

in memoriam

**A modern businessman,  
an enlightened person.**



**Üzeyir Garih**  
————— 1929-2001 —————

Üzeyir Garih was one of the intellectual vanguards of the Turkish business community. He had successfully established a good communication with the younger generation as he did with his fellow businessmen. He considered it a duty to spread hope in society with his writings, conferences and his participation in public debates. He firmly believed that the youth of this country could become like Vehbi Koç, Sakıp Sabancı, Nejat Eczacıbaşı and even like Üzeyir Garih provided that there was equality of opportunity.

Üzeyir Garih was 72 years old on 25 August 2001 when his life was brutally terminated. He was a business leader who spent 45 years of his life in partnership with Şak Alaton, whom he called "older brother", thus proving that contrary to the common experience in Turkey partnership was no impediment to business success.

He never had a personal quarrel with anyone despite having met with innumerable people here and abroad in the rapidly growing Alarko Holding where he participated in many a stressful and at times charged meetings. We are all shocked that Üzeyir Garih who used to say "I do not remember being hurt by or cross with anyone" left us in such a brutal and meaningless way.

One cannot help rebel against the fact that an enlightened man like Üzeyir Garih who once said that "Luck is the name given by people to events that they are unable to foresee. The more knowledge you have the less there is room for luck." had been fated for so unlucky an end.

While stressing that he learned a lot from his teacher Professor François Duscio, Üzeyir Garih used to relive the enthusiasm of those days when he shared these views with his friends:

"Whatever I know about approaching matters and producing ideas like an

engineer and about the methods for searching and finding simple, practical and cheap solutions to technical problems, I learned from my esteemed professor. I understood that engineering was a process of thought. I learned that ideas evolved into engineering, which is the profession of turning technology and technique into commercial form, by moving from thought to philosophy, from philosophy to science, from science to technology. I learned that the triad of knowledge-honesty-good relationships are the best investment for a penniless engineer."

In his conversations with the young Üzeyir Garih used to say that he chose for himself the profession of being a "boss". For him people confused "Executive" and "boss". Being a boss was also a profession.

He tried to teach his children and his entourage that being a boss was an important job, that it was different from being an executive, that the boss was someone who approved the actions of the executive and that they were the guardians of their wealth. He used to say that "The boss is at the same time a leader. In order to be a leader that person needs to be loved and respected. The leader must be trustworthy, have common sense and knowledge. The leadership skills usually come from birth, executive skills can be learned later in life."

According to Garih, the creature called human being wanted to control everything. It is impossible to divert this natural instinct of humans towards another goal. The majority want to make money because it is a sign of success. Human beings have deeply rooted passions in their subconscious like the need to show off, prove oneself and the desire to let everyone know their accomplishments. Üzeyir Garih was one of the people who believed that "success is for human beings but it has no meaning if it is hidden. Success

means something so long as it is observed by society." This is why he believed it was his duty to tell the younger generations about success and make sure they understood.

Eliminating discrimination among people and living in unity and peace in Turkey was an intellectual passion of his. He used to say that "we must create the necessary conditions whereby people can be proud of openly stating their race and religion." and to this he added: "Atatürk had said 'How happy is the person that calls himself a Turk' and did not say 'How happy is the person who is a Turk or was born a Turk'. This means that if we want to strengthen Turkish nationalism I should be able to say 'I am a Jew but I am Turkish' as they do in America. You need to make me experience the pleasure of that feeling."

The matter that worried Garih most lately was the imbalance in the distribution of income. He found the growing gap between the rich and poor to be dangerous in all respects. He used to say that "It is now understood that poverty and communism are synonyms. But I need to remind you that the two concepts of communism and social state should not be confused. I am for a strong social state. I think that everybody needs to make money and be entrepreneurial according to their talents. I give importance to making money because I see profits as the source of taxes which should be paid to the state. The function of the state is to use the taxes it collected in areas which will be to the benefit of society. We should know that the state has no money, the money belongs to the people."

Üzeyir was a real MAN of principle. Turkish business world is in need of new Üzeyir Garihs who will fill his shoes.

Let us stand in respect before his memory.

Can Kuraç / 26 August 2001