Anglo-Turkish Society online lecture, 15 April 2021, 6.00 pm

Speaker: Andrew Finkel

Platform: Zoom with link provided to those who register

Title: Tales from the Turkish newsroom: Why Newspapers Sometimes Lie

Andrew Finkel's introduction to the skewed world of press integrity in Turkey occurred over thirty years ago when one of his first assignments on an Istanbul daily was to invent a story about a rival newspaper proprietor smuggling heroin to the UK inside of cauliflowers. A decade later, as a columnist on a national broadsheet, he was in court, defending himself against criminal charges of insulting the Turkish military. This coincided with his wife successfully suing the country's largest newspaper for libel after being accused of purloining historical documents. Today, he helps run an NGO in Turkey which, among other things, speaks up for scores of journalists in prison simply for trying to do their job.

Though we like to think of the media as the "guardian of the guardians" – the answer to Juvenal's famous question - *quis custodiet ipsos custodes*, we know the reality is more ambiguous. Indeed, the history of Turkish media since the first pirate TV broadcast in 1990 has been an ideal type of what is called "press capture". It is a history of radical transformation -- from a private media that used its influence to extract commercial advantages in non-media businesses to a media with ever diminishing influence and where ownership has become a levy on cronies whose core business- be it construction or energy- depends on government grace and favour.

It is a story that has become ever more complicated with the rise of social media, a hydra-headed force that can both evade government control but also manipulate public opinion in the way a state-controlled radio station could never contemplate. It is a phenomenon that has challenged not just the business model of heritage media but, many would argue, the very nature of news – and with it politics and social life.

Booking essential: https://andrew-finkel-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk





Andrew Finkel is a co-founder and executive member of P24 an Istanbul-based NGO. He has been based in Turkey since 1989, corresponding for a variety of print and broadcast media including *The Times*, *The Economist*, *TIME*, CNN and for the Latitude section of *The New York Times* and has also had columns in Turkish language newspapers. He is the author of several scholarly articles on media integrity and press capture including "Using Old Media to Capture New in Turkey" in a forthcoming edited volume *Media Capture in the Digital Age,* published by Columbia University Press. Finkel is also a contributing editor and restaurant critic for *Cornucopia* magazine