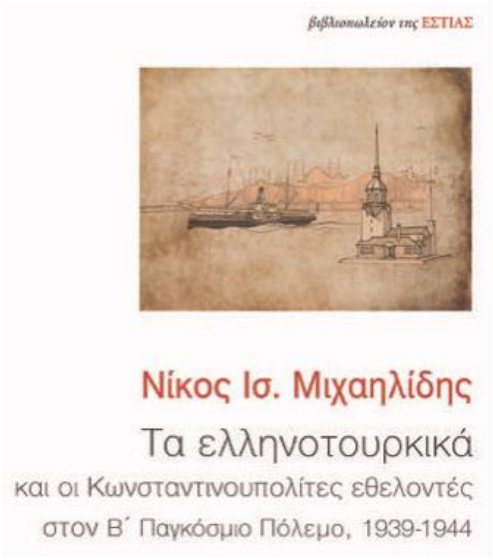
Anglo-Turkish Society online lecture, 22 March 2022, 6.00 pm (UK time)
Speaker: Nikos Michailidis
Platform: Zoom with link provided to those who register
Title: 'The Greek Turkish Relations and the Volunteers from Istanbul in WW2, 1939-1944'

This book is about events that took place during WW2 which are not widely known. It took me 9 years of research in order to complete it. The period of interest is between January1939 and the end of December 1944.
The first part of the book refers chronologically to the international events of that time with emphasis on the Greek-Turkish relations. The outcome of the international events influences Turkey's political stance.
The events are presented in a different way. For example the Greek achievements during the Greek-Italian war are narrated using the Turkish publications of the time. The details of the attack of the Nazi Germany in Greece are taken from the personal diary of an Istanbul Rum volunteer, a graduate of the Robert College (today called Boğaziçi Üniversitesi) who served as an interpreter for the British at the front. There are also many elements of the history that are not known such as the sinking of a big caique, by the English submarine "Torbay", in July 1941, which carried mainly Greek Orthodox and few Greek speaking Catholics and Jewish volunteers returning to Istanbul. This lead to the death of all.
In the second part of the book, I write about the Man in the war, about the personal stories of the Greek speaking Istanbul volunteers who fought against the Axis powers in Europe and the Middle East. I interviewed 171 people, the surviving volunteers or their immediate relatives.
The personal experiences and narratives are not always considered reliable sources of history because they are charged with emotions and personal views. However, when there is a large number of them and the testimonies coincide and confirm each other, they are considered reliable sources, primaries and important for drawing useful conclusions.
By seeing the war through the eyes of 171 witnesses you get a human touch to the cold narrative of war events.

Booking essential: https://nikos-michailidis-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk





Nicos Michailidis was born in Istanbul in 1946. In 1964, the year of his graduation from Zografyon Rum Lisesi (High-school), he was deported and moved to Athens.
He graduated from the Merchant Marine Academy of Hydra and in 1973 became a Merchant Marine captain.
He later became manager of the Greek Tourist Organisation Marinas in Attica. In 1980 he followed a different professional path and was hired by the Metaxa spirits company. In 2010 he finished his career as a Commercial Director of a well-known French Multinational Spirit Co.
The following years were devoted in the research of issues concerning his favourite subject: Istanbul.
He was the inspirator as well as the implementer of the restoration and maintenance of the biggest Greek-Orthodox cemetery of Şişli in Istanbul. Its unique burial monuments were heavily damaged during the pogrom of 6 and 7 September, 1955.
After nine years of research, he revealed a not widely known story about the Greek speaking volunteers of Istanbul, during WW2.
In November 2019 he created a Monument dedicated to the deceased Volunteers in Paleo Faliron, in Athens.