Turkish businessman of mass media was 'uncovered' as having a Greek ancestor in his family. He was branded a 'Greek child' (Rum çocuğu). The Greeks similarly had used the characterization 'Turkish seed' for the Christian immigrants from Anatolia in a pejorative sense.

Therefore, one should use the words 'Greek', 'Greece' and/or 'Turk', 'Turkey' in conversation as few times as possible. One may speak of the 'neighboring country', 'the people next door', 'the nation to our west/east', the 'other' etc. Some people instinctively use the 'softened' versions of national nomenclature. The Turks use the word 'Hellenes' (Helenler) for 'Greeks' and Greeks use 'Ottomans' (Othomanoi) instead of 'Turks' when they need to sound more friendly and gentle with the

‘other’ side. They prefer this usage also when they want to convey the message that they do not consider the ‘others’ so negative. This approach is worth remembering.

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Toponyms are another intricate matter. A letter sent from Turkey to Greece very often is not accepted by the officials of the central post office and is returned with a stamp saying ‘address unknown’ in cases where on the envelope the country is mentioned as ‘Yunanistan’, i.e., the Turkish word for Greece. This happens even if it is clearly marked Athens, and even if the (accepted) words Greece or Hellas are also included. The logic behind this is that the Greeks react (according to the principle of ‘reciprocity’) to the refusal of the use of ‘Constantinople’ on the Turkish side.<sup>4</sup>

Greek passports do not include the word ‘Constantinople’ as the place of birth, since this toponym will create problems for the bearer in being accepted in Turkey. The solution, since the Greek authorities refuse the use of ‘Istanbul’, is to write the name of the suburb instead of that of the city; this is the current practice. A Turk will not get a visa to enter Greece if as place of birth the Greek town Komotini is mentioned as ‘Gümülcine’, its Turkish name. There are many examples of this sensitivity. One should be aware that there are different toponyms for the same place: Chios/Sakız, Aleksandroupolis/Dedeagaç, Xanthi/İskeçe, Beyoğlu/Pera, Bosphorus/Boğaziçi, Makrohorı (Makriköy)/Bakırköy, İmia/Kardak, etc.

In short, try to mitigate and control the emotions; do not use the anathematized word or use one of the above approaches, i.e., quotation marks, accept the offer of the other etc. Double-use is widely used lately: Istanbul/Constantinople, İmia/Kardak etc. But which one should go first? One may think of all kinds of solutions: alphabetical order, historical order (a appropriate method for names of cities), changing of order every other time. The best solution however, should be prescribed after a thorough research on the psychology of the suffering subjects involved.

Many names are apprehended as anathema and as a provocation. Crowds in Greece and in Turkey reacted violently lately when a rumor spread that an avenue was to be named ‘Mustafa Kemal’ in Thessalonika, and when a ship with the name ‘Venizelos’ carrying the ‘Rum’ Patriarch reached a Turkish port, respectively. There are double names for many

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<sup>4</sup> A letter sent from Saudi Arabia to Greece with the inscription of ‘Yunanistan’, in Arabic characters, does not present a problem and the address in this case is easily recognized. By the way, the Saudis do not know where ‘Persian Gulf’ is and do not accept letters with this address; they have heard only of ‘Arabic Gulf’. Many wise people use simply ‘Gulf’.

places: Southeast Turkey/Kurdistan, Republic of Macedonia/FYROM, Turkish Republic of North Cyprus/Pseudo State of Denktas or Occupied Territories, East Black Sea area/Pontus, Anadolu (Anatolia) /Asia Minor etc. A friend of mine narrated to me how he came across a village in Anatolia, inhabited by Greeks who had converted to Islam and in consequence did not participate in the population exchange of 1923; the new name of the village was Öztürkler Mahallesi which literally means 'the neighborhood of real Turks'. The old airport of Athens 'Hellinikon' (Hellenic) is not situated in an district with the same name as it is believed; the old name of the district was Hasani (a Turkish name, Hasan). Actually, toponyms are usually associated with national sovereignty.

It is difficult to purify the 'other' altogether from the anathema of controversial names. Even the prime minister of the two countries once had names that belonged to the 'other'. A few years ago, the Prime Minister of Greece was K. Karamanlis and of Turkey A. Menderes; the first had a Turkish surname and the second a Greek one (Meander). Many Greek family names are Turkish due to historic reasons.

Detested words however are not of the same magnitude. Turks are normally annoyed when they hear the Greeks referring to 'Turkish' rule (Tourkokratia) when they actually refer to the Ottoman rule. They can stand it somehow though. Turks however hate 'Constantinople' more than the Greeks dislike 'Yunanistan'. Dario Moreno was adored in Turkey for his song 'Istanbul, not Constantinopolis'. A few years ago the editors of a periodical were taken to court in Turkey for using the old name of Istanbul, Konstantiniye, as the title of their journal.

Both sides are fervently changing as many toponyms as they can when they remind the 'other'. In Turkey, the island of İmroz has become officially Gökçeada and the Tourkolimano (Turkish Port) of Pireas has become Mikrolimano (Small Port). Hundreds of toponyms have been changed and the process is going on. The irony is that this enterprise is an impossible one: the word Balkans is a Turkish one, and the word Istanbul is derived, according to a persuasive etymology, from the Greek 'stin Poli' (to the City). Even the suffix 'ia/iye' of 'Turk-ey' is Greek. The common history is really both a binding and a dividing one (see chapter 3).

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