

Miniaturk: Tour Through History, in the Small

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

During his June visit to Turkey, Lyndon LaRouche had such a packed schedule, that visits to the usual tourist sites, were impossible. All the more fortunate, therefore, that the Democratic Presidential candidate had the chance to visit Miniaturk, a brand-new park in Istanbul, which presents most of the great buildings and monuments of Turkey.

As the name denotes, the park has rebuilt these monuments in miniature, on a scale of 1:25. Walking through the lush landscape, the visitor can retrace the steps of history, moving from the Maidens' Tower at the mouth of the Bosphorus, originally built in the 5th Century B.C., to the Temple of Artemis, built in 356 B.C. in Ephesus (one of the seven wonders of the world), to the 2nd-Century Library of Celsus at Ephesus, the 2nd-Century amphitheater of Aspendos in Antalya, the 6th-Century Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia (later a mosque and now a museum), the 6th-Century Galat Tower, the Byzantine church of Chora in Istanbul from 1118, the Malabadi Bridge from 1147, the Ulu Mosque in Divrigi dated 1229, Cifte Minareli Medrese in Erzerum from 1291, the 13th-Century mausoleum of Mevlana built by the Seljuks in Konya, the Ulu Mosque in Bursa dated 1400, the 16th-Century Maglova Aqueduct built by the architect Sinan in Istanbul, the 16th-Century Muradiye Mosque in Manisa, the 18th-Century Ahmed III Fountain, Hidiv Kasir in Istanbul from the turn of the 20th Century, and the Bosphorus Bridge

built in 1973. There is also a replica of the Atatürk Mausoleum in Ankara.

Although most of the buildings are in Turkey, some important sites outside the country are represented, among them the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In all, there are 105 famous monuments, spread out over an area of 60,000 square meters.

As the visitor wanders through the centuries, he can also listen to recorded explanations of the monuments, offered in six languages through a voice information system, with outlets at each building. In addition, there are various action models, including 65 vehicles; miniature trains, including Atatürk's train car; airplane models and seagoing vessels, including the Kalender boat built by the Turkish Maritime Lines.

The park is a project of the Istanbul Municipality, and is located on the northern shore of the Golden Horn, at Suetluce, where numerous cultural institutions are located. Istanbul Cultural Council head Cengiz Özdemir, the mind behind the project, who hosted Mr. and Mrs. LaRouche on their tour, aimed at creating a park that would reflect the rich, multicultural history of Turkey. The buildings to be reconstructed were selected by two leading Turkish historians, Prof. Dr. Liber Ortayli and Associate Professor Dr. Haluk Dursun. The project was inspired by the Dutch miniature town Maduram, whose executives worked as consultants for the effort.

Miniaturk has already been visited by over 200,000 people, from Turkey and abroad, since its April 23 opening. It is a favorite of children, who delight in the "little mosques" and other miniatures, and a wonderful educational tool allowing people of all ages to experience some of the greatest monuments in the country's history, and, because of their size, to see them in settings and from perspectives not easily visible in real life.



The LaRouche's visited Istanbul's new historical and cultural park, Miniaturk, viewing miniature reconstructions of famed churches, monuments, mosques, bridges, and water works including the "Golden Horn" harbor and fortifications of old Constantinople.