

## THE TURKISH POET NAZİM HİKMET AND POLAND

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**Abstract:** Nazım Hikmet is one of the marginal artists of XX. Century Turkish Literature. His marginality is due to his ideological opinion and breaking the traditional patterns of Turkish poetry. Due to his Marxist opinion, he conflicted with the system. Because of his marginal opinions he spent his 13 years of his life in prisons between 1925 and 1950. In this study, Nazım Hikmet's leaving Turkey in 1951 and Poland section of his yearning for country will be discussed. He had no passport while leaving the country. Why he was accepted to the citizenship of Poland and issued a Polish passport will be clarified. In addition, Nazım Hikmet's ties with Poland and relationships with the Poles, where and how he received the Polish surname "Borzenski" and the poems he wrote on Poland will be discussed. Finally, how Münevver Andaç, Nazım Hikmet was married to before leaving Turkey, was met by the Poles in 1960 and how he found a job for her at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw will be clarified.

**Keywords:** Nazım Hikmet, Poland, Borzenski, the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw

### TÜRK ŞAİRİ NAZİM HİKMET VE POLONYA

**Özet:** Nazım Hikmet, XX. yüzyıl Türk edebiyatının aykırı sanatkârlarından biridir. Onun aykırılığı ideolojik görüşünden ve Türk şiirinin geleneksel kalıplarını kırmasından kaynaklanır. Marksist anlayışı benimsediğinden dolayı sisteme ters düşen Nazım Hikmet, 1925-1950 yılları arasındaki çeyrek asrın yarısını aykırı görüşlerinden dolayı hapisanelerde ve hayatının son yıllarını da yurt dışında geçirmiştir.

Çalışmamızda, Nazım Hikmet'in 1951 yılında Türkiye'den ayrılması ile birlikte, hayatının sonuna dek sürecektir olan sıla hasretinin Polonya bölümüne değinilecektir. Türkiye'yi terk ederken yanında pasaportu olmayan Nazım Hikmet'i, Polonyalıların neden Polonya vatandaşlığına kabul ettikleri ve pasaport verdikleri konusuna açıklık getirilecektir. Ayrıca Nazım Hikmet'in Polonya ve Polonyalılar ile olan bağlarına, ilişkilerine, "Borzenski" soyadını nereden ve nasıl aldığına, Polonya üzerine yazdığı şiirlerine değinilecektir. Son olarak, Türkiye'den ayrılmadan önce evli olduğu eşi Münevver Andaç'ın 1960 yılında Polonyalılar tarafından nasıl karşılandığı ve Nazım Hikmet'in Varşova Üniversitesi Doğu Dilleri Enstitüsü'nde ona nasıl iş bulduğu da bildirimiz içerisinde yer alacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Nazım Hikmet, Polonya, Borzenski, Varşova Üniversitesi Doğu Dilleri Enstitüsü.

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The renowned Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet<sup>1</sup> left Turkey on 17 June 1951 (Fuat, 2001: 563) and he was denaturalized of his Turkish citizenship on 25 July 1951 (Fuat, 2001: 577). After his death, although there had been numerous attempts for him to be reaccepted as a Turkish citizen by civilian associations like Socialist Workers Party (SWP), they all had been rejected by the government. The case of his citizenship had never been come to conclusion (Fuat, 2001: 703, Sezgin, 2011). On January 6, 2009 most of the newspapers had some news related to Nazım Hikmet's being accepted the re-naturalization.

Nazım Hikmet is a poet, who has been accepted that he had the Turkish music listened to the world through his poems. Until his death, his affection of Turkey, Turkish language and being a Turk had never faded away from his heart. He had never written poems in another language, but Turkish (Nesin, 1998: 8; Kara, 2006: 156). Nazım Hikmet had always yearned for Anatolia and passed away with a great yearning in his heart for the country. (Bezirci, 1979: 228).

After leaving Turkey in 1951, Nazım Hikmet had no passport. At the end of 1952, until he had been offered to be a citizenship of Poland, (Kolesnikova, 2006: 107) he had attended the meetings and conferences of the World Peace Council without a passport or with a live passport, a Russian agent (Fuat, 2001: 593).

At the end of 1952, Nazım Hikmet was in the committee of the World Peace Council. He was attending the conferences and meetings in the cities like Wien, Stockholm, Berlin, Prague, Budapest and Helsinki and he was sometimes visiting Warsaw (Fuat, 2001: 593). The World Peace Council work was taking his time. After he attended some conferences in Hungary, he decided to go to Poland. His friend Zekeriya Sertel was with him and he hadn't visited Poland before. So, Nazım Hikmet persuaded him to come to Poland. They traveled by train from Hungary to Poland. When they crossed the Poland border, Nazım Hikmet suddenly remembered that he was going to be introduced to some of his relatives from his great grandfather noble family Borzecki. The family, by whose name, he obtained the Polish passport. To be able to understand better the issue regarding his Polish origin, we have to go into the details of his family background (Fuat, 2001: 600-601).

One of the countries and cities Nazım Hikmet loved very much were Poland and Warsaw. Whenever he visited Poland, he was always welcomed warmly and sincerely. He had emotional relations with Poland and Polish people. These relations helped Nazım Hikmet have a Polish passport (Lekesiz, 2006: 28). His Polish friends discovered that he descended from the Borzecki family on his grandfather's side. As he did not possess citizenship to any country, they issued him a Polish passport. Thus, Nazım Hikmet was accepted Polish citizenship with the name of his grandfather as Nazım Hikmet Borzecki. (Fuat, 2001:

593-594; Kara, 2006: 155). He had changed his last name from Ran to Borzec-ki. This was not either he ashamed of his country or denied his nationality (Apay-dın, 2006: 55).

Nazım Hikmet, who officially changed his name into Nazım Hikmet Borzec-ki, used this name in the formal papers after that date. (Göksu, Timms, 2001: 334) Nazım Hikmet had a Polish passport in his pocket but his live passport was still with him. Although this live passport had scared the people around Nazım Hikmet, he couldn't prevent to read poems with other poets who were from Hungary, who liked Turkish people, in his spare time after they had finished their committee work (1954) (Fuat, 2001: 593).

Celile Hanım's (Nazım Hikmet's mother) father Enver Pasha was the son of Mustafa Celalettin Pasha, who hailed from Poland. How could a man, who hailed from Poland, have raised to the rank of 'pasha' in the Ottoman? The story, which was like a film scenario, was like this:

A boy named Constantin Borzecki from Poland was a deck boy on a German military school ship. When the military school ship was in Istanbul, the boy jumped into the Bosphorus and swam somewhere to the coast of the city, as he was tortured and mistreated in 1848. He was blonde, tall, handsome teenage. He had some bruises and lashes on his body. Sadrazam Ali Pasha took this young, handsome, besides clever man, who sheltered to the land of Ottoman, under his protection. He motivated him to be a member of Islam religion and gave him the name 'Mustafa Celalettin (1826-1876) (Lekesiz, 2006: 28, (Göksu, Timms, 2001, p. 30-32). Sadrazam Ali Pasha helped Mustafa Celalettin to complete his secondary education and start studying mühendishane-i hümayun (Engineering Faculty) (Göksu, Timms, 2001:-32; Fuat, 2001: 602).

The director of the faculty, Omer Pasha, liked very much Mustafa Celalettin's hard working, intelligence and had him marry his daughter, Sıdıka. Their marriage yielded had their son, named Enver (Fuat, 2001: 602).

After graduating from the faculty, Mustafa Celalettin was sent to Politenchnique (Technical University - artykuł jest w j. ang.), in France to specialize in his major. He graduated from Politenchnique (Technical University) successfully and returned to Istanbul. He served the Ottoman State for years and ascended to the rank of "pasha" (Fuat, 2001: 602).

It has been said that Mustafa Celalettin Pasha was good at Polish, Latin, French, German, and Russian and also good at drawing pictures, cartography, having a well-rounded knowledge of military, history, languages, focused on studying Turks and the roots of Turks. One of his master piece is "*Les Turcs anciens et modernes*" (Ancient and Modern Turks) published in 1869 in Istanbul (Göksu, Timms, 2001: 30; Fuat, 2001: 602).

In this work, it is asserted that Turks had a very important role in the world's history; share in progress in civilization, influenced the Greek, which had the basic western civilization, later the Roman civilization. Besides, it is mentioned in this work that Turkish language did not need the assistance of the other languages. It is also recommended that Turkish language be purified, women be modernized and the Turks find their place in the western civilization (Fuat, 2001: 602).

Mustafa Celalettin Pasha had taken part in many wars, had been commander in those. In a battle, he had been wounded and about to die, he had sent a telegram to Sultan Abdülhamid and wished to take his son Enver under his protection. Enver, graduated from military school, became the assistant commander of Abdülhamid for a while and rose to the rank of pasha. Later he opened a contemporary school and had fame. During all his life, he worked for the Turkish language to be purified, like his father Mustafa Celalettin Pasha, who was a fanatic Turk. This led to the belief that, he was originated from the Gagavuz Turks (Fuat, 2001: 603).

The rest of the generation of Nazım's Polish aristocrat grandfather's family was still alive. Borzecki family was one of the oldest aristocrat families in Poland. Nazım was from this family from his mother's side. When he came to Poland his close or far relatives had wanted to meet him. He was not taking this event into consideration. What is more, he was ashamed of belonging such an aristocrat family (Fuat, 2001: 605).

Polish people liked Nazım Hikmet very much and considered him their own citizen. He was also very much impressed by their keening on their freedom, and getting along with this country's people. In those days he wrote a poem, called "The letter from Poland" (Lehistan mektubu) (Fuat, 2001: 606-607) and addressed his wife Münevver:

*Darling, dear cousin, Memet's mother,  
one of our grandfathers is  
1848 Poland expatriate*

*That's why you are just like a twin  
of that beautiful woman from Warsaw,*

*Probably that's why I am tall with  
yellow moustache  
and that our son's eyes are north sea blue.*

*And that plain reminds me of ours  
or this Polish ballad stimulates  
the sleeping dim water in me*

*One of our ancestors with dark  
defeat in his eyes  
and with blood-stained hair must have come from Poland*

*The sleepless nights of Borzecki's  
might be similar to mine  
he might have left his sleep under a far away tree  
just like me*

*That he wouldn't be able to see his own country  
drew him crazy every time  
he dreamt his country just like me*

*Dearest,  
where and whence hadn't there been a Polish in the front row  
during a fight for freedom.*

The last two lines of the poem were like this:

*I swell with pride thinking that  
one of my grandfathers is from Poland...*  
(Hikmet, 2008: 1528; Fuat, 2001: 606-607))

On June 1, 1954 he went to Warsaw to attend the Polish Writers' Congress and the committee of the writers' organized an art ceremony for him (Kolesnikova, 2006: 491). His visit to Poland was in 1956. Nazım Hikmet stayed in Poland with Dr. Galina (In 1952, Nazım Hikmet had a heart attack and stayed in a hospital in Moscow. He met there Dr. Galina Grigoryevna Kolesnikova, who later had become his doctor, friend, assistant, health advisor and mistress.) (Göksu, Timms, 2001: 387) for about nine months. In 1956, Nazım's a poetry book named "The Ballad of Those Drinking the Sun" in 1959; "Poems of Paris" were published in Poland. On July 1959, he was awarded with "The Cross of Starry Komendator" which was the highest medal in Poland, and "The Uprising Medal of Poland" (Kolesnikova, 2006: 491).

He was considering Poland as "an instance of liberal communism". He traveled to other socialist countries, where the World Peace Conferences were held, from Poland and returned there. During the events in Hungary, he was, again, in Warsaw (Göksu, Timms, 2001: 387).

At the beginning of August 1961, his wife Münevver Andaç, her daughter Renan and their son Memet were in Poland. At that time Nazım Hikmet had just returned from Cuba. (On May 1961, Nazım Hikmet went to Cuba to give the Peace Prize to Fidel Castro in the name of the World Peace Committee.) (Fuat, 2001: 651).

Nazım Hikmet was tired. His Polish friends did not let him know that his wife and son were in Warsaw. Because they were afraid of his having a heart attack as he had not seen them for almost 10 years since he left his son when he was three months old. Even when he was talking to his friends about their coming to Poland, he was getting very excited. He was completely in the affection circle of Polish people. They were considering Nazım Hikmet as he was Poland's poet and respecting him. Meanwhile, Münevver was aware that her husband had been living with a doctor in Moscow for years (Göksu, Timms, 2001: 387).

He entrusted Münevver and her children and his son Memet, whom he had missed for years, to his Polish friends' care and decided not to take them to Moscow. A teaching job was found for Münevver Andaç at the Institute of Oriental Studies, at Warsaw University. Nazım Hikmet stayed in Warsaw for fifteen days. A house was bought and furnished. The salary, Münevver Andaç was going to earn from the university was good enough to meet their expenditures. Besides, she was going to continue to translate Nazım Hikmet's poems into French (Fuat, 2001, p. 660, Göksu, Timms, 2001, p. 406)

After entrusting his wife Münevver, daughter Renan and son Memet, whom he called his bellowed son in his poems "Memet! Memet", which were full of yearning, Nazım Hikmet left Poland for Moscow (Göksu - Timms, 2001: 407). Münevver Andaç worked as a native speaker of Turkish language at the Turkology Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies at Warsaw University and taught Turkish language to the Polish students between 1960 and 1971. Then she got married to a French businessman and moved to France with his son Memet.

Nazım Hikmet's last meeting Münevver and his son Memet were at his funeral in Moscow, on 5 June 1963, two days after his death (Göksu - Timms, 2001: 425).

On 18 June 1963, Münevver Andaç wrote a letter, from Warsaw, to Nazım Hikmet's sister Samiye about the funeral:

"I know how much you liked your brother. Who knows if he were aware of this? When I was told that he was dead, on the phone, I remembered you. I thought if I had sent a telegram to you. I didn't know your address. I didn't want you to learn his death news from newspapers or radios, but I was helpless. Memo and I went to Moscow for funeral. It was a magnificent and sorrowful funeral. The boy was very brave. He stood still like an adult for hours. But just before they put the cover of the coffin, he was told: "Kiss your father". He kissed. But he started to sob. He is an unfortunate boy. He hasn't known what father is. Anyway, I put flowers on his grave for you, Seyda and Ayşe." (Fuat, 2001, p. 695-696, Göksu, Timms, 2001: 425).

As conclusion, when Nazım Hikmet left his motherland, he was without documents to prove where he was from or what his nationality was. Even the Republics of Soviet Union did not give him any documents or passport in his early life in Moscow. Russians never let him go anywhere without his live passport, a KGB agent. During his visit to Poland, Polish people liked him so much that they offered and gave him Polish passport, as Nazım Hikmet was also a great-grandson of Constantin Borzecki (Mustafa Celalettin). So his roots were also from Poland. He lived in Moscow until his death, but did not visit Poland often as Munevver, his ex-wife, and his son Memet lived in Warsaw, because his wife Vera did not allow him to see them. Münevver and Memet got together with Nazım Hikmet in Moscow on 5 June 1963, two days after his death, at Nazım's funeral.

### FOOTNOTE

- <sup>1</sup> Nazım Hikmet was born on 21 November 1901 in Salonica, but his birth was certified as 15 January 1902 in order to prevent his age appearing older by a year older on account of 40 days. With the influence of his grandfather, he started to write poetry. Nazım Hikmet entered the Naval School in 1917 and graduated thence in 1919 and started to work as intern deck officer on the Hamidiye Cruiser. But in winter of the same year he had an illness and by a Health Council Report he was discharged as unfit for duty on May 1920. Nazım Hikmet admired Yahya Kemal who was his history and literature teacher and also his family friend, and showed him his poems for his critique. Istanbul had been under occupation and Nazım Hikmet was writing resistance poems reflecting his patriotism. On 1 January 1921, with the help of illegal organization which provided weapons to Mustafa Kemal, four poets (Faruk Nafiz, Yusuf Ziya, Nazım Hikmet and Vâlâ Nurettin) secretly got on the Yeni Dünya (New World) Ship in Sirkeci. But only Nazım Hikmet and Vâlâ Nurettin were permitted to go to Ankara. On August 1921, they sailed from Zonguldak to Trabzon and then from Trabzon to Batum. They traveled by ship and reached Batum on September 21, 1921. Thus the two young poets went to the Soviet Union and attended the Communist University of Eastern Labourers (KUTV). Nazım Hikmet returned to his country after graduation from the university in 1923. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison on August 12, 1925. Immediately after that, Nazım Hikmet came to Istanbul from Izmir in the middle of June and then secretly went to the Soviet Union once again. Nazım Hikmet and his friend Laz İsmail, came to Turkey secretly on July 1928, but they were interrogated and arrested. On July 1930, the poems "Salkım Söğüt" and "Bahri Hazer" were recorded in the poet's voice by the Colombia Records. Nazım Hikmet was charged twice after publishing Gece Gelen Telgraf (The Telegram that Came at Night). He married Piraye Altınoğlu on January 31, 1935. At the end of 1936, Nazım Hikmet was arrested again with twelve other people due to their alleged distribution of bills without permission. On May 28, 1938, the Supreme Court approved the sentence and he was brought from Ankara Prison to the Istanbul Sultanahmet Prison. On September 1, 1938, he was sent to the Istanbul Prison, then in February 1940 to the Çankırı Prison, and finally to the Bursa Prison in December of the same year. During the twelve years he stayed in these city prisons, Nazım Hikmet continuously wrote poetry even though he did not have the opportunity to publish them. Nazım Hikmet, seeing that no result was going to be received from all these efforts, began a hunger strike on April 8, 1950. Days were passing by and Nazım Hikmet waited at the Üsküdar Paşakapısı Prison. He began a hunger strike again on the morning of May 2, 1950. On July 15, 1950, he was told that he was free at last at the Cerrahpaşa Hospital. He divorced Piraye upon his release (March 23, 1951). He started to live with Münevver Andaç. They had a son on (March 26, 1951) called Memet. On June 17, 1951, he left home in order to correct the error in his military-service in Ankara, but on June 20, 1951 the Bucharest Radio announced that Nazım Hikmet had arrived in Rumania. At the end of 1952 Nazım Hikmet became an administrator of the World Peace Council. He attended meetings in several countries, and he went to Warsaw during this period. He had good relations with the Polish. His Polish friends realized that he descended from the Borzenski family on his grandfather's side. As he did not possess citizenship to any country, they prepared a Polish passport for him. Thus, Nazım Hikmet was accepted to Pol-

ish citizenship with the name of his grandfather as Nazım Hikmet Borzecki. Nazım Hikmet married to Vera Tulyakova on November 18, 1960. He went to Cuba alone to give the Peace Prize to Fidel Castro in the name of the World Peace Committee. Münevver Andaç, Renan and Memet were in Poland at the beginning of August. Nazım Hikmet had newly returned from Cuba. Their meeting in Warsaw was not sincere. A Soviet Union passport was given to Nazım Hikmet in January 1962. Nazım Hikmet died of a heart attack at his house in Moscow on the morning of June 3, 1963.

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