

B O O K

Turkey's Modernization: Refugees from Nazism and Ataturk's Vision – by Arnold Reisman

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Alfred Kantorowicz, a recognized, major contributor to pediatric dentistry and a pioneer in public health dentistry, is one of the professionals highlighted in *Turkey's Modernization*.

He was born in 1880 in Posen, Prussia, now known as Poznan, Poland. He received his dental degree in 1900 and his medical degree in 1906. After World War I, he was appointed as director of the dental institute in Bonn, Germany, in which capacity he served for 15 years. In 1923, he was awarded the first full professorship in the field of dentistry at Bonn University. He developed mobile clinics and preventive dentistry programs for children in Germany. Kantorowicz is credited with dental care and examination in schools. The "Bonn model" was developed for school dentists to provide regular dental checkups and treatment for all students. Kantorowicz also introduced the mobile dental clinic for area schools, a preventive care model unique in Germany. His work was regarded noted throughout the dental profession in pre-Nazi Europe.

While his other lifetime contributions to knowledge and practice have been documented as has his life story, in part – and archival literature recognizes that he had to leave his university post at the University of Bonn in Germany because of Nazi racism – what has been left unsaid until now is how this valuable intellectual was saved, his trials and tribulations in coming to America, and the

difficulty in finding a job within a climate of pervasive anti-Semitism.

On April 1, 1933, Kantorowicz was arrested and kept in "protective custody" for 4 months in the Court Prison of Bonn. In July 1933, he was transferred to the Gestapo-, S.A.-, and S.S.-run Börgermoor hard labor concentration camp near Papenburg. There he spent another 4 months, after which he was transferred to the concentration camp for prominent socialists, Jews, and intellectuals in Lichtenburg. Kantorowicz's life was saved because Turkey, a country heretofore alien in every aspect to the Kantorowicz family, was at that time discarding the society and culture inherited from the Ottomans' derelict and shattered empire. As Turkey (personified by Kemal Atatürk) transformed into a republic, it recognized the need to modernize its society, culture, way of living, and system of higher education.

Kantorowicz was among the intellectuals saved because Turkey needed and officially invited him. Kantorowicz was appointed professor of dentistry at the fledgling University of Istanbul, and his contract had already been signed by the Turkish government while he was still in a concentration camp. The government of Turkey intervened, Kantorowicz was released and with his family was allowed to emigrate to that safe haven. The other refugees were in various scientific disciplines of science, the humanities, medicine, and the arts.

Using various means such as testimonials, oral histories, and institutional statements, *Turkey's Modernization* documents the impact of these professors on Turkey's higher education and on its practices in architecture, medicine, engineering, libraries, museums, city planning, and cultural institutions.

Turkey's Modernization creates a vivid picture of the least documented yet very significant aspect of 20th-century history. The book's primary theme involves a group of German, Austrian, and Czech intellectuals whose lives were saved when in 1933, Turkey recognized the need for modernizing its one fledgling university (a converted Ottomanist madrasa) and its technical university (a converted military academy) and invited these people who had to flee from the Nazis. To be sure, the 190 or so individuals plus families and staff (for a total of approximately 1,000) were not all Jewish; most had Jewish roots or spouses and the others were anti-Nazis. Turkey's neutrality and goodwill had sufficient meaning to the Third Reich so that at least two individuals who were wanted for Ankara's modernization program were extricated from concentration camps. One of these was Alfred Kantorowicz.

This book juxtaposes the attitudes and behaviors of two completely disparate countries at a critical point in history and offers a look at a dental public health professional within the social context of the times.