

Time Travel Manisa 1955

Facts about Tarzan - Ahmed Carlak Bedevi

Ahmed Bedevi was born in the town of Samarra in present day Iraq in 1899. He fought in the Liberation war and won a Medal of Honour. He was married but his wife passed away during a climbing expedition and he never remarried.

Ahmed moved to Manisa after the war and started to work as an assistant gardener. He was very upset about the devastation in Manisa and wanted to help the people of the town. He planted about 60 000 trees in and around Manisa. He often gave flowers to the ladies and candy to the children.

Ahmed lived alone in a cottage on the slopes of Mt Spil and took it as a personal duty to fire the canon at noon. He was interested in nature, mountaineering, photography and literature. He wanted to live like a free citizen. Although he lived alone in his hut in the mountain, he was not isolated from daily life, he read the daily newspapers, listened to music and went to the cinema. He had many friends including the mayor of the town and he was a reliable and honest person. He was a republican and he always flagged in front of his house.

Manisa's Tarzan passed away on May 31st 1963. A big burial ceremony was held for him. His love for nature made him a pioneer in environmentalism. Books, articles, poems, monuments and a movie have been dedicated to him.

Facts about Manisa and Turkey in the 1950s

Manisa was totally burnt down during the Liberation war. In the 1950s the rebuilding was well on the way and organized due to a new and modern cityplan. The industry was developing fast. The traditional way of living changed into a more "modern" life with better houses, new roads and a lot of new equipment. People were optimistic and believed in the future. *How many citizens in Manisa in the 1950s?*

Houses in the city were usually one storey high and made of sun-dried brick, there were no multi-storey buildings except for the official ones.

A lot of people still lived on farms, most of them in a traditional way. But the rural areas and the agriculture also saw a lot of changes in the 1950s. The farmers grew grapes, tobacco, cotton and olives. Women worked in the fields together with men.

The primary school was for five years, secondary school three and high school three years. In 1955 the first high schools in Turkey started to teach foreign languages, some years later in Manisa but few students attended high school and university.

In 1950 the Democratic Party won the national elections and Adnan Menderes became Prime Minister. In 1954 the Democratic Party won the election also in Manisa. The Democratic Party slowed the pace in the westernization of the country. They were also less militant and less secular than the Republican People's Party. Soon there was a growing public dissatisfaction with Menderes' perceived intolerance of criticism and people started to demonstrate against the regime. The military was also worried of losing their influence. In 1960 the Government was overthrown by the military forces under the lead of general Cemal Gürsel, a military coup, and the Prime Minister Menderes was executed.

This was the time of the cold war between the superpowers USA and Russia and there was a war in Korea and in Indochina. Many of the colonies in Africa were liberated.

The best example of the changes in the Turkish society in the 1900s was the status of women. Polygamy was abolished in 1925. Laws gave women equal rights to divorce and inherit, which they didn't have under Islamic Law. In 1934 women in Turkey could be politicians and members of Parliament. According to the law, women in Turkey had equal rights. However, reality did not always match the law. In the home, the majority of house work was still done by wives and daughters and the men gathered in the cafe-houses after work.

Bill Haley and the Comets revolutionized rock music. Turkish pop music had its humble beginnings in the late 1950s with Turkish cover versions of a wide range of imported popular styles, including rock and roll, tango and jazz. This wide collection of songs were labelled as "Hafif-batı" (light western) music and included a wide range of artists, such as Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and Paul Anka. The first original song of this type is credited to Erol Büyükburç in 1958 and his "Little Lucy". In Turkish Art Music Zeki Müren and Müzeyyen Senar were the most popular singers.

There were local and national newspapers and magazines. Milliyet was a daily newspaper in Istanbul founded in 1950. In Manisa "Hür Işık" and "Yenigün" newspapers were published and "Hayat" magazine was very popular.

There was no television but the radio was popular with music and news programs. Cinema was important to people, especially outdoor cinemas. Yeşilçam ("Green pine") is a metonym for the Turkish film industry. Yeşilçam is named after Yeşilçam Street in the Beyoğlu district of İstanbul where many actors, directors, crew members and studios were based in the 1950s-1970s.

The most popular sport in Turkey was football. Professional football began in 1952 and the best team were Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş.

Scenario, Manisa in 1955, the green city?

The city of Manisa is taking a step into the modern times. The population is growing and the city needs to be modernized with better roads and higher standard of living for people. A new avenue is planned. All the trees in the area of the road have to be cut down as well as some of the old trees in and around the city.

The assistant gardener Ahmeddin Carlak, “Tarzan”, is not at all happy with the new plans for the city. He doesn’t think that Manisa needs a wide avenue because there are few vehicles and he means that it’s completely unnecessary to cut down any trees. He tries in many ways to convince the leaders of the municipality that trees are important for the wellbeing of the people. He has succeeded to save a lot of old trees in the city and has planted new ones. But this time he seems to fail. Today the first trees are going to be cut down for the modern avenue. Some old trees also have to be taken down, even close to Tarzan’s own cottage.

Many people think that Tarzan is kind of crazy and of course the city has to be modernized. “You can’t save every tree,” they say. But Tarzan also has many supporters. They agree with him about saving the trees and think that the right way forward is to make the city greener.

Rather many people have gathered at the place where the first trees are going to be cut down. Some are only curious but some are here to protest and will try to stop the plans to fell the trees.

The atmosphere is tense. People are upset. Will the tree cutters come? And what will happen?

Key questions

- What is most important? The environment or development? Can we use the environment without exploiting it? Is it possible to develop in harmony with nature?
- What do we want to keep from the old traditions and how shall we take in the new modern things?
- What future do I want for Manisa? For myself? Which way shall we choose?

Roles

The students are people from Manisa that are coming to the place where the tree cutting is going to happen. Some are curious; some want to protest.

The students keep their age and sex.

Adults

Some of the adults are local people coming to the place.

One or two persons are people living close to the place

If it’s possible – a “real” journalist playing the role of a journalist in 1955

The gardener

Tree cutters

Tarzan

Activities

- Cooking – gözleme, ayran, butter
- Make protest signs
- Make a small flowerbed
- Examine plants and trees
- Clean the area
- Knitting, weaving, spinning
- Play game
- Sing and dance

I sell oil and honey (Yag satarim)

Time plan

- 07.00 Set up the place
- 08.00 Students arrive. Welcome
Dress up, presentation of characters
- 08.30 Initiation
Tree cutters arrive, vivid discussions
- 08.45 Activities and discussions
- 09.45 Tree cutters come back
Tarzan arrives, have also flowers and sweets
- 10.00 Meal. Music (and dancing)
- 10.35 End of Time Travel
Short evaluation
- 11.00 Students leave
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- 14.15 Students arrive. Welcome
Dress up, presentation of characters
- 14.45 Initiation
Tree cutters arrive, vivid discussions
- 15.00 Activities and discussions
- 16.00 Tree cutters come back
Tarzan arrives, have also flowers and sweets
- 16.15 Meal. Music (and dancing)
- 16.50 End of Time Travel
Short evaluation
- 17.15 Students leave
Clean up

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