Building Beyoğlu

Histories of place in a central district in Istanbul

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TÜNEL

German high school
own a steep hill at the intersection of Tünel square and the İstiklal Caddesi lies the German High School, currently a private school (Özel Alman Lisesi or Deutsche Schule Istanbul). Similar to the Galatasaray High School the building is secluded from its surroundings by a perimeter, in the case of the German School a wall, consigning little of the building's size. Since 1897 the school has held its premises here and functioned as a pivotal actor for German cultural diplomacy while providing a significant contribution to the Turkish education system which had a hard timing keeping up with the rapid increase of population, particularly in the city. That being said the German School was one of the elite high schools in the country, open to the best students and historically with a considerable representation from the country’s minorities amongst its student population. Set up in the same year as the Mekteb-i Sultaniye, in 1868, the German High School was initially founded as the paritätische Deutsche und Schweizer Bürgerschule (German and Swiss civil school). It had earlier roots, however, as historian Anne Dietrich indicates, when she mentions a Protestant School that had already existed since 1857. Yet, the new “German” school was deemed necessary by missionaries, who had complained that interconfessional marriages affected negatively the Christian upbringing of children in Istanbul/Constantinople. Again, Dietrich traces an earlier evangelical school in Smyrna, which was to be the model for the previously mentioned Protestant School in Istanbul/Constantinople.

The initial plot of land for its building was acquired in Aynalı Çeşme, where the first stone was laid in 1856 and which is presently still the site of the German Protestant Church. When the Protestant School also known as the Prussian School, opened in 1857 it had 44 students of
Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Greek Orthodox descent. In 1867, part of the Protestant community suggested to lessen the Protestant character of education. Dietrich argues this was probably catalyzed by new initiatives from within the Germanophone community in Istanbul/Constantinople, aimed to set up a new civil high school where Armenians, Catholics, Jewish and Protestants would benefit from the same type of education, with no religious discrimination or any particularly outspoken confessional orientation. Gerhard Fricke argues that efforts were initially made to merge the plans for this new school with the Protestant School, but were met with resistance of the Prussian representatives of the Protestant Church. The parents who took the initiative for the plans then decided to set up an entirely new school in a different building. This would be the Deutsche und Schweizer Bürgerschule, opened on 11 May 1868. Here, two teachers were responsible for 23 or 24 girls. The foundational document of the school pointed out that the institution should match the standards of similar well-ranked educational institutions in Germany. Not long thereafter the Protestant School and the Bürgerschule were merged, on 23 November 1873, continuing together as the Bürgerschule.

THE PARITÄTISCHE DEUTSCHE UND SCHWEIZER BÜRGERSCHEULE IN ISTANBUL

Another type of “competition” coming from earlier German language education institutions was that of the Nationalschule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, located near the imperial embassy in the vicinity of Galatasaray. Ulrich Münch explains that, similar to the Bürgerschule which was about to be opened, the Nationalschule was under the supervision of Austrian-Hungarian clergymen, who were known to be liberal. They consequently opted to steer the school clear of religious education bound to a particular denomination. The main instigation behind this choice, Münch argues, was the multi-confessional background of the pupils. He describes the observations of a visitor in the school around 1873, who noticed that the Jesuits had by then indeed ‘conquered’ the religious education, but that any kind of autonomy of the Jesuits inside the school was in the curriculum. This suggests that the school
had maintained what could be seen as a liberal context. It reflects the broader philosophy of the Austrian school, which not only offered classes in four languages, but set an ambition for itself summarized as follows: ‘eine absolute Nationalitätenlosigkeit zu bewahren und in sich den [östereichisch-ungarischen] Gesamtstaat zu repräsentieren, von jeher nur einzelne Deutsche.’Elsewhere Gerhard Fricke suggests that the language of instruction at the school was in fact Italian rather than German.

In contrast to the Prussian Protestant School and the Austro-Hungarian Nationalschule the Deutsche und Schweizer Bürgerschule appears not to have had any clergymen or representatives of the North German Confederation involved in its establishment. This leads Münch to the conclusion that the school was a private initiative by parents. Paradoxically, the Bürgerschule grew much more popular among the German-speaking community than the Prussian Protestant School. By the early 1870s, the German consul Gillet noted that the number of students at the Bürgerschule was double that of the Protestant School and its income and contributions moreover were thrice as high. The secular character may have been a partial cause for this popularity. It should be noted, however, that the Bürgerschule was quite unique in the context of the German-speaking community in Constantinople: Marcel Geser argues that before the founding of the Bürgerschule most schools had been either Protestant or Catholic mission schools.

The Bürgerschule may be seen as representative of a new trend bearing similarities with the English schools and the Ottoman Mekteb-i Sultaniye. As indicated in chapters 6 and 7 these schools did not, due to the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic composition of their respective student populations, have obvious religious orientations as well. The Bürgerschule actively cultivated a disregard for any of the particular denominations as the head master of the school Engelking noted in 1872:

‘Hier war zur Konfessionlosigkeit der Boden günstiger als irgendwo anders. In dem Zusammenleben der giesigen Deutschen machen sich die konfessionellen Unterschiede so wenig geltend und verschwinden bis zu dem Grade, dass manchen von seiner übrigens guten Bekannten nicht weiß, ob sie protestantisch oder katholisch sind, und ich

Map 16: The German High School’s parcel (809) in the insurance maps of Eduard Goad, 1905.
Münch furthermore quotes the Pastor of the Protestant community and consular priest in 1871 when stating that the school did not just disregard denominations, but religion altogether:

‘Die bedeutend größere Zahl deutscher Katholiken hier, dient nur den an und für sich alten Protestanten zum bequemen Deckmantel für ihre Abneigung gegen alle evangelischen Institutionen und Bestrebungen. Nur ja nicht etwas Konfessionelles, deutsch muss alles sein! und so wird das ‘deutsch’ identisch mit konfessions- d.i. religionslos.’

Mühlmann takes concern particularly with the career path for boys, hinting at the distinct educational trajectories of boys on the one hand and girls on the other. Indeed the curricula of boys and girls differed: girls were allocated more time for education in geography, history, singing and English, as well as ‘weibliche Handarbeit’, while ignoring math altogether.¹¹

Lothar Wiltmann of the German Foreign Ministry’s Cultural Department indicates that the school was placed under the patronage of the German Empire in 1878 with the ‘Reichsschulfonds’.¹² It rented a property for the German School, but it proved to limit the potential for growth of the school. The community needed 100,000 Goldmark to finance the acquisition and build new premises. Half of this amount was collected by the community itself, with 12,000 Goldmark donated by the small Swiss community. According to Fricke, the school community consequently changed its name to deutsch-schweizerische Schulgemeinde. Fricke points out that the subsequent tradition of having one Swiss citizen on the German School’s board endured up to the time of his writing in 1958. The rest of the amount needed to build the school was covered by the German Empire, which also made commitments to assist the school in its future development. Eventually a new site was chosen near the Galata Tower in 1871, where a three-storey school building was constructed.¹³ Director Mühlmann describes the location of the building: near the Galata Tower where it would catch the healthy winds from the Bosporus and Marmara Sea from all directions and thus highly suitable for a school. He notes: ‘Wahrlich, es dürfte wenige deutsche Schulen geben, denen eine so herrliche Landschaft in die Fenster hineinlacht’¹⁴. A heavy earthquake in 1894, however, badly damaged the building which led the Kölnische Zeitung to report in that year that the ‘wenig erfreuliche Gebäude der Schule’ had become a hazardous site for the children attending it to such an extent: ‘dass es die Kinder ohne Gefahr für Leib und Leben nicht mehr besuchen können.’¹⁵

The school is described by director Mühlmann as two separate buildings, connected by a courtyard. The buildings were built in stone, with asphalted terraces and flat roofs. Both buildings had their own cisterns for water provision, while the school’s playground was lined with ailanthuses.¹⁶ It had a total of eleven classrooms, an apartment for the rector, two married and two unmarried teachers, and a housemistress.
Furthermore, it possessed a turn hall, which was rented by the local German turn club. By the time of the new building’s opening in 1872 the school had already 133 students; 71 boys and 62 girls of, as Fricke points out, ‘exclusively German origin or German ethnicity’, growing further to 200 students and 9 classes with 10 teachers in 1874.17

Fricke states that it remains unclear, due to the destruction of documents from the early years of the school in a fire, when the restrictions on the students’ ethnicity were lifted to allow other non-Muslim and Muslim children to attend the school. Student numbers had by 1897 risen to 600, however, which indicates that by that time not much had been left of the school’s restrictive access. In the 1880s already, director Mühlmann notes that besides German, Swiss and Austrian citizens, also Ottoman Turkish, Romanian, English, French, Greeks, Russians and others were attending the school. In the 125th anniversary of the school edition in 1993, Gerhard Nurtsch noted that Mühlmann in the 1880s tried to counter critiques regarding the mixed school population. He adds that if German language proficiency, rather than nationality of the parents, was to be taken as criterion, then most Turks, Romanians and Russians from the school’s numbers could have been designated as Germans, inserting an ambiguous definition based on language proficiency rather than nationality.18 The 1880s was a decade of quickly burgeoning nationalism and antisemitism in the German Empire, which may explain why sensitivities on nationalities became a topic of interest for the school’s management. Nurtsch points out that the reason as to why Mühlmann felt the need to defend the school’s policies regarding student inflow was the German Empire’s burgeoning national consciousness and identity formation, the rise of racist identity politics and antisemitism. Nurtsch cites a message from a publication referred to as the Kreuz-Zeitung from 4 July 1903, which is probably the Neue Preußische Zeitung, later known as the Kreuz-Zeitung:

‘Will die deutsche Schule in Istanbul auch in Zukunft begründeten Anspruch auf den hohen Reichzuschuß erheben, so muß sie das Schulgeld für nichtdeutsche und nichtchristliche Schüler derart bemessen, daß dadurch die Ausgaben für diese Schüler voll gedeckt werden’.

Looking at the admission statistics of the school, Nurtsch states that these sentiments had little effect on the admission policies of the school. Partly due to the earthquake, authorities sought a different location for a new school building.20 By the time the decision was made to leave the old building, the school had approximately 300 children under its roof. In 1895 it was decided that the parcel would be acquired through bank director Wülfing. The school moved from across the Müeyyedzade Mosque along Galip Dede Caddesi, to the site on which the German School presently is situated, near Tünel and at the top of the slope connecting Pera to Galata. Architect Otto Kapp, also responsible for the construction of the Teutonia building, was prepared to design and supervise the construction of the new school free of charge and provided the school’s association with a loan of 200,000 Mark, completed with another 50,000 by Wülfing.21 The former building of the school was eventually sold to the Greek millet in 1909 and continued as a Greek school. Christa Lippold notes that by 1938 it was in the possession of the Zoğrafyon Rum Erkek Lisesi.22

Construction started in June 1896, with a plan including 15 classrooms and an auditorium. The opening ceremony took place on 14 September 1897 and between 1901 and 1903 an adjacent parcel was bought for six additional classrooms for the girls’ school. The school would be occupied by Allied forces in 1918, following the German Empire and Ottoman Empire’s involvement in the Triple Alliance. The school would eventually be handed back in 1925 by France, with the building in a rundown state. Classes by then had already been resumed in the Polonya Sokak since 1924, in a building currently owned by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. Once the school was returned to the German authorities, the renovation efforts brought new furnishings such as
central heating. More significantly, however, the flat roof was replaced by a pitched roof and during that process the school’s distinctive tower was demolished out of a practical need to connect the roof tops of the building’s two wings.23 Josef Joraschek indicates that the fundamental layout of the school would not change until 1944, when it was confiscated by the Turkish authorities.24

THE DEUTSCHE SCHULE AND NAZISM

Dietrich suggests that children who had emigrated from Weimar Germany would also be admitted to the German School from the Machtsangriff in 1933 onwards. She cites the message of director Scheuermann to his students on the first graduation ceremony after the end of World War I, who said the following amid rising nationalist tensions in both Turkey and Nazi Germany: ’daß sie ihre Mitmenschen als Mensch verstehen und schätzen sollen, über alle Nationen und Religionen hinweg, wie sie es bisher in der Klasse ihre Mitschülern gegenüber auch getan haben.’25 Nonetheless, the coming to power of the Nazi regime affected the Istanbulite German School as well, with the large number of Jewish children in the school declining rapidly: from 365 children (on a total of 828 students) in 1932/33, to 236 in 1933/34, 164 in 1935/36, 106 in 1938, 34 in 1939, 20 in 1940 and 7 in 1942/43. In those years, pressure from the school administration on the parents of its Jewish students was increasing. The headmaster explicitly requested parents to take their children away from the school.

An interesting insight in the contradictions of the dynamics of those times belongs to Adolf Hommes, teacher at the German School between 1942 and 1944 who also confessed his regret when he received orders to remove all Jewish students from the school in 1943 and 1944. He remembers with great regret one talented student in particular who was not able to do her exam because of these measures. When Turkey cut off diplomatic ties with Nazi Germany, the German community was given a choice between repatriation or being interned. Hommes himself managed to make it back to Nazi Germany, but he claims others who were interned were held on the premises of the German school. Such remarks from Hommes’ are particularly interesting considering the fact that the German School was registered under the Turkish school system. Due to this, the school was implicitly following Turkish legislation, meaning the Nazi regime had no authority to send the children away from the school on grounds of antisemitic legislation. The rapid and dramatic decrease in the number of Jewish students in the German School, however, means that the ‘problem’ for the Nazi authorities in part resolved itself. The order Hommes claims to have been given also indicates the anti-Semitic fanaticism that was still at work when local Nazis decided to exclude the students from the school. Dietrich also explains that the presence of a Turkish vice-rector prevented the implementation of race theory education and broader antisemitism as well as for instance the usage of the turn hall by the local branch of Hitlerjugend.

She does not, however, address the inertia of the general context of rising racism and antisemitism in Turkey itself, at a time when Turkish Jews were also the victims of the national agenda of the Kemalists and the Jewish community in Istanbul was affected, particularly in 1942 with the Wealth Tax.26 Dietrich does emphasize that among the Germans in the school there were few who openly distanced themselves from national socialism or antisemitism after 1933. Additional classes and meetings for the Hitlerjugend, moreover, were relocated to the premises of Teutonia. As explained in chapter 1, Teutonia would allow the Hitlerjugend to organize various activities such as the Heimabende on its premises. Film screenings of national socialist propaganda were also organized for the German students, who were also allowed to celebrate events such as the Anschluss of Austria in the school.27 The German authorities apparently made efforts to avoid conflict with the Turkish educational officials and emphasized the similarities between the nationalisms of the two countries and its leaders. Concretely, this resulted in singing both national hymns, raising the flag of both countries during festivities and ‘honouring’ Mustafa Kemal with three cheers of ‘Sieg Heil!’28
REINSTATION AND REHABILITATION: THE DEUTSCHE SCHULE AFTER WORLD WAR II

After the Turkish authorities confiscated the school, following the pressure of the Allied forces to join their side in 1944, its premises were used as a Turkish state school for girls, the Beyoğlu Kız Lisesi. Necla Altınok, geography teacher at the German School, writes in 1993 how she remembers being a student at the girls’ school. They were students at the İnönü Kız Lisesi (İnönü High School for Girls) in Fındıklı and their school was transferred and renamed in the second school semester. In July 1953 the school was returned to the Bundesrepublik Deutschland FRG or the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and on 1 October of the same year the school became the German School once again. Irrespective of the state of the building, admission to the German School were soon once again in high demand. At the moment of its opening, the school had 226 students, 55 students with German nationality and 171 others, 9 German-speaking and 162 with a different native language. The school’s statistics provide an overview of the makeup of the student population during the first three years after the school’s reopening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Greek Catholic</th>
<th>Other denominations</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953/54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954/55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955/56</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though no precise explanation can be provided, it is remarkable that the category of Greek Catholics – possibly a Rum Istanbulite branch of the Eastern Catholic Church – is quoted separately here for the school year 1955 and 1956. All other Christian denominations (presumably including Greek and Armenian Orthodox) are assigned to a single ‘other’ category. If we are to follow Romain-Örs and Alexandris’ observation that Greek-speakers were typically distinguished formally on the basis of their nationality (Greek or Turkish), their religion may have been less of an issue. Particularly so as hardly any differentiation was made between Jews, Orthodox and Catholic Christians, especially at the time of the most violent outbursts of nationalism in Istanbul. The identification considered Muslims or non-Muslims, regardless if the latter meant Orthodox, Catholic or Jewish. Apart from the possibility that this assignment may have been a mistake, or that they were in fact Greek Byzantine Catholics, it is possible that these students were, in fact, Romanians. The Greek Catholic Church in Romania was historically a church that both accepted supremacy of the pope, and retained the rights to perform the Byzantine liturgy during mass. By the mid-twentieth century the church’s community constituted a sizeable minority. When the communist regime came to power in 1948 in Romania the Greek Catholic Church was forced to merge with the Romanian Orthodox Church and its real estate was dispossessed. Considering the mention of Romanian students in the German School in earlier decades, it is possible that this in fact explains the (deliberate) identification of Romanians as ‘Greek Catholics’.

A report from April 1957, drawn up by the chairman and vice-chairman of the board of the German School, Dr Fricke and Hans Weidtman, indicates that the number of students had grown to 800, which was comparable to the student population before the Second World War. The reasons cited for this are, on the one hand, the overall prestige that the school had built up in the years preceding the war and on the other the overall high demand for admission into foreign schools in Turkey. The reasons why the schools were popular may vary, but some of the most significant causes stem partly from socio-economic, and partly from political considerations. Foreign schools would give children access to foreign-language instruction, often by native speakers and additionally in some cases (such as the German School) a foreign system of higher education. In various instances, the diplomatic cables of the German and English consulates and embassies also suggest that the quality of education was better at the German School and the English High Schools, compared to the average of the Turkish public high schools. On the other hand, a relative independence from the national-
ist Turkish schooling system would have been appealing for the members of the cultural minorities in Turkey. It is clear that the management of the school was aware of the school’s importance for the public diplomacy of the FRG from an early point onwards. Fricke and Weidtman argue that the management of the school had decided to take in as many students as possible:

‘angesichts der entscheidenden Wichtigkeit einer wesentlichen Verbreiterung der deutsche Sprachenkenntnisse in der Türkei für die kulturellen, besonders aber auch für die wirtschaftlichen deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen, diesem Bedürfnis in tunlichst weitem Masse Rechnung zu tragen’.\textsuperscript{35}

They explained that the class sizes, in the prep level, exceeded the boundaries of the pedagogical limits, with class sizes of 50 pupils on average. Even with classes of this size the management had to turn down numerous applicants. The management acknowledged it as an indication of the school maintaining a relatively intact prestige after the war and that the influence of German in Turkey was rising rapidly. Tenbrock argues that whereas in the first 80 years of its existence the student population was mostly composed of children from non-Turkish nationals and minorities, by 1958 at least 80 percent of the school’s population consisted of Turkish nationals (see also table 1 above). Tenbrock therefore suggests that the German School should be a place of interaction for Turkish and German culture, where a fruitful dialogue between the two could grow.\textsuperscript{36} As such, it can be considered as a space of cultural or educational diplomacy, a dynamics noticeable in the English High Schools as well. Fricke and Weidtman indicated that they wanted to limit the intake of students from 200 annually to 140 and reduce class sizes to 40 students. With those numbers they projected that the school would have 1105 students in 1961, which would require 42 class rooms rather than the available 26.

In their plans to counter these structural challenges, they suggested three possibilities. The first was to cut back on the number of admissions, although they presented this solution as undesirable since it would be disappointing for far too many Turkish parents who had pinned their hopes on the German School for their childrens’ futures. The second option was to leave the old building behind and erect a new building elsewhere, which they presented as the best option due to the ever increasing numbers of students and the position of the German School in the educational landscape of Turkey in the 1950s. It would also open the possibility of a boarding house so that students from beyond Istanbul, ‘die ausgesuchten besten Kräfte aus dem weiten anatolischen Hinterland’, would be able to attend the school. They pointed out, however, that the Turkish authorities would likely make it difficult for the school to move and construct a new building since they were empowered by the Lausanne Treaty to obstruct the building of new foreign schools. Although it seemed as the most desirable option, they expected that it would also mean losing a great deal of independence, i.e. a fully Turkish management would take over the school. These were concerns which would not have been an issue if the school decided to stay in the old building. The third option was to expand and renovate the present building. The solution would not enable the school to grow into a situation that would at least partially meet its potential, but at the same time it would not cause the sort of problems that would arise from the second option. The board thus requested that the German Foreign Ministry decide between the second and third option, arguing the first option could jeopardize the existence of the school altogether.

The local representatives of the German legations in Istanbul and Ankara apparently shared the board’s concern with rapid action on the issue and pressed their colleagues in Bonn to set in motion the necessary procedures and send a building expert to Istanbul. The Foreign Ministry was not able to allocate the necessary funds for the expansion of the school building in the same year, i.e. 1957, after which the director of the school solicited the ministry to pay for the construction by means of a loan through the school board, so that the immediate future of the school would not be at risk.\textsuperscript{37} Other plans were to reconstruct part of the existing building, which would entail moving the teachers who had been living on the school’s premises elsewhere, for which the building of Teutonia was considered to be an option. The Consulate General kept on pressing the Foreign Ministry to make a decision on the matter since no students could be admitted as of 1958 without a new construction or reconstruction. It is worth noting here that the Consulate General emphasized to the German Foreign Ministry that the German
School should not be left to wane away due to the limits of its building and should be granted all necessities in order to ensure its growth in the future since it was: ‘das Kernstück unserer kulturpolitischen Bemühungen in der Türkei’. The German response was strikingly similar to the attitude of the Foreign Office and British Council towards the English High Schools until the 1970s. The potential ‘cultural-diplomatic’ function of the school was indeed emphasized by the German Embassy in Ankara as well, indicating the significance of the school for furthering German interests. In the end, the school was refurbished in 1957, with a new gymnastics hall and music room. A more expansive modernization was obstructed due to the high tariffs the Turkish authorities would charge for building materials from the FRG. Another plan, also cut short but mentioned in the documents of the consulate general, was to move the building away from Beyoğlu altogether:

‘Es sollte jedoch angestrebt werden, die Deutsche Schule in Istanbul, die augenblicklich in einem sehr wenig schönen Stadtviertel untergebracht ist, zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt an den Bosporus, etwas außerhalb der Innenstad, zu verlegen, wie es vor dem Kriege schon einmal geplant war.’

The employee of the cultural department of the German Foreign Ministry went on to state that other schools already existed in the vicinity and claimed that additional stories would in the long-term prove to be wholly inefficient and that plans for the expansion of the old building should not be considered. With the benefit of hindsight this has proven not to be the case, as foreign or foreign-language schools continue to be highly popular in Istanbul. As regards to the interaction between the schools on the formal level, I was only able to find hints at the previously mentioned interaction in chapter 7, from which we can deduce that the British consul-general and his German counterpart appear to have occasionally briefed or consulted each other on the issues they encountered with the Turkish authorities as regard to the EHS and the German School respectively. The concerns and plans for a new building elsewhere along the Bosporus were ignored and disqualified by the school’s management as too expensive and not realistic due to traffic reasons.

The school meanwhile became a pinball of politics and competing bureaucracies. Director R.H. Tenbrock wrote a memo to the educational authority in Hamburg that the German School had been subjected to what appeared to be harassment by Turkish educational authorities and conflicting instructions from different officials. Moreover, he seems conflicted about the instructions from the German counterpart. The German Foreign Ministry appears to have explicitly instructed him to emphasize the German character of the school in order to prevent a further watering down of the school’s character. From a different perspective, German parents complained to the German Foreign Ministry about the burden that was placed on their children who were subjected to a significantly higher number of classes, particularly in the lower grades (27 hours versus 18 hours in the FRG in the first year and 32 hours versus 22 hours in the second year) due to the conflict between German and Turkish regulations. In their letter, they pressed for the opening of an embassy school in Istanbul. They explained that the discrepancy emanated from the Turkish Ministry of Education’s push for 6 hours of Turkish language, 2 hours of History and 2 hours of Geography, all in Turkish. The parents argued that it was hard for a child with no native proficiency in Turkish to catch up, but that particularly for children who joined the school at a different starting point as newcomers it was an absurd demand.

Tenbrock’s memo was forwarded to the Foreign Ministry in Bonn together with a letter of the German consul Mr von Graevenitz who indicated that such problems were the consequence of ‘der bekannten türkischen Mentalität, vor allem des ausgeprägten Nationalismus’ which never waned or will wane in the future. He advises, however, to be cautious with pushing back against the Turkish side. Graevenitz, following Tenbrock, explains that the Turkish authorities were trying to overrule German educational regulations: ‘allmählich immer mehr bewährte deutsche Richtlinien durch nach unserer Ansicht schlechtere türkische zu ersetzen’. Apart from that, he argued that Tenbrock suspected that this was also the effect of a personal vendetta against his persona pursued by unsatisfied parents or educational officials, which resulted in a ‘policy...
of pinpricks’ (*Nadelstichpolitik*). The consul warned the Foreign Ministry that the letter received by the educational authority in Hamburg might prompt action from the German side in a way that may harm the interests of the FRG. He requested the Foreign Ministry to take action in such an event ‘*wegen der in erster Linien kulturpolitischen Auswirkung***’.48

The explanation provided by the German Embassy in Ankara to the Foreign Ministry in Bonn bore similarities with the situation of the English Schools in Beyoğlu and Nişantaşı: the Turkish officials strictly followed the reasoning and agreements stipulated by the Treaty of Lausanne regarding the existing foreign institutions of education. The officials at the German Embassy, however, explain that the foreign schools were considered private schools, which was – as explained in the chapter on the EHSG – different for the English schools. Despite that, the German School and the English Schools were subject to Turkish legislation and still considered, in legal terms, ‘Turkish schools’, regardless of the sponsors of the schools and their teachers. Interestingly the embassy official goes on by stating the following:

‘*Begründet wird diese, der heutigen geistigen und politischen Stellung der Türkei keineswegs mehr entsprechende Haltung bei jeder der zahlreichen Demarchen der Botschaft damit, dass es vor allem in Istanbul griechische, armenische, jüdische und sogar eine bulgarische Schule gebe und dass diese natürlich unter Kontrolle gehalten werden müssten, Auf den Einwand, dass es bei den guten deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen keine Bedenken dieser Art Geben dürfte, wird geantwortet: ‘Euch Deutschen vertrauen wir, aber wenn wir Euch Erleichterungen gewähren, so kommen sofort auch die englischen, amerikanischen und französischen Schulen mit derselben Forderung und damit bricht unser kulturpolitisches System zusammen.’***49

The embassy official thus makes the argument that the Turkish authorities are ‘naturally’ right in subjecting the schools of the former *millet* to their control without substantiating at length the reasoning behind this particular statement. The quotation that he ascribes to his Turkish colleagues, however, indicated that he thinks a different degree of autonomy should be maintained for foreign and for minority schools and that the Turkish state is therefore ‘right’ to maintain control over the minority schools. He thus sketches not just an interpretation of Turkey’s educational landscape from the viewpoint of a *reallpolitiker*, but even seems to think that the Turkish government is right to deny autonomy to its minority communities. The statement is rendered even more complicated if one considers that many of the foreign and minority schools were founded at about the same time.50 Elsewhere, however, a cable communication argues that the foreign schools are treated in the same way as those of national minorities and, as a consequence, the students in the foreign schools are subjected to the same nationalistic pressure as their peers in Armenian or Greek schools.51

Despite earlier messages from the German legations that the German School’s situation should not negatively interfere or affect cultural relations between the FRG and Turkey, it appears that by 1959 the representatives at the consulate and embassy realize that the matter is too complicated for the school director to resolve alone. Particularly the situation of non-Turkish children in the school seems to have instigated the need for action on the side of the Foreign Ministry in Bonn. The aforementioned embassy official indicates that 80 percent of the students at the time of writing in 1959 were Turkish, yet he argues against the Turkish authorities’ claims to subject 20 percent of the school’s population (who did not have Turkish nationality) to Turkish educational regulations. He goes on to explain that a compromise should be reached, but that the Turkish authorities should understand that the German parliament can only allocate funding to the school if it can also cater to the needs of the German minority. The way the director deals with the situation, the official thinks, can affect the cultural relations of the FRG and Turkey or even the general attitude of Turkey to foreign endeavours. He believes, therefore, that the matter should be considered a ‘political’ one and a resolution to the issue should follow clear instructions of the German Foreign Ministry.52

The problems which director Tenbrock was facing resonate also in his opening words to the publication occasioned by the German School’s 90th anniversary. He is at pains to stress how the path of Turkey is strongly intertwined with that of its European partners and that Turkey has established a very warm relation with the German people. He goes
on by stating that the ‘Sinn und Ziel’ of the German School should also be considered from this perspective. The German School does not aim to alienate its students from their national character (Volkstum), but to educate them in Turkish and German, two languages which – Tenbrock argues – are significantly apart, but have much to offer to each other. Tenbrock is diplomatic in his choice of words, clearly conditioned by the problematic situation that the German School found itself in, and by his role as the school’s key representative to Turkish authorities.

Tenbrock’s veiled messages are clarified by reflections of some of the high school’s students, who show what great an impact the school had on their personal and professional outlook. Barbaros Çağa explains how the greatest contribution provided by the school was in fact to learn to understand the Germans and their culture. It was particularly the work of Thomas Mann which made an impact on him and also showed him that the life problems of Germans and Turks are apart, arguing that Mann would have picked different topics had he lived in Turkey. Contrary to the Galatasaray High School, Çağa feels that the students at the school do not feel a very strong connection to the school: ‘Die Schüler kamen morgens in die Schule und gingen mittags nach Hause.’ Similar to statements made with particular emphasis by alumni of Galatasaray High School from the 1950s and 1960s, he also argues that he and his fellow students took pride in the fact that no-one was discriminated against on national grounds: ‘Wir leben in unserer Schule wie eine Familie, und in einer Familie verachtet oder Haßt keiner den anderen.’

By 1962, however, it seems that the relations between the school and the Turkish Ministry of Education became slightly smoother. Director Hanz Anstock reports to the German Foreign Ministry that year that the Ministry of Education had agreed to shrink the school down to levels that would no longer tax the staff and facilities to the same degree it had since its reopening. A report in the archives of the German Consulate General in Istanbul indicated that the student numbers reached 1000 at the time of writing, 17 May 1962. Elsewhere it is indicated that the school would provide students coming from the Turkish primary schools, with one year of prep classes, followed by two classes of middle school and four classes of high school. The school had 44 to 46 German teachers and 22 Turkish teachers. There were 37 classes, of which it was expected that 27 classes with 650 students should remain after the reduction of the school’s size. More significantly, the report indicates that of the 1000 students in the school an approximate 70 students had German nationality, while all others were Turks. It seems unlikely that all of these students were, however, ethnic Turks so considering the concise nature of the report Turkish here probably means Turkish citizens. The report also indicates that the school was planning a new building.

The Oberschulrat (school inspector) Fritz Krog who visited the school in April 1962, however, argues that the school building, despite needing repairs and being too small for 37 classes, was still suited for its purpose. The exception was, however, the facilities for physical education. A separate turn hall did not meet the demands of a large coed-school, both in terms of size and equipment. The girls did not have their own facilities, so had to do their classes outdoor and in the attic during the winter. Krog, probably taking up the school management’s suggestion, proposes to build new and modern facilities on the second floor of the building, which the building, notwithstanding its modest size, would be able to lodge. With regard to the plans of the school to reduce its size, Krog states that the school’s management thought these would probably prove impossible to execute without the mediation of the German Foreign Ministry, given that the expansion of Turkish high schools already did not meet the demand of a rapidly growing population in Istanbul and Turkey. This seems highly probable in light of the remarks of Fricke and Weidtman in the 1950s who indicated there were long waiting lists for students trying to be admitted to the school. Krog goes on to explain that he also visited the director of national education in Istanbul ‘Sayin Bay Halis Curtça’ (Halis Kurtça). Following the suggestion of the German School’s director Krog, he paid this ‘Höflichkeitsbesuch’ which would potentially enhance the director and his office’s willingness to accede to the requests of the school in the future. Kurtça appears to have been very forthcoming and stressed how important he considered the German contributions to Turkish education to be. He applauded the suggestions of the school to set up a bursary system for German-speaking Turkish teachers which indicates that his enthusiasm could have had positive effects for the German School.

Director Anstock reports on 8 January 1963 that the measures to reduce the student population of the school had been approved by both
Krog thus clearly points out that the school population from the Turkish side was no longer limited to the country’s bourgeoisie, but that also citizens from the middle class were at pains to have their children educated in a foreign school with better perspectives for education and careers than a regular Turkish high school could probably provide. A reflection on Krog’s report in the German consular archives, however, also claims that the popularity was an effect of the shortcomings of Turkish high schools in Istanbul, which prompted Turkish parents to apply for the admission of their children at the German, English and French schools simultaneously. The fact that the parents applied for various foreign or foreign-language schools may signify that these parents may have cared slightly less about which school their children would end up in as long as it was not a regular state school. Fatma Gök points out that from the 1950s onwards the Turkish state would establish maarif kolejeri (Educational Colleges) which had a better reputation than regular state high schools. These would pave a way to the later Anatolian High School system. Between the 1950s and 2000s the Turkish educational system would gradually become more and more competitive, with highly selective private schools (such as the German High School and the EHS) on the one hand and on the other hand a highly segregated system of public high schools. Within the public system Gök discriminates between the regular public high schools, the Anatolian High Schools and the so-called ‘super secondary schools’ (such as Galatasaray High School). In the case of the latter two, instruction would be in English, French or German rather than Turkish and admission to these schools was (and is) subject to fierce competition. This holds true for the German School as well, although this is a private school (like all foreign schools) requiring tuition, whereas the Anatolian High Schools and ‘super secondary schools’ are free.

Six years previous, moreover, the Consulate General reported that considerations of reducing the size of the school should be taken with caution as many of the parents who apply for their children’s admission to the school are from the ‘influential Turkish community’. Refusing children would send a message that the FRG is disinterested in an important aspect of Turkey, which the consul general concludes is: ‘ein Gesichtspunkt, der nicht nur kulturpolitischer Natur ist.’ Meanwhile the usage of the building beyond school hours grew increasingly intense during the 1960s.

By the mid-1960s the building was for instance also in use by the Goethe Institut, which used the classrooms for 39 German language courses with approximately 1000 participants, teaching for 156 hours weekly, with another 400 students in 13 to 14 groups and 52 to 56 hours during the summer holidays. The Goethe Institut meanwhile made plans for a language lab in the school. A new gymnastics hall was planned in 1965 thanks to the efforts of the Foreign Ministry. A report from 1966 explains further concerns that were growing in the Foreign Ministry about the German School. Mr Von Dziembowski writes that the historical ties the FRG has in the field of education with Turkey are matched by few others, yet quotes the ‘sterk gewachsenen Selbstbewußtsein der heutigen Türkei’ as a possible reason for concern. Particularly since the Cyprus crisis, he argues, this nationalism has grown to be increasingly anti-western and any foreign influence or effort is treated hostile. Attempts to expand existing schools or open new ones are blocked with reference to the Treaty of Lausanne. Nonetheless, Dziembowski argues that every ‘denkende Türke’ is aware of the fact that speaking Western languages and connecting with Western research and technology is inevitable if the country is to move forward. He sees this as the primary reason as to why the great majority of students in the German School indeed consist of Turkish nationals. Meanwhile director Heinz Anstock describes the relationship between the school and
Building Beyoğlu German High School since those were the responsibility of the Turkish vice-rector. The new director did not formally have a say in the organization of these courses, considering the ‘aufrichtigen Freundschaft der Türken’. It should be key be ranked higher on the Foreign Ministry’s priority, particularly were made by the French and Americans in 1965, he recommends Turkish the school was subjected to. In practice this meant that the non-Turkish students could opt for French, Latin or Turkish as a second language. More significantly, the previous arrangements also imposed the teaching of subjects such as geography, history, literature, psychology and sociology in Turkish, which put significant pressure on the non-Turkish students due to the great amount of extra hours, learning material, instruction for non-native speakers and the Turkish teachers themselves whose classes are described as: ‘unmethodisch’. In addition, the school director did not formally have a say in the organization of these courses, since those were the responsibility of the Turkish vice-rector. The new regulations also meant that the school could accommodate students from the FRG easier and synchronize their education with that of the German School. The arrangements had immediate effect as in 1967, the parents of 110 students out of 113 eligible (non-Turkish) students at the German School and the consular school registered their children as guest students. The remaining three consisted of one Austrian and two Israeli children.

In a different report from 1966 the German Embassy in Ankara Mr Röpper mentions the significance of continuing the school, since ‘Immer deutlicher ergibt sich von Jahr zu Jahr, daß die kulturelle Arbeit in der Türkei sich wirklich lohnt.’ Referring to the greater efforts that were made by the French and Americans in 1965, he recommends Turkey be ranked higher on the Foreign Ministry’s priority, particularly considering the ‘aufrichtigen Freundschaft der Türken’. It should be noted that while work-related migration from Turkey to the FRG had begun officially since 1961, its effects on the German School through the 1960s were still quite marginal, considering that the pool of potential students for the German School came from the middle classes and higher middle classes, whereas the working migrants were mostly low-educated migrants. The effects of workers’ migration, however, would start to have an impact in the 1970s, which will be discussed further on in this chapter. Again similarities to the case of the EHS also become apparent in the archives: with regard to the problems caused by the Turkish side’s attitude towards the opening and expansion of foreign schools and the insistence of maintaining the status quo of the Lausanne Treaty is commented by him as follows: ‘Einsichtige Kritiker dieses Gesetzes wissen darauf hin, daß die Türkei sich den Luxus eines solchen Verbots angesichts der noch völlig ungenügenden Zahl von Schulen eigentlich nicht leisten könne.’ The rapid growth of the population, and high levels of illiteracy (Röpper quotes 65 percent) make for an unmanageable situation even though schools are continuously built, he argues. He suggests increasing the number of German teachers at Turkish schools to more than their presence in past years, which will lead to improvement and expansion of German education at Turkish schools. Interestingly he suggests that half of Turks studying abroad are studying in the FRG, while the division of foreign language education in Turkey is divided over English, French and German in a 5:3:2 ratio.

A shift in the attitude about the school from the side of the German Foreign Ministry can be read in the answer of the Ministry regarding the possibility of opening a boarding house on the premises of the German Catholic Church community. Complications with achieving proper class sizes in the Botschaftsschule in Ankara led to requests to open a boarding house for the German School in Istanbul. The Ministry reports that it is interested in such a project, but adds that no financial support from the Ministry should be expected. The official suggests that German firms and parents should contribute to the endeavour since the Foreign Ministry is already keeping a very expensive high school in Istanbul. The building of the German School and the obstacles for a renovation indeed seemed to have been a burden for the German Foreign Ministry. In 1976, the building is mentioned as a problem for the German side, since its poor condition would soon require an inevitable and costly renovation - a need that could no longer be ignored moreover. The school building is described again as too small for a student population of 900, with maximum student numbers in many groups. Noticeably, the author Bernard Becker of the Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen reports applications from Turkish citizens in the FRG were refused on those grounds. He goes on to say that the need
to have the building painted, which had been mentioned in 1971 already, has become even greater yet the growing costs make it increasingly unlikely that it would actually happen. Significantly, Becker also remarks that the building’s exterior could not be changed anymore, an indicator that the Council for the Preservation of Monuments probably listed the building as a second degree protected heritage.

Becker furthermore notes that the school had 900 students, with noticeably 110 non-Turkish students, 80 percent of which were German and 10 percent Austrian and Swiss. 41 German teachers were responsible for 75 percent of the teaching. The numbers of applying parents were still very high: 2400 applicants were tested, of which 102 were in the end admitted to the prep classes. Meanwhile the report indicates that it was not easy for all German children, typically the children of expats who would have been in Istanbul for a couple of years, to get along in the school which is described as a ‘türkischen Elite-Schule’. This is problematic for these children as their different talent and IQ levels would have placed them in different school levels in the FRG. The author remarks how impressed he was by the rapid progress Turkish students made in the prepclasses and how motivated they were, so much that he remarks: ‘Vergleichbares hatte ich auf meinen inzwischen zahlreichen Schulbesuchen noch nicht zu Gesicht bekommen’. As regards to the teachers in the higher groups he notices that they speak as if they were speaking to a native German group and that ‘ein wenig mehr sprachliche Disziplin’ would be recommendable. It appeared to him that the teachers’ professional engagement – most probably a euphemism for an excessive usage of colloquial or complex expressions – obstructed the capacity to remain aware that they were speaking to a foreign group. He thus seems to push for a more consistent usage of standard or formal German, enabling students to improve their language comprehension.

A response of the consulate to Becker’s report follows and takes stance towards Becker’s description of the İstanbull Erkek Lisesi (Istanbul High School for Boys) – a Turkish state school with instruction in German – as being more significant for the FRG’s cultural diplomacy efforts in Turkey. In poignantly clear-cut language, the official at the German Consulate points out to the Foreign Ministry in Bonn how the difference between the school may not be as great as projected by Mr Becker. The official counters Becker’s statement that the student population of the German...
School is determined by the socio-economic position since – as a private school – it asks for tuition, whereas the İstanbul Erkek Lisesi as a Turkish state school does not. The official argues against this by stating that ‘bedürftige und würdige Schüler’ are granted a scholarship. A significant general comment he makes concerns the socio-economic position of the parents who send their children to the German School:


Finally, he also pointed out that the parents who send their children to the German School have already studied at German universities and expect to send their children to the FRG as well, which was generally possible since the children could be awarded diplomas which granted them access to both the Turkish and German school system (although problems had arisen in the mid-1970s with Turkish restrictions for dual diplomas). For students of the Istanbul Erkek Lisesi this was much less so the case, since the parents, the official argues, typically hoped that the mediation or recommendation of the German teachers at the school would make access to Turkish universities easier for their children. The school management was saddened by the Turkish decision to centralize the application process since they thought that: ‘die Begabung zum Sprachenlernen werde zu wenig, eingepauktes Grundwissen zu hoch bewertet.’ Elsewhere he argues that this is the result of the Turkish school system which pushes for control of knowledge and ‘nerves’ during a multiple choice exam. In the 1970s the effects of the increasingly complex ties between the FRG and Turkey due to workers’ migration from Turkey to the FRG are becoming visible. By 1974, the number of legal Turkish working migrants in Germany had risen to 617,500. The popularity of the school increased even further with the many Turkish families that returned from the FRG in the 1970s whose children had attended schools in the FRG and tried to register their child in the German School. Many were rejected, Lippold points out, while many of those who made it into the school had great difficulties. The school was, also compared to regular German high schools, on a different level. German children who were and are admitted to the school did not have to participate in any of the Turkish courses, but therefore also did not acquire diplomas that were valid in Turkey. He also points to the problems with the building, which by 1993 still appear to have not been resolved in a satisfactory way. The limited space for sport facilities did not hinder the students from being quite successful in various championships. The technical installations, much of which dated back to the early years of the twentieth century, were due to be renovated in 1989 yet were postponed to 1995 because of the high costs of West and East-Germany’s reunion. Lippold expresses the hope that the vacant parcels next to the school would be acquired by 1995 so that the school would have more space for improving its building.

Lothar Wittmann of the Foreign Ministry’s Cultural Department meanwhile argued in 1993 once again how important the school had been and is in the FRG’s cultural policy. He argues that: ‘Neben der pädagogischen Aufgabe, Interesse und Freude an der deutschen Sprache...’
zu fördern, wollen wir damit auch ein aktuelles Deutschlandbild vermitteln und die Bindung an unser Land, seine Kultur und seine Menschen vertiefen.'100 The mission and value of the school for the FRG meanwhile becomes clear in Wittmann’s following statement: ‘Viele der türkischen Absolventen des ALMAN LISESI sind unserem Land aufs engste verbunden und tragen häufig an verantwortungsvollen Posten in Politik und Gesellschaft zur Gestaltung der deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen bei.’ Currently the school is still a science lyceum with 640 students who can graduate either with a Turkish diploma with or without a language diploma or take the German Abitur exam which grants them the same rights as any other German high school graduate.101 Generally speaking, despite of the occasionally tumultuous relations between the FRG and Turkey, the educational ties between the two countries are strong and actively stimulated by public and private sectors in both countries. Although virtually all foreign-language education has lost ground to instruction in English, initiatives between Turkey and Germany are actively encouraged. Examples are the public Turkish-German University (Türkisch-Deutsche Universität/Türk Alman Üniversitesi) and a campus in Berlin of the private Bahçeşehir University.

In the 2015 call, prior to the 2016 attempted coup d’état in Turkey, Germany received 144 Turkish participants from the Erasmus+ staff mobility programme, the highest number of incoming participants of all countries and 2667 Turkish Erasmus students, making it fourth in the ranking of outgoing Erasmus students with Germany as their destination. Turkey on the other hand, received only 12 participants in the staff mobility programme. Additionally, however, Turkey received 2231 German Erasmus students, making it by far the most popular destination for German students.102

ENDNOTES

5 Ibidem, 139.
7 Marcel Geser, ‘Wir sind im Kleinen, was das Vaterland im Großen’: Der deutsche Kindergarten in Istanbul von 1850 bis 2007, in: Barbara Pusch, Tomas Wilkoszewski, Facetten internationaler Migration in die Türkei: Gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen und persönliche Lebenswelten (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2016) 149.
8 Geser, ‘Wir sind im Kleinen’, 150.
9 Ibidem, 156.
10 Ibidem, 159.
14 Gerhard Nutsch, ‘Skizzen aus der Frühgeschichte, 19.
18 Gerhard Nutsch, ‘Skizzen aus der Frühgeschichte, 76.
19 Ibidem, 77.
22 Lippold, ‘Das erste eigene Gebäude’, 100.
Building Beyoğlu

24 Ibidem.
27 Dietrich, *Deutschsein in Istanbul*, 227-249.
28 Ibidem, 233.
30 Politisches Archiv – Auswärtiges Amt (from here onwards PA – AA), B93 41 54-55, ‘Übersicht(…)Sammelter Schüler in den letzten fünf Jahren’. Muslims are categorized as ‘mohammedanisch’.
48 Ibidem.
51 PA – AA, B93, 75 58-61, ‘Die Schwierigkeiten des Unterrichts für die deutschen Kinder in der Deutschen Schule’ (no date provided).
52 PA – AA, B93, 75 58-61, ‘Die Schwierigkeiten des Unterrichts für die deutschen Kinder in der Deutschen Schule’ (no date provided) and PA – AA, B93, 112 58-61, ‘Frage der Anerkennung der Deutschen Schule Istanbul als höhere deutsche Vollanstalt im Ausland’ (12-1-1959), 4.
59 Ibidem, 5.
61 PA – AA, B93, 334 55-63, ‘Deutsche Schule in Istanbul: Stand der Entwicklung’ (date note provided).
71 Ibidem.
73 Ibidem, 5.
74 Ibidem, 3.
79 Ibidem, 9.
80 Ibidem, 13.
85 Ibidem, 4.
86 Ibidem, 5.
87 Ibidem, 6.
90 Ibidem.
91 Ibidem.

92 Ibidem, 4.
97 Ahmet Akgündüz, ‘La migration de travail des Turcs’, 156.