

---

Today, some 3,000 to 4,000 gangs, with perhaps 100,000 members, are operating in Russia, Handelman reports. "Gangland murders, bomb explosions, kidnappings, and gun battles have become part of daily life." Crime jumped by one-third between 1991 and '92. In a 1992 survey, three out of four Muscovites said they were afraid to walk the streets at night. Such fears have built support for extremists such as ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who has advocated shooting lawbreakers on sight.

Russia's new leaders, Handelman contends, "have failed to adopt any significant measures to curb organized crime." As the law stands now, police may arrest people they catch in a criminal act, but the "mastermind" who is not on the scene cannot be prosecuted. Handelman advocates Western assistance not only to beef up Russia's police and criminal justice system but to help to develop viable banking and legal systems.

## Turkey's Democratic Secret

"Why Turkey Is the Only Muslim Democracy" by Bernard Lewis, in *Middle East Quarterly* (Mar. 1994), 4304 Osage Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

Democracy has reached the seedling stage in many parts of the globe recently, but has not flourished in the Islamic world. Of the 51 sovereign states in the International Islamic Conference, only one—the Turkish Republic—has experienced more than one democratic transfer of power. Lewis, an emeritus professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton University, is not entirely satisfied with the standard explanation of Turkey's success.

He does not disagree with many of the major points commonly made. It is important that, unlike most of the Islamic lands of Asia and Africa, Turkey was never subject to imperial rule or domination. "The Turks were always masters in their own house, and, indeed, in many other houses, for a long period," Lewis notes. Modern Turkey, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), emerged from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire after World

War I. Its politics was not built around a national liberation movement.

Nor was full democracy introduced all at once. Beginning under the later Ottoman rulers, Turkey "went through successive phases of limited democracy, laying the foundations for further development, and, at the same time, encouraging the rise of civil society," with its "mediating institutions"—the neglected factor, Lewis believes, in Turkey's success. Gradually, "a professional, technical, managerial, entrepreneurial middle class" emerged. By its own efforts, and not by some accident, such as the presence of oil in the subsoil, Turkey was able to achieve significant economic growth, an important undergirding for democracy.

"It is not easy to create and maintain free institutions," Lewis notes, "in a region of age-old authoritarian traditions, in a political culture where religion and ethics have been more concerned with duties than with rights, in which obedience to legitimate authority is a religious obligation as well as a political necessity, and disobedience a sin as well as a crime." Indeed, some observers have considered Atatürk's separation of religion and state the crucial difference between Turkey and the rest of the Muslim world.

But when it diminishes civil society, modernization can work *against* democracy, Lewis points out. The pre-Atatürk modernization in some ways did this. It strengthened the power of the sultans while weakening or eliminating mediating institutions: the religious establishment, the military establishment, and the *ayan* ("notables, who amounted to a provincial gentry and magistracy").

The movement for constitutional and representative government that began in 19th-century Turkey, Lewis says, was not just a drive "to import or imitate Western practices," but an effort "to restore . . . old established rights, and to restrain what was perceived as a newly imposed despotism." Perhaps because of this reform tradition, modern Turkish rulers seem to appreciate the importance of mediating—and sometimes troublesome—institutions such as independent newspapers and trade unions. The spread of such bedrock institutions of civil society, Lewis says, is vital to the spread of democracy in the Middle East.