

THE CAMBRIDGE  
HISTORY OF

# TURKEY



VOLUME 4

Turkey in the  
Modern World

EDITED BY  
RESAT KASABA

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF

TURKEY



Turkey's modern history has been shaped by its society and its institutions. While the development of its society defies easy categorisation, the state has been crafted through the activities of a range of political actors, all with their own particular vision of what Turkey should look like. A team of some of the most distinguished scholars of modern Turkey has come together in this volume to explore the interaction between these two aspects of Turkish modernisation. *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, volume 4, begins in the nineteenth century and traces the historical background through the reforms of the late Ottoman Empire, the period of the Young Turks, the War of Independence and the founding of Atatürk's Republic. Thereafter, the volume focuses on the Republican period to consider a range of themes including political ideology, economic development, the military, migration, Kurdish nationalism, the rise of Islamism and women's struggle for empowerment. The volume concludes with chapters on art and architecture, literature and a brief history of Istanbul.

REŞAT KASABA is Henry M. Jackson Professor in International Studies at the University of Washington. He is the author of *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* and co-editor of *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF  
TURKEY

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I. METİN KUNT, *Professor of History, Sabancı University*

**The Cambridge History of Turkey** represents a monumental enterprise. The History, comprising four volumes, covers the period from the end of the eleventh century, with the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia, through the emergence of the early Ottoman state, and its development into a powerful empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, encompassing a massive territory from the borders of Iran in the east, to Hungary in the west, and North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in the south. The last volume covers its destruction in the aftermath of the First World War, and the history of the modern state of Turkey which arose from the ashes of empire. Chapters from an international team of contributors reflect the very significant advances that have taken place in Ottoman history and Turkish studies in recent years.

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Turkey in the Modern World

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THE CAMBRIDGE  
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VOLUME 4  
Turkey in the Modern World

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*Edited by*  
REŞAT KASABA



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## Chronology

- 1839** Gülhane decree inaugurates the Tanzimat
- 1853–6** Crimean War
- 1856** Reform Edict, Treaty of Paris
- 1876** Declaration of Ottoman constitution
- 1877–8** Ottoman–Russian War
- 1878** Suspension of the constitution  
Congress of Berlin ending the Russian War
- 1881** Ottoman Public Debt Administration is created  
French protectorate in Tunisia
- 1882** British occupation of Egypt
- 1895–6** Massacre of Armenians in eastern Anatolia
- 1897** Ottoman–Greek War
- 1902** First Committee of Union and Progress opposition meets in Paris
- 1907** Second opposition congress meets in Paris
- 1908** Young Turk Revolution, beginning of the Second Constitutional Monarchy
- 1909** Counter-revolution fails; Abdülhamid II is exiled to Salonica.
- 1911** Italy invades Libya
- 1912–13** First Balkan War
- 1913** Second Balkan War
- 1914–18** First World War
- 1915** Russia defeats the Ottoman Empire in the east  
Deportation and massacre of Armenians
- 1915–16** Ottoman victory against Allied forces at Gallipoli
- 1916** Arabs revolt against the Ottoman rule
- 1918** Moudros armistice and the Allied occupation of Istanbul
- 1919** 15 May Greek forces land in Izmir  
19 May Mustafa Kemal lands at Samsun  
4–13 September Sivas Congress; confirmation of National Pact  
December Elections for the Ottoman parliament
- 1920** 23 April. Opening of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara; Mustafa Kemal is elected its president  
22 June Greek troops occupy western Anatolia and Eastern Thrace  
10 August Sèvres Treaty is signed  
27 September Turkish troops offensive against Armenians in the east

## Chronology

- 1921** 13 October Treaty of Kars is signed with the Soviet Union  
20 October Treaty of Ankara is signed with France
- 1922** 26–30 August Battle of Dumlupınar  
9 September Greek army is defeated  
11 October Mudanya armistice  
1 November Abolition of the Sultanate  
17 November Flight of Sultan Mehmet VI from Istanbul  
20 November Lausanne Peace Conference starts
- 1923** 30 January The agreement on Greek–Turkish population exchange is signed  
24 July Lausanne Treaty signed  
6 October The last Allied troops leave Istanbul  
29 October Proclamation of the Republic
- 1924** 7 February Union of Turkish women (Türk Kadın Birliği) is founded  
3 March Caliphate abolished. Dynasty exiled  
8 April Abolition of the *shari'a* courts  
20 April New constitution is adopted
- 1925:** February–June Kurdish şeyh Said rebellion  
4 March Law for the Maintenance of Order is proclaimed  
25 November Proclamation of the dress code requiring all men to wear hats  
30 November The religious brotherhoods are banned  
26 December International calendar and time are adopted
- 1926** 17 February The new civil code is adopted; women gain civil rights  
5 June Agreement is signed with Great Britain solving the Mosul question  
15 June Police discover a conspiracy to assassinate Mustafa Kemal in Izmir  
July–August Independence tribunals in Izmir and Ankara punish nineteen alleged conspirators with death
- 1927** 7 March Independence tribunals are abolished  
28 May The Law for the Encouragement of Industry is adopted  
15–20 October Atatürk's six-day speech
- 1928** 23 May Turkish Citizenship Law is adopted  
1 November Latin script is adopted and the public use of the Arabic script is banned
- 1929** 4 March The law for the Maintenance of Order is repealed
- 1930** 3 April Women gain the right to vote and run in municipal elections  
July Kurdish rebellion around Mt Ararat  
23 December Religiously inspired riots in Menemen
- 1932** 18 July Turkey joins the League of Nations  
18 July Official announcement that the call to prayer will be recited in Turkish
- 1934** 9 January First Five-Year Plan is approved  
14 June The Law of Settlement (of nomads and refugees) is adopted  
21 June The surname law is adopted  
21 June–6 July Anti-Jewish riots in Thrace  
5 December Women gain the right to vote and run in parliamentary elections
- 1935** 2 February St Sophia in Istanbul is opened as a museum  
April Union of Turkish Women hosts the Twelfth Congress of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship



## Chronology

- 1936** 20 July Montreux Convention is signed, regulating the status of the Straits
- 1937** March–August Kurdish uprising in Dersim  
29 May The League of Nations decides that Hatay should become independent
- 1938** 10 November Atatürk dies; İsmet İnönü becomes president
- 1939** 15–21 March General elections  
29 July Hatay is united with Turkey
- 1941** 18 June Turkey signs a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Nazi Germany
- 1942** 11 November Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) is imposed by the parliament
- 1943** 15–20 February General election
- 1944** 15 March Wealth tax is abolished
- 1945** 23 February Turkey declares war on Germany  
April Turkey joins the UN
- 1946** 7 January The Democrat Party is founded  
21 July National election
- 1947** 11 March Turkey joins the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund
- 1949** 28 March Turkey recognises the state of Israel  
May The first consignments of Marshall Plan tractors arrive
- 1950** 14 May General election; Democrat Party comes to power, Celal Bayar becomes president, Adnan Menderes becomes prime minister  
5 July The parliament lifts the ban on the use of Arabic in the call to prayer  
25 July The government decides to send troops to fight in the Korean War  
21 October Compulsory religious instruction is introduced
- 1951** 25 July The law against defaming Atatürk is passed
- 1952** 18 February Turkey joins NATO
- 1954** 2 May General elections
- 1955** 24 February Baghdad Pact is signed joining Turkey with Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Great Britain  
6–7 September Anti-Greek riots; many Greeks leave
- 1957** 27 October General elections
- 1959** 17 February Menderes survives a plane crash in London  
19 February London Treaty forming the Republic of Cyprus is signed between the UK, Greece and Turkey  
31 July Turkey applies for membership to the European Economic Community  
11 September The European Economic Community Council of Ministers accepts Turkey and Greece's applications for associate membership  
19 November Preacher schools and the Advanced Islamic Institute are opened
- 1960** 23 March Said-i Nursi dies  
28 April Student demonstrations take place against the DP in Istanbul and Ankara; martial law is declared  
27 May Military coup; the junta seizes power under the name of the National Unity Committee; the former commander of the land forces, General Cemal Gürsel, becomes the president of the Republic  
16 August Republic of Cyprus gains its independence from Britain  
14 October Yassıada trials begin

## Chronology

- 1961** 3 January The Army Mutual Assistance Association (OYAK) is established  
11 February The Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) is founded under the leadership of Rağıp Gümüşpala  
9 July A new constitution is adopted in a referendum  
16–17 September Adnan Menderes, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Hasan Polatkan are hanged  
15 October General elections  
30 November Martial law is lifted  
7 December National Security Council is convened for the first time
- 1963** 12 September The Ankara Agreement is signed, aiming at securing Turkey's full membership in the EEC  
21 December The killing of two Turkish Cypriots leads to protests in Turkey  
26 December Turkish navy crosses the territorial waters of Cyprus
- 1964** 29 November Süleyman Demirel is elected new leader of the Justice Party  
1 December Association Agreement between Turkey and EEC comes into force
- 1965** 10 October General election; Justice Party comes to power
- 1966** 28 March Cevdet Sunay becomes the president of the Republic  
18–21 October Bülent Ecevit is elected the general secretary of the Republican People's Party
- 1967** 12 February Confederation of Revolutionary Labour Unions (DİSK) is founded  
17 May Graduates of preacher schools are given the right to enrol in universities
- 1968** 31 January First television broadcast in Turkey
- 1969** 16 February A violent demonstration in Istanbul against the presence of US Sixth Fleet in Turkish waters (Bloody Sunday)  
12 October General elections; Justice Party wins the highest percentage of votes
- 1970** 25 January Necmettin Erbakan forms the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi)
- 1971** 12 March Coup by memorandum by the commanders of the armed forces  
19 March Nihat Erim is appointed as prime minister  
27 April The National Security Council proclaims martial law in eleven provinces  
20 May The National Order Party is dissolved by the constitutional court
- 1972** 6 May Student leaders Deniz Gezmiş, Hasan İnan and Yusuf Aslan are hanged  
14 May The RPP congress elects Bülent Ecevit as the chairman of the party  
11 October Erbakan forms the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi)
- 1973** 6 April Fahri Korutürk elected president of the Republic  
14 October General elections
- 1974** 26 January RPP–NSP coalition government is formed  
20 July Turkey intervenes militarily in Cyprus in response to a pro-Greek coup  
16 August Turkey occupies one-third of the island.
- 1977** 1 May Thirty-nine people are killed by gunfire and panic in a demonstration involving 200,000 workers in Taksim Square, Istanbul  
5 June General election
- 1978** November Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is established  
22 December Pogroms against Alevis in Kahramanmaraş
- 1979** 1 February Assassination of Abdi İpekci

## Chronology

- 1980** 24 *January* Sweeping measures are introduced to broaden the scope of market economy in Turkey; the Turkish Lira is devalued, interest rates are liberalised  
12 *September* Military coup  
14 *September* General Kenan Evren is declared the head of state  
20 *September* Retired Admiral Bülend Ulusu is appointed prime minister
- 1982** *January* The European Community suspends its agreements with Turkey  
7 *November* Referendum for the new constitution  
9 *November* Kenan Evren assumes the office of the president
- 1983** 20 *May* The Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) is formed by Turgut Özal  
19 *July* Welfare Party (RP, Refah Partisi) is founded  
22 *October* The use of the Kurdish language is banned  
6 *November* General election; Motherland Party wins; Turgut Özal becomes prime minister  
15 *November* Proclamation of the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
- 1984** 15 *August* PKK resumes its armed struggle
- 1987** 14 *April* Turkey applies for full membership in European Union  
29 *November* General election
- 1989** 31 *October* Turgut Özal is elected the president of the Republic, replacing Evren  
*December* The ban on headscarf in universities is lifted
- 1990** 9 *April* Anti-terrorism law, giving the authorities extraordinary powers, is passed  
5 *May* Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) is established
- 1991** *January* Turkey joins the Gulf War in Iraq on the US side  
20 *October* General election
- 1993** 17 *April* Turgut Özal die  
17 *May* Demirel becomes the ninth president of the Republic  
25 *June* Tansu Çiller becomes prime minister  
2 *July* A mob burns a hotel in Sivas during an Alevi festival; 39 people die  
8 *July* The parliament changes article 133 of the constitution; as a result the establishment of private TV and radio channels is allowed
- 1994** *January–December* Kurdish insurgency continues  
2 *March–December* The immunity of eight Kurdish parliamentarians is lifted, seven sentenced to prison  
27 *March* Local elections are held; Welfare Party captures twenty-seven municipalities including Istanbul and Ankara
- 1995** *March* 'Operation Steel' by the Turkish army against Kurdish insurgency  
12 *April* 'The Kurdish Parliament in Exile' convenes for the first time in the Hague  
24 *December* General election; Welfare Party becomes the biggest party
- 1996** 1 *January* The Customs Union between the EU and Turkey comes into effect  
28 *June* Erbakan becomes prime minister in a coalition government  
3 *November* Susurluk incident; a car crash reveals cooperation between the police and organised crime

## Chronology

- 1997** 28 February The National Security Council orders the Erbakan government to implement a list of eighteen directives (28 February dictate)  
17 June Erbakan resigns  
17 December The Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) is formed
- 1998** 16 January The constitutional court closes down the Welfare Party and bans Erbakan from politics for five years
- 1999** 16 February Turkish military forces capture PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya  
18 April General election
- 2000** 16 May Ahmet Necdet Sezer becomes the president of the Republic  
19 December 'Operation Return to Life'; Turkish soldiers attack 48 prisons to end hunger strike
- 2001** 21 February The economic crisis begins  
2 March Kemal Derviş becomes the state minister in charge of the economy; he directs austerity measures to deal with the crisis  
22 June The constitutional court bans the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi)  
20 July The conservative faction of the FP founds the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP)  
14 August The Justice and Development Party (AKP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) is formed  
4 October The Turkish parliament adopts thirty-four constitutional amendments that relax restrictions on civil society organisations and on the use of Kurdish
- 2002** January–August European Union Adaptation Laws are adopted changing the penal code, lifting the ban on the use of Kurdish and abolishing the death penalty  
3 November General election; JDP wins a big majority; Abdullah Gül becomes prime minister  
12–13 December The Copenhagen summit; the fifteen leaders of the EU reject Turkey's demand to set a date to begin negotiations for its eventual admission
- 2003** January–August Four more European Union Adaptation reform packages are adopted by the Turkish parliament  
14 March Tayyip Erdoğan becomes prime minister  
7 November The parliament refuses to allow US troops to use Turkish soil to attack Iraq
- 2004** 24 April Referendums are held in both sides of Cyprus; while Turkish Cypriots approve the UN plan, Greek Cypriots reject it  
17 June The parliament approves a bill abolishing the State Security Courts and amending the Criminal Trial Process Law  
17 December EU agrees to open membership negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005; Turkey becomes a candidate member
- 2005** 1 January New Turkish Lira (YTL) comes into use at midnight
- 2006** 12 October Orhan Pamuk receives the 2006 Nobel prize for literature  
5 November Bülent Ecevit dies  
10 December Citing Turkey's unwillingness to open its ports to Cyprus, the EU suspends eight of the thirty-five articles under which Turkey's membership has been negotiated
- 2007** 28 August Abdullah Gül becomes president of the Republic



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Elizabeth Angell played a crucial role in the completion of this project. Senem Aslan, Evrim Görmüş, and Joakim Parslow also helped along the way. I received a grant from the Graduate School of the University of Washington, which made some of this possible. I am happy to express my deep gratitude to all of them.

Reşat Kasaba

## *A note on transliteration*

Modern Turkish spelling has been used, except for Arabic and Persian words that do not occur in Turkish. For these, the system of *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* has been adopted with some modifications.

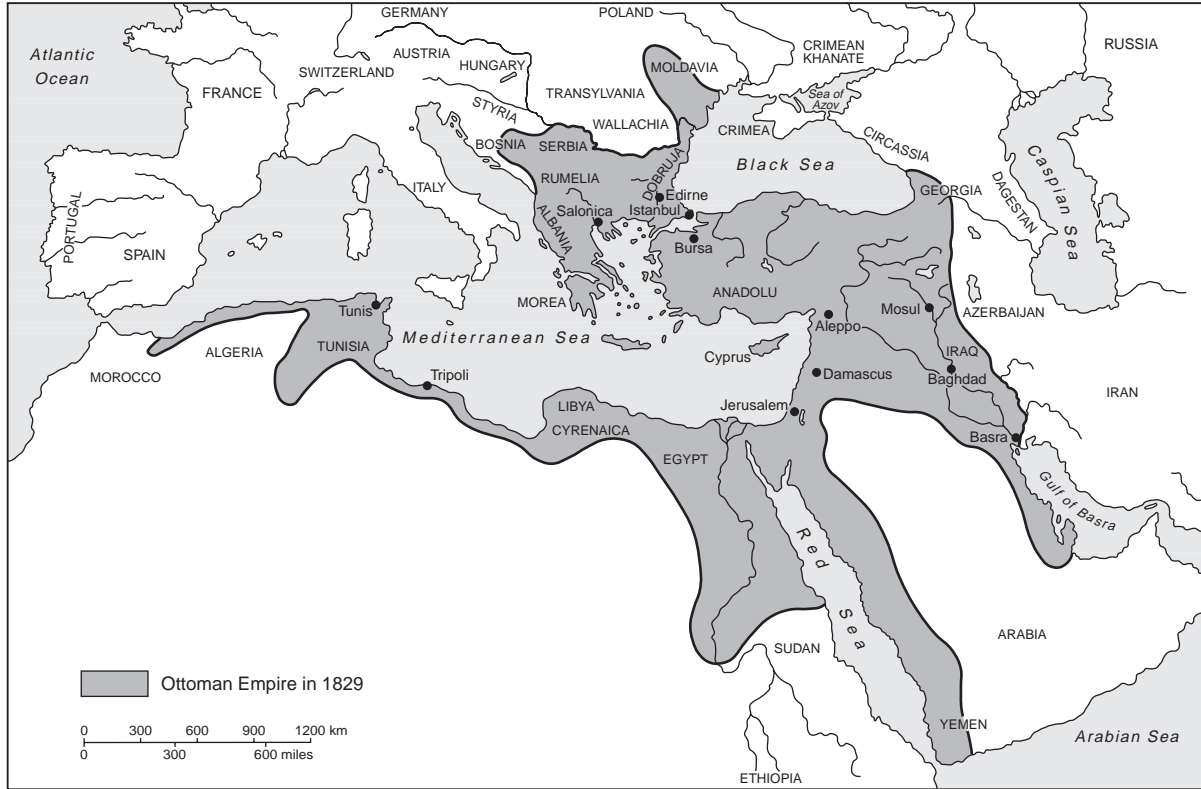
## *Abbreviations*

ANAP, MP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
CPU	Committee of Progress and Union (Terakki ve İttihat Cemiyeti)
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti)
DEP	Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
DİSK	Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
DLP, DSP	Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti)
DP	Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti)
DPK-T	Democratic Party of Kurdistan-Turkey (Türkiye Kurdistan Demokrat Partisi)
DPP, DEHAP	Democratic People's Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi)
FP, SP	Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)
FP, HP	Freedom Party (Hürriyet Partisi)
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
İHD	Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği)
İKD	Progressive Women's Association (İlerici Kadınlar Derneği)
JDP, AKP AK	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
JP	Justice Party (Adalet Partisi)
KA-DER	Association to Support and Educate Women Candidates
KSP-T	Kurdistan Socialist Party-Turkey (Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan-Tirkiye)
NAP, MHP	Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
NDP, MDP	Nationalist Democracy Party (Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi)
NLK	National Liberators of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları)
NOF, MNP	National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi)
NSC, MGK	National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu)
NSP, MSP	National Salvation Party (Milli Selâmet Partisi)
NTP, YTP	New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi)
NUC, MBK	National Unity Committee (Milli Birlik Komitesi)
NVM	National View Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi)
PDA	Public Debt Administration
PDP, HADEP	People's Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiyi Karkara Kurdistan)
PLP, HEP	People's Labour Party (Halkın Emek Partisi)
PRP, TCF	Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası)



*List of abbreviations*

RECA, DDKD	Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Associations (Devrimci Dođu Kùltür Dernekleri)
RECH, DDKO	Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths (Devrimci Dođu Kùltür Ocakları)
RPP, CHP	Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
SHP, SODEP	Social Democratic Party
SPO	State Planning Organisation (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı)
TPP, DYP	True Path Party (Dođru Yol Partisi)
TÜSİAD	Industrialists’ and Businessmens’ Association of Turkey (Türkiye Sanayiciler ve İş Adamları Derneđi)
VP, FP	Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi)
WP, RP	Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)
WPT, TİP	Workers’ Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)
YÖK	Council on Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu)



Map 1. The Ottoman Empire, 1829



Map 2. The Republic of Turkey, 2006

## Introduction

REŞAT KASABA

It was a little over two years before this introduction was written (February 2007) that Turkey appeared at last to have taken the final steps to become a candidate member of the European Union. The agreement that was signed at the end of 2004 promised a period of negotiations, which, albeit long and difficult, would eventually end in Turkey's accession to full membership. Yet two years later, people in Turkey find themselves in the position of having to watch from the sidelines as Romania and Bulgaria become full members. In the meantime, eight of the thirty-four articles under which Turkey's status was being negotiated have been frozen, and being against Turkey's accession to the EU has become a necessity for winning elections in major European countries.

Turkey has repeatedly had to pull back from such 'points of no return', or 'thresholds of new eras' in the course of the twentieth century, each time turning its back on a hopeful turn of events and retreating to closure and isolation. In 1958, Daniel Lerner was so impressed by the progress Turkey had made that he stated confidently that the 'production of "New Turks" can now be halted, in all probability, only by the countervailance of some stochastic factor of cataclysmic proportions—such as an atomic war'.<sup>1</sup> But less than two years after these words were published Turkey experienced a bloody military coup that would set its democratic development back significantly. In the mid-1980s, Prime Minister Turgut Özal would declare that Turkey had 'skipped a whole epoch' in the race to modernise, implying that the reforms that were implemented were irreversible and that Turkey had been firmly placed on the path of continuing liberalisation and progress. But many of these reforms would be quickly abandoned in the 1990s and the country would live through a decade of protracted paralysis, prompting at least one analyst to describe the 1990s as 'the years that the locust hath eaten'.<sup>2</sup>

1 Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (New York: Free, Press, 1958), p. 128.

2 Soli Özel, "Turkey at the Polls: After the Tsunami", *Journal of Democracy* 14 (2003), p. 84.

The major reason for these wild swings is that Turkey has been pursuing a bifurcated programme of modernisation consisting of an institutional and a popular component which, far from being in agreement, have been conflicting and undermining each other. The bureaucratic and military elite that has controlled Turkey's institutional modernisation for much of this history insists that Turkey cannot be modern unless Turks uniformly subscribe a same set of rigidly defined ideals that are derived from European history, and they have done their best to create new institutions and fit the people of Turkey into their model of nationhood. In the mean time, Turkey has been subject to world-historical processes of modernisation, characterised by the expansion of capitalist relations, industrialisation, urbanisation and individuation as well as the formation of nation-states and the notions of civil, human and economic rights. These have altered people's lives and created new and diverse groups and ways of living that are vastly different from the blueprint of modernity that had been held up by the elite.

Hence, Turkey's modernisation in the past century has created a disjuncture where state power and social forces have been pushed apart, and the civilian and military elite that controlled the state has insisted on having the upper hand in shaping the direction and pace of Turkey's modernisation. Even the presence of multi-party democracy during most of this time did not change this situation. In fact, we can point to only two periods when there appeared to be a reversal of this relationship and a degree of concurrence developed between state power and social forces. The first of these was the first half of the Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party, henceforth DP) years in the early 1950s, and the second is the period that started in 2002 when Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, henceforth JDP) won a majority of the seats in the parliament. As I mentioned above, the first of these ended in a bloody military coup in 1960. As for the second, after introducing institutional reforms and making significant gains in linking Turkey to the European Union, the JDP government has come under growing pressure by the military and bureaucratic elite and has started to show signs of strain. The simultaneous presence of these forces that have been pulling (or pushing) Turkey in opposite directions has meant that transformation in Turkey has never been a uniform and linear process. Even in the darkest periods of military rule, the forces that countered the state have found ways of being effective, and yielding surprising results, as in the elections that followed the coups of 1960, 1971 and 1980, where the parties that were explicitly anti-coup came out as winners. Conversely, periods that signalled liberalisation have always been followed by radical reversals and retreat.

None of this should be taken to imply that Turkey's project of modernisation has not been successful. The developments of the past century have transformed a land which was fragmented and under occupation, and a people whose identity and purpose were at best uncertain, into today's robust nation which is a candidate for membership in the European Union. However, as Pamuk explains in his chapter, it is more illuminating to assess the performance of a country like Turkey, not in absolute terms, but as relative to other comparable cases as well as by entertaining the question of what could have happened under different institutional settings. The chapters that are collected in this volume agree that this transformation should be seen not solely as resulting from the deeds of an enlightened elite or as the unfolding of a predestined path, but as a historical process that has been passing through various turning points and has been subject to many contingencies. To understand Turkey's path to modernity we need to consider the contributions of both the military and political geniuses like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and those unsung heroes, such as Necati Güven, who was celebrated in Turkey and in Germany as the 500,000th *Gastarbeiter* in 1972.<sup>3</sup>

Any study of Turkey's modern history has to address the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, even though Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and other early Republican leaders insisted on a clean break between the Ottoman past and the new Republic. For them, this was not just a question of writing this history in a certain way, but making it as such. Many of the reforms, from adopting the Roman alphabet to secularising the state, can be seen as deliberate attempts at separating these two histories and erecting barriers between them. Yet there was little these leaders could do about the fact that they were products of that Ottoman context; their thoughts, plans and ideology were shaped by it. They were, first and foremost, military officers, politicians and intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire and they all started with the instinctive goal of saving the empire. Furthermore, they inherited the empire's institutional framework and its laws that had been undergoing reform for close to one hundred years. And finally, the people they mobilised during the War of Liberation and in the building of the new state were considerably more diverse and more religious than their visions of the new Turkish nation. In the coming together of a rigidly formalist leadership and the more expansive people in these years, we see the seeds of the pendulum that would become so prominent in the twentieth-century history of Turkey.

<sup>3</sup> See Levent Soysal's chapter below (chapter 8).

The chapters in the first part of this book describe the Ottoman context and discuss how these leaders dealt with the dilemmas it created. Recent scholarship has shown and these chapters affirm that, far from being the haphazard attempts of out-of-touch leaders at minimising the empire's losses and surviving in an increasingly unfamiliar world, the reforms of the nineteenth century displayed great dynamism on the part of the imperial rulers. While the influence of Western ideas cannot be ignored, it has also been shown clearly that these steps originated from within the empire and as such reflected the interests, demands and contradictions of indigenous groups. There were important continuities across the major periods of the Tanzimat, Abdülhamid II's reign, the Second Constitutional Period and the War for Liberation. However, while institutional changes were passed down and expanded from one period to the next, the state during Abdülhamid's rule was markedly less enthusiastic about the West. Also, starting with Abdülhamid's reign, the central government became increasingly stronger at the expense of societal forces, even through the constitutional regimes of 1876–7 and 1908–18 that had been declared in order to make the Ottoman politics more representative. The post-1908 period was also marked by the rise of the military in Ottoman politics, which, along with the strong state, would become a key feature of modern Turkey. The struggle for independence and Atatürk's leadership during and after this war provides the link between the empire and the Republic. A close look at the crucial years of the 1918–23 period, however, shows that, until the very end, the outcome of this struggle was unclear and its unfolding was shaped by the contingencies of these tumultuous years. The degree to which this history was constituted through multiple negotiations among the representatives of many different groups, including an election that was held in 1919, when the empire was all but finished, is indeed remarkable.

Atatürk was very much a product of this context but he was also different from his cohorts in his unabashed identification with the Enlightenment ideal of universal civilisation and progress through science. He had no hesitation in using force in order to bring about the right conditions in Turkey so that these principles could be applied. It would be hard to claim, however, that Atatürk was completely successful in banishing the mistrust of the West that had taken root among the military and civilian elite in the late nineteenth century, and became even stronger in the course of the wars of the early twentieth century. This, in addition to a strong state, would become a key legacy of the Ottoman Empire for Turkey.

The second part of the book focuses on twelve themes that are constitutive of modern Turkey. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list, but it is one

that captures most of the topics one needs to be aware of in studying modern Turkey. Some of these topics deal primarily with the formal and institutional aspects of modernisation such as political parties, the military and economic policy, while others reflect on Turkey's societal dynamics (migration, Islam, the Kurdish movement, women, art, architecture literature and Istanbul). But neither of these categories would be exclusive in that they were both shaped by the interaction of both the formal and the substantive processes of modernisation.

The first two chapters in this part are on migration because the mobility of the people of Turkey has played a decisive role in shaping both their national identity and their evolving characteristic as an urban and industrial people. While some of these migrations were spontaneous, others were induced by state actions or international agreements. For most of the last sixty years, it has been the experience of the 3–5 million Turks who have been working in Europe that has created the most immediate tie with Europe. In discussing this topic, however, we usually overlook how integral these 'guest workers' have become to Europe, especially Germany. In addition to being affected and transformed by their experience, these people have also changed Europe in ways that could not have been predicted when the first waves of this migration started. They have become some of the most thoroughly cosmopolitan and modern people in Europe. As recounted in chapter 9, the history of politics and political parties can be seen as various attempts at building appropriate institutions and mechanisms so that the vibrant and mobile population that is depicted in chapter 7 could be contained. After the initial quarter-century of single-party, authoritarian rule, politics in Turkey has been mostly democratic. Outside relatively brief periods of military rule, there have been political parties and regular elections. This has meant that societal forces have always found inroads into Turkish state and politics, making this a truly recursive relationship. The chapter by Şevket Pamuk traces the arc of Turkey's modern economic history because it was the economic transformations that gave substance to the political restructuring of the Republic. This history can be described in terms of a movement from more to less state intervention and regulation. Exactly how this change has come about, however, is not that straightforward. Partly as a result of its own internal dynamics, and partly under external pressures, a big part of this shift has been affected by the state itself. As a result even periods of opening and liberalisation have reinforced the separation between formal and substantive modernisation in Turkey, making the overall economic transformation less than it could have been under different conditions. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the continued presence of Turkish armed forces



in Turkey's politics constitutes one of the most important factors responsible for preventing Turkey from moving on a consistent path of reform and liberalisation. In explaining this, Ümit Cizre shows how the military has become a major interest group with vested interests in the very uncertainty of the path of modernisation Turkey has embarked upon. Completely abandoning this path would be anathema to the founding ideology of the armed forces; at the same time, the total embrace of modernity, with all of its implications, would eliminate the armed forces as a serious player in Turkey.

In this book we use Kurdish politics, political Islam and women's movements as the main entry points to discussing the substantive aspects of Turkey's modernisation. Even though each one of these areas is deeply rooted in the societal dynamics, they also carry the imprint of Turkey's formal modernisation. The very presence of Kurds constitutes an existential challenge to the principles of Turkish nationalism as propagated by the Turkish military and bureaucrats. At the same time, in recent years, the recognition of Kurdish rights has become the single most important measure of the fullness of Turkish democracy. Conversely, the periods when the Turkish state was most insistent in a formal and narrow definition of Turkey's modern national identity invariably coincided with particularly harsh and oppressive policies against the Kurds. By their presence and activism Kurds have forced the governing elite to react to them, and in doing so to implicitly agree that the homogenous community of Turks, which their policies were premised upon, never really existed. A similar argument can be made in relation to political Islam. We can identify a specific time when the first openly Islamist party was established and participated in elections in Turkey. But it would be wrong to take this as the beginning of political Islam in Turkey. Both through the presence of actual networks of Muslims and the prevailing religious sensibilities of the people of Turkey, Islam has been part of Turkish politics since the very early days of the Republic. Just as Turkish nationalism cannot be understood without taking the Kurds into account, Turkish secularism, the other key plank of modern Turkish identity, makes sense only in conjunction with the deep religiosity of the people of Turkey. Even from the Second Constitutional Period, some of the fiercest debates about the place of Turkey in modern Europe have consistently revolved around the status and rights of women. As Yeşim Arat shows, Turkey's modernisation has not simply turned women into its passive objects. These transformations have also empowered women. As a result, not only have women been active participants in these changes, but they have also used their subjectivity to challenge both the patriarchal norms in society and the very state whose actions were responsible for their empowerment.

The last three chapters focus on how people in Turkey expressed their modern identities in different contexts and through different modules. In art and architecture, Sibel Bozdoğan starts with styles that reflect the complexity and the indeterminate nature of the transitional period, and move into more formal reflections of institutional modernism of the Republic. In recent decades, along with the emergence of new openings between the state and society and to the outside world, the artistic and architectural forms have also become more hybrid and cosmopolitan, reflecting more closely the societal changes that have taken place in Turkey. Unlike other forms of art, Turkish literature has consistently taken a somewhat critical and even oppositional stand vis-à-vis the main phases of Turkey's modern history. Hence, when the state-centred policies of transformation were in full swing, the most popular novels were firmly rooted in village settings, exploring parts of the Turkish society that were becoming marginalised. And today, the best novels, including those of the Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, are anchored in the modern and mostly urban experiences of the people of Turkey. Their representations of modern Turkey are much more complex than simple dichotomies such as east/west or traditional/modern can embrace. The book ends with a chapter on Istanbul because this city has become a true microcosm of modern Turkey. Far from being a mere bridge between East and West, tradition and modernity, as is frequently portrayed in Western media, this city has become a true cauldron, the place where all the forces and contradictions of modernity can be observed and where ultimately the future of Turkey will be decided. It is not so much by linking Turkey with the West but by being open to the rest of the world that Istanbul has prospered, not only in the last twenty years but throughout its history. The same can be said about Turkey's history as well. The wild swings that have been characteristic of its history follow closely the changes in its openness to the outside world.

While it is possible to see the current uncertainty in Turkey's future as yet another temporary swing in its history of modernisation, there are two factors that make this period somewhat different from earlier phases. The first of these is the fact that the JDP, which has organic ties with Turkish society, has been in government and has been wielding state power for a while now. Undeniably, this has altered the oppositional state-society relationship outlined above. Also, in a way that is similar to the DP of the late 1950s, the JDP has also been ruling in a way that contradicts the democratic discourse that propelled it on the political scene in 2002. Both in the day-to-day running of the government and in terms of the ideological vision it projects for Turkey there are signs that the JDP itself may be moving away from the universal

notions of modernity it had embraced in the early 2000s. Second, the early years of the twenty-first century have been different from the second half of the twentieth century, in that there is now a tendency to close up in both the advanced and poorer societies. The USA and the EU appear to be both more interested in preserving and protecting what is theirs than in accepting the new and the unfamiliar. Such signals coming from the most powerful and advanced nations reinforce the most conservative tendencies in different parts of the world, including Turkey and the Turkish diaspora in Europe. All of this makes the current conjuncture full of uncertainties. In assessing the past and the future of Turkey's modern history we need a framework that gives primacy to the contingencies of history that frame and constrain the choices that are open to those who were the subjects of this history. The chapters that are collected in this volume seek to take a step to construct such a framework.

PART I

\*

OTTOMAN BACKGROUND  
AND TRANSITION



# The Tanzimat

CARTER VAUGHN FINDLEY

In Ottoman history, the term *Tanzimat* (literally ‘the reforms’) designates a period that began in 1839 and ended by 1876. Literary scholars speak of ‘Tanzimat literature’ produced long after 1876, arguing that the literature displays continuities that warrant such usage. Reform policy also displays continuities after 1876. Yet the answer to the critical question of ‘who governs’ changed. The death of the last dominant Tanzimat statesman, Mehmed Emin Âli Paşa (1871), and the accession of the last dominant Ottoman sultan, Abdülhamid II (1876), decisively changed the answer to that question.

## Background

No disagreement surrounds the beginning of the Tanzimat, for several watershed events occurred in 1839, including a change in ‘who governed’.<sup>1</sup> However, Ottoman efforts at modernising reform had begun much earlier. The catastrophes that alerted Ottomans to the menace of European imperialism began with the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768–74, ending with the disastrous Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. That treaty launched the series of crises known to Europeans as the ‘Eastern Question’, over how to dispose of the lands under Ottoman rule. Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt (1798) was equally traumatic, although temporary in its effects compared to Küçük Kaynarca, as it showed that the imperialist threat was not localised in the European borderlands but could make itself felt anywhere. These crises stimulated demands in both Istanbul and the provinces – for example at Mosul – for an end to the political decentralisation of the preceding two centuries and a reassertion of sultanic authority.<sup>2</sup>

1 This chapter is adapted from Carter Vaughn Findley, ‘Turkey: Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity’, ch. 2 (forthcoming).

2 Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 160–78, pp. 205–11.

Sultans Selim III (1789–1807) and Mahmud II (1808–39) responded with reform programmes that opened the Ottoman reform era (1789–1922).

Selim's 'New Order' (Nizam-ı Cedid) aimed first at military reform. As in other states, military reform required more revenue, and more revenue required more efficient government overall. Facing that fact, Ottoman statesmen came to realise that a governmental system previously guided by custom had to be reconsidered as the object of rational planning and systematisation. Lacking precedents to follow, the resulting new programmes required plans, regulations and laws to guide them. There would be no Nizam-ı Cedid without *nizamnames* (regulations, literally 'writings about order'). The plans and regulations that defined Selim's New Order mark the point at which the Enlightenment's systematising spirit (*esprit de système*) appeared in Ottoman policy; Selim's decision to inaugurate permanent diplomatic representation in Europe (1793) furthered this rapprochement between Ottoman and European modes of thought. In Weberian terms, the perception that the New Order required planning and regulation marks the beginnings of the transition from 'traditional' towards 'rational-legal' authority. In Ottoman terms, finally, it was the sultan's command that gave the new regulations the force of law. The warlords who had wielded power by default during the period of decentralisation could not wield power by right. The sultan could do so, if he possessed sufficient strength of will, and the reassertion of his right meant centralisation and an end to warlordism.

In attempting to create new institutions while unable to abolish old ones, Selim III left himself open to attack by vested interests threatened by his reforms. His overthrow resulted from this fact. To avoid repeating Selim's mistake, Mahmud II prepared carefully. He neutralised provincial warlords where he could, although the biggest of them, Egypt's Mehmed Ali, eluded him. By 1826 Mahmud was strong enough to abolish the Janissaries, the once-famous infantry corps that had become undisciplined and ineffective to the point of being a liability. The fact that Sultan Mahmud's forces performed poorly against the Greek revolutionaries, while Mehmed Ali Paşa's Egyptian troops performed well, heightened the sense of urgency in Istanbul. The abolition of the Janissaries, the most dangerous vested interest opposing reform, made it possible for Mahmud to revive Selim's programme and go beyond it.<sup>3</sup> Beginning with a new army and reorganised support corps, Mahmud went on

3 Avigdor Levy, 'The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II' (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1968), pp. 101–14.

to found new schools, revive diplomatic representation, and rationalise civil and military institutions overall.

Ottoman statesmen under Selim and Mahmud realised that the empire could no longer defend its interests militarily without external aid. This realisation raised the importance of diplomacy and cemented the tie between defensive modernisation and reforms intended to appeal to European interests. Two measures from Mahmud's last years prove the extent of his attempts to align Ottoman and European practice. Dependent on British support in the last phase of his conflict with Egypt's Mehmed Ali Paşa, Mahmud concluded the Ottoman–British commercial treaty of 1838, which essentially introduced free trade. The treaty has often been interpreted as ruining Ottoman manufactures. In fact, the Ottomans' dependent integration into the world economy had already begun. Both Ottoman and British negotiators understood the treaty as an agreement aimed against the interests of Mehmed Ali, a rebel but still an Ottoman subject and thus bound by the treaty. If Liberal ideas were introduced in economics, they would have to be introduced in politics as well. The Gülhane decree of 1839, promulgated after Mahmud's death but prepared before it, took that step. The decree is usually understood as inaugurating equality among all the sultan's subjects, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, but that interpretation is not entirely accurate or complete.

### What was the Tanzimat?

Between Mahmud's death (1839) and Abdülhamid's accession (1876), no sultan dominated policy consistently. Selim and Mahmud's new elites filled the gap. Because defence depended on diplomacy, it was not the military but rather the civil elite, especially the diplomats, who became most influential. The centre of power shifted from the palace to the civil bureaucratic headquarters at the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli*). During the Tanzimat, it became common for the foreign minister to go on to serve as grand vezir. Dominating this combination of posts, Mustafa Reşid (1800–58), Keçecizade Fuad (1815–69) and Mehmed Emin Âli Paşas (1815–71) shaped the period. Their associates formed a revolving interministerial elite, rotating among ministries and provincial governorships.

Tanzimat policy represents a continuation and intensification of reform. Both the name *Tanzimat* and the term *nizam* ('order') had entered Turkish as loanwords from Arabic; and both terms derive from the same Arabic root, which denotes 'ordering'. A causative or intensive form of this root, *Tanzimat* implies the expansion or intensification of ordering or reform, and that was



exactly what happened during the Tanzimat. Ottoman policies during that period responded to emerging global modernity in both its Janus-like faces, the threatening aspect (separatist nationalism in the Balkans, imperialism in Asia and Africa) and the attractive aspect (the hope of overcoming Ottoman backwardness by emulating European progress). The Tanzimat was both a time of crises, which implied impending collapse, and of accelerating reforms, which signified renewal.

As greatly as government policy defined this period, the formation of new elites and the propagation of new ideas also slipped beyond government control. Here the most significant factor was the rise of the modern print media. As government policy moved further into realms not sanctioned by custom, critics found more to contest. Consequently, the rise of the print media was soon followed by that of a modern opposition intelligentsia, which used the media to appeal to the emergent reading public. Less conspicuously, a conservative current, appealing to propertied interests and grouped most noticeably around reformist religious movements, was also taking shape. The conservative trend gained momentum, particularly with the emergence from Ottoman Iraq of the Khalidiyya-Naqshbandiyya, founded by Shaykh Khalid al-Naqshbandi (1777–1826), known as the ‘renewer’ (*mujaddid*) of his century. The remainder of this chapter examines the Tanzimat more fully.

### Crisis and contraction

The period began and ended with the empire’s survival more threatened than at any other time in the nineteenth century. When Mahmud II died in 1839, he and Mehmed Ali were at war. The latter controlled Crete and Syria as well as Egypt, and had just defeated the Ottoman army inside Anatolia; the Ottoman fleet had also defected to Egypt. The European powers found the imminent prospect of Ottoman collapse so destabilising that they intervened in Istanbul’s favour. Mehmed Ali was pushed back, left as hereditary governor of Egypt, and deprived of his other territories. Egypt remained under nominal Ottoman sovereignty until 1914. Under Mehmed Ali’s successors, Egypt became increasingly both autonomous from Istanbul and economically dependent on Europe. Both cotton exports and the Suez Canal (1869) increased European investment and strategic interest in the country, setting the course that led the British to occupy Egypt in 1882.

Following the Egyptian crisis of 1840–1, the Ottoman Empire endured a series of local crises that expressed the growing politicisation of religious and ethnic differences among its subject populations. Crete and Lebanon sank into

crises of this type following their reversion from Egyptian to Ottoman rule. Cretan Christians wanted union with independent Greece, and the island's historical Christian–Muslim symbiosis dissipated into violence, leading to the revolt of 1866. In Lebanon, the old network of relationships that bridged differences of religion and class had already been destabilised under Egyptian rule in the 1830s. These relationships collapsed totally under restored Ottoman rule from the impact of both the Tanzimat reforms and the increased penetration by Europeans, especially missionaries, who created new religious differences and politicised old ones. Sectarian conflicts broke out in Lebanon in the 1840s, followed by class-based conflicts. Damascus lapsed into sectarian violence in the 1860s. The Lebanese crisis led the Ottomans, in agreement with major European powers, to introduce special regulations, under which Mount Lebanon would have a special administrative system, headed by a non-Lebanese Christian governor. This system brought security at the price of lastingly imprinting the new sectarianism on Lebanese politics.<sup>4</sup> In Damascus, the Ottomans banished the old elites who had failed to restrain the violence of 1860, thus facilitating the rise of a new local elite with interests in landholding and office-holding.<sup>5</sup>

In the Balkans, after Serbia won autonomy (1815) and Greece won independence (1830), separatist nationalism continued to spread. Bulgaria flourished economically under Ottoman rule, despite experiencing twelve minor insurrections between 1835 and 1876.<sup>6</sup> At first, the most pressing Balkan issue concerned the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Desiring unification, Romania became the only part of the Ottoman Empire to get caught up in the European revolutionary wave of 1848. Romanian nationalism was repressed then, but unification (1861) and independence (1878) were only questions of time. After 1848, the Ottomans also gave asylum to both Polish and Hungarian revolutionaries of 1848, whose contributions to Ottoman defence and culture proved significant, despite the resulting tensions in relations with Russia and Austria.<sup>7</sup>

4 Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace, 1861–1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); J. C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), vol. I, pp. 344–9.

5 Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 8–52.

6 Michael Palairt, *The Balkan Economies, c.1800–1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 129–35, 157–65.

7 İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun en uzun yüzyılı* (Istanbul: Hil, 1987), pp. 146, 192–3.

Balkan tensions did not produce a major war until 1877, but the same issues soon caused war over the Christian holy places. The crisis grew out of a dispute between Catholic and Orthodox clergy over the keys to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.<sup>8</sup> Such issues were not new; but the growing politicisation of religious difference made them less manageable than in the past, as did the European powers' competition to champion the interests of different religious communities. Claiming protectorship of Orthodoxy, Russia issued an ultimatum. In return for Ottoman promises of further egalitarian reforms, France and Britain declared war on Russia. The war was fought in the Balkans and the Crimea and became known as the Crimean War (1853–6). Further accelerating the Ottoman onrush into modernity, the war brought with it the huge casualties caused by new weapons, the improvements in medical care symbolised by Florence Nightingale's pioneering efforts to provide nursing care for the wounded and advanced communications in the form of both photograph and telegraph, which reached Istanbul during the war. At the war's end, the sultan issued his promised reform decree of 1856, discussed below; and the Treaty of Paris formally admitted the Ottoman Empire to the concert of Europe. The Ottoman Empire thus became the first non-Western state to conclude a treaty with the European powers on supposedly equal terms.<sup>9</sup> However, the treaty contained contradictory clauses, disclaiming interference in Ottoman affairs in one, while neutralising the Black Sea, internationalising control of the Danube and introducing European controls in Romania and Serbia in others. The Ottoman Empire did not lose territory in the war, but its sovereignty was further breached.

The territorial loss averted in 1856 occurred in the 1870s. Revolt broke out in Herzegovina in 1874 and spread to Bosnia, Montenegro and Bulgaria by 1876. The Ottoman government, having just suspended payment on its foreign debt, had to face this crisis without European support.<sup>10</sup> Ottoman efforts to contain the situation raised European outcries against massacres of Christians, even as counter-massacres in the Balkans began to flood Istanbul with Muslim refugees, whose plight Europeans ignored. In Istanbul, the political situation destabilised to the point that two sultans were deposed within three months, and Abdülhamid came to the throne as the third sultan to rule in 1876. At once

8 Paul Dumont, 'La période des Tanzîmât', in Robert Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 505–9.

9 Hurewitz, *Middle East and North Africa*, vol. I, pp. 319–22.

10 Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 217; François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II: le sultan calife (1876–1909)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 71–8.

a triumph of Ottoman reformism and a bid to ward off European interference, the Ottoman constitution was adopted (23 December 1876) and parliamentary elections were ordered.<sup>11</sup> No friend of constitutions, Russia declared war anyway, attacking in both the Balkans and eastern Anatolia. The Russo-Turkish War (1877–8) created the crisis conditions that enabled Abdülhamid to end both the bureaucratic hegemony of the Tanzimat and the First Constitutional Period (1876–8).

The Russo-Turkish War brought the empire closer to extinction than at any time since 1839. Europeans who knew nothing of the Tanzimat except the Eastern Question might have found it logical to dismiss the empire as ‘the sick man of Europe’. Only by looking inside does it become possible to form a different view.

### Major themes of reform

While reformist initiatives proliferated in this period to a degree that defies summary, they cohere around certain themes: legislation; education and elite formation; expansion of government; intercommunal relations; and the transformation of the political process. Late in the period, the reformist momentum grew, producing systematising measures of wide import. In 1867, Sultan Abdülaziz became the first sultan to tour Europe, with a large suite including foreign minister Fuad Paşa and Prince Abdülhamid. This trip may have helped to stimulate the far-reaching measures on provincial administration, education and the army that ensued between 1867 and 1871.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Legislation*

If de facto civil bureaucratic hegemony demarcated the Tanzimat chronologically, the main instrument of change was legislation.<sup>13</sup> In a sense, the Tanzimat was fundamentally a movement in legislation. In essays of the 1830s, for example, Sadık Rifat Paşa, then serving as Ottoman ambassador in Vienna, elaborated the connection between external and internal public law, between securing the empire’s admission into the European diplomatic system and maintaining a just internal order. European demands for internal reform in exchange for international support in 1839 and 1854 made the same point. Beginning

<sup>11</sup> Dumont, ‘Tanzîmât’, pp. 515–22; Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 352–61.

<sup>12</sup> Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, pp. 31–5.

<sup>13</sup> Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, pp. 179–80.

with the Nizam-ı Cedid, the connection between reform and the drafting of instructions, regulations and laws had impressed itself on Ottoman statesmen's awareness. The fact that instructions and laws took effect through the sultan's powers of decree made centralisation, reform and legislation interdependent. Whenever a given reform required implementation all over the empire, the necessity for clear orders and regulations became especially obvious.

Although they were only crests on an ever-gathering wave of regulation, the most important legal acts of the Tanzimat were the Gülhane decree of 1839, the reform decree of 1856 and the constitution of 1876. Opening the period, the Gülhane decree proved less of a westernizing measure than has commonly been assumed.<sup>14</sup> It called for reforms in taxation, military recruitment and judicial procedure; and it extended guarantees for life, honour and property to all subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim. It promised new laws to implement these reforms – a promise from which a flood of new laws flowed. The decree reflects British Liberal thinking in its denunciation of tax-farming and monopolies and in several specific guarantees. Yet the repeated references to promulgating *kavanin-i şer'iy*e, laws conformable to Islamic law (*şeriat*), to fulfil the decree's promises also reflected the Ottoman tradition of aligning state law (*kanun*, plural *kavanin*) with the *şeriat*. Although commonly so interpreted, the decree did not say that Muslim and non-Muslim are equal, which they are not under the *şeriat*. The decree did declare that the privileges it granted applied without exception to all subjects of the sultanate, both 'Muslims and members of other communities' ('ehl-i İslam ve milel-i saire'), as the state's law (*kanun*) could do. The provisions on taxation spoke of replacing old, exorbitant taxes with 'an appropriate tax' ('bir vergü-yi münasib'). The intention was to consolidate and reduce taxes; *vergü* was not a generic word for taxes, but the name of a specific new tax. The provisions on due judicial process, finally, had special significance for the ruling elites. Historically bearing the legal status of slaves to the sultan, they had been subject to his arbitrary punishment (*siyaset*) in a way that ordinary subjects were not. The decree repudiated such punishments. This provision gave the ruling elites a vested interest in keeping the decree in force, thereby making of the decree a milestone in the process by which *siyaset* acquired its modern meaning of 'politics'.

Although the Gülhane decree had not explicitly stated the equality of non-Muslims with Muslims, the Reform decree (*İslahat fermanı*) of 1856 did.<sup>15</sup> It

14 Ahmed Lutfi, *Tarih-i Lutfi* (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1302/1884–5), vol. VI, pp. 61–5; Suna Kili and A. Şeref Gözübüyük, *Türk anayasa metinleri, Senedi İttifaktan günümüze* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1985), pp. 11–13.

15 Kili and Gözübüyük, *Türk anayasa*, pp. 14–18.

enumerated measures to be enacted for the benefit 'without exception, of all my imperial subjects of every religion and sect'. Reaffirming historical communal privileges, the decree invited non-Muslims to form assemblies to reorganise their affairs. As a result, non-Muslim communities drew up communal regulations (*nizamname*), sometimes called 'constitutions', and formed representative bodies.<sup>16</sup> The decree liberalised the conditions for building and repairing non-Muslim religious buildings. It forbade language or practices that 'held some communities lower than others'. It proclaimed Ottoman subjects of all religions eligible for official appointment according to their ability, and opened civil and military schools to all. The decree extended the obligation of military service to non-Muslims but allowed for exemption upon payment of a substitution fee (*bedel*); buying exemption became the norm for non-Muslims, and the fee replaced the *cizye*, the tax that the *şeriat* required of non-Muslims. Court cases between parties from different communities were to be heard before mixed courts, although cases between co-religionists could still be heard in communal courts.

The third fundamental act of the period, the constitution of 1876, was a logical response both to the international situation and to the organic regulatory acts promulgated for various parts of the Ottoman polity. In the 1860s, in addition to those of the non-Muslim communities, organic statutes had defined special regimes for Lebanon and Crete; at the Ottoman peripheries, Tunisia had its constitution for a time in the 1860s, and Romania acquired one in 1866. With growing Ottoman awareness of European practice, organic regulation of parts of the imperial system heightened demands for a constitution for the whole.<sup>17</sup>

Hastily drawn up by a commission including *ulema*, military officers and civil officials, the constitution contained compromises and imprecisions. Yet it showed the extent to which ideals such as rule of law, guaranteed rights and equality had permeated Ottoman thinking. The articles were grouped in sections pertaining to the empire's territorial integrity; the sultanate; the subjects' rights and obligations; the ministers; the officials; the parliament; the courts; the provinces; and a final miscellany. The articles included provisions pregnant with future consequences. Article 7 left the sultan's prerogatives undefined, although it mentioned many of them; these included appointing

<sup>16</sup> Dumont, 'Tanzimât', pp. 497–500.

<sup>17</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 114–35; Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, pp. 295–97; Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 224–7.

and dismissing ministers, who would consequently have no collective responsibility. Enforcement of *şeriat* and *kanun* formed part of the imperial prerogative. The constitution itself became law only by imperial decree; the sultan's right to continue legislating by decree was nowhere restricted; and his freedom to veto laws passed in parliament, where the ministers retained most of the legislative initiative, was unchecked. Article 113, inserted at Abdülhamid's insistence, acknowledged the sultan's right under martial law to exile anyone on the basis of a police report identifying that person as a security risk.<sup>18</sup> Although martial law was not in force at the time, constitutionalist hero Midhat Paşa went into exile in 1876 as a victim of this provision.

If the acts of 1839, 1856, and 1876 formed the crests on the wave of legislation, much of the wave's mass consisted of new codes. An initial penal code (1840) was revised (1851) and replaced with a code of French origin (1858). Also French inspired were the codes of commerce (1850, 1863). When Âli Paşa proposed adapting the French civil code as well, the *ulema* resisted. Instead, a codification of *şeriat* law was undertaken under Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's direction and published as the *Mecelle* (1870–7). Also significant was the land law (*arazi kanunnamesi*) of 1858, which codified and systematised the historical Ottoman principles of state ownership over agricultural lands (*miri*). The law attempted to protect small cultivators (successfully or not, depending on local conditions), clarify titles and identify the responsible taxpayers.<sup>19</sup> Thousands more laws and regulations affected life in countless ways, adapting Ottoman to international practice in many cases, for example by prohibiting the slave trade.<sup>20</sup>

New courts were created to apply the codes, starting with commercial courts (1840), presided over by panels of judges named by the government. By the 1860s, a network of *nizami* courts had evolved to try cases under the new codes. As in the case of the regular (*nizami*) army, the adjective *nizami* (deriving from *nizam*, 'order') identifies the new institutions as products of the reforms. The *nizami* courts were organised hierarchically, with two levels of

18 Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 60–79; Davison, *Reform*, pp. 358–408; Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, pp. 68–71.

19 Donald Quataert, 'The Age of Reforms, 1812–1714', in Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 856–61; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, p. 137; Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu kentleri'nin sosyal ve ekonomik yapıları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), p. 283.

20 Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression, 1840–1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

appeal courts above the courts of first instance; in contrast, the *şeriat* courts lacked a formal appeals instance.

Many scholars have seen in the new codes and in the *nizami* courts many steps towards secularisation and breaches in the role of Islam in the Ottoman state. Yet this assessment overstates one issue and ignores another. In 1876, Abdülhamid's decree of promulgation still echoed the Gülhane decree's reference to 'laws conformable to the sharia' by affirming the constitution's conformity to the provisions of the *şeriat* (*ahkam-ı şer'î şerif*).<sup>21</sup> The *Mecelle* formed the clearest example of a major component of the new body of law derived from the *şeriat*. The land law of 1858 analogously provided the clearest case where traditional Ottoman *kanun* provided the source for new legislation. The fact that *ulema* continued to serve in the new courts, as in the new schools, moderated what might otherwise have been secularising reforms. However, as the empire gradually created the outlines of a modern, law-bound polity, which Turkish legists idealise as a 'law state' (*hukuk devleti*, compare the German ideal of the *Rechtsstaat*), another problem persisted. This consisted of the chasm between the ideal of a 'law state' and the authoritarianism that either deified the law without regard to its human consequences, or else used law and regulation instrumentally to extend the reach of a power that placed itself above the law.<sup>22</sup>

### *Elite formation and education*

The need for new elites can be gauged from the fact that the Ottomans created an entire new army after abolishing the Janissaries. The civil bureaucracy grew almost as dramatically, from roughly 2,000 scribes in service as of 1770–90 to the 35,000–70,000 civil officials serving at a time under Abdülhamid. The Ottoman Empire was still lightly administered compared to other states; yet this was rapid growth.<sup>23</sup>

With growth, disparities appeared in the extent to which different branches of service benefited from reform, and these differences aggravated inter-service rivalries. The elite formation efforts primarily benefited military officers and civil officials. However, even in those services, gaps opened between groups

21 Kili and Gözübüyük, *Türk anayasa*, pp. 29–30.

22 Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, pp. 76–80; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 163–5; Carter Vaughn Findley, 'Osmanlı siyasi düşüncesinde devlet ve hukuk: İnsan hakları mı, hukuk devleti mi?' *XII. [Onikinci] Türk Tarih Kongresi, Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), pp. 1195–1202.

23 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 22–3, 212–18.



with different qualifications. Civil officials differed in their degree of westernisation, mastery of French serving as the distinguishing trait. Military officers differed in being either 'school men' (*mektepli*), trained in the new academies, or 'regimentals' (*alaylı*), who rose through the ranks and were often illiterate.<sup>24</sup> These differences created significant tensions. Compared to the civil and military elites, the religious establishment lost influence. The *ulema* still carried weight as guardians of Islamic values, as masters of the old religious courts and schools, as part of the personnel for the analogous new state institutions, and as an interest group. Yet the reforms ended their historical dominance of justice and education and their control of the revenues from charitable foundations (*evkaf*). Here as throughout the Islamic world, the largest challenge to the *ulema* was that the intellectual impact of modernity was transforming Islam from the all-embracing cultural reality into one realm in the universe of knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Tanzimat educational policy was largely driven by goals of elite formation but gradually produced wider results. The *ulema*'s educational vested interests made the elementary *mektebs* (Qur'anic primary schools) and the *medreses* (higher religious schools) virtually untouchable. The architects of the new state schools reacted to this situation by taking a top-down approach to elite formation. They founded ostensible institutions of higher learning first and added broader outlines of a general system of schools later, with the consequence that many years passed before the new elite schools could perform up to level. Military engineering schools were founded early for the navy (1773) and the army (1793). Mahmud II created the military Medical School (1827) and the Military Academy (1834). Students were sent to Europe, and an Ottoman school briefly existed in Paris (1857–64). Systematic efforts to train civil officials began with the founding of the Translation Office (*Tercüme odası*) of the Sublime Porte in 1821; it was to train Muslims to replace the Greek translators whom the Ottomans had employed until the Greek Revolution.

With time, founding schools to train elites became part of a larger effort to create a network of government schools. The first new schools for civil officials became the foundations of the *rüşdiyye* schools (1839), which were upper elementary schools, intended to pick up where the Qur'anic *mekteb* left off and educate students to about the age of fourteen. Middle schools (*idadiye*) began to be founded in 1845, initially to prepare students for the military academy.

24 Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, pp. 97–102, 145–52; Dumont, 'Tanzîmât', pp. 478–81.

25 Cf. Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), p. 102.

The first lycée (*sultaniye*) opened in 1868. The most important effort to systematise education was the public education regulations of 1869 (*maarif-i umumiye nizamnamesi*). New teaching methods (*usul-ı cedit*), intended to achieve literacy more quickly than in the *mektebs*, were introduced as early as 1847 and came into general use around 1870, eventually spreading into Central Asia. There, these methods assumed such importance in the development of cultural modernism that the Central Asian modernists became known as *jadid-chilar* ('new-ists') because they championed this 'new method' pedagogy.<sup>26</sup> For the Ottomans, several of the new schools became particularly important in training civil officials, notably, the Galatasaray Lycée and the School of Civil Administration (Mülkiye Mektebi, founded in 1859, upgraded in 1876). Educating far more than the elites, the new schools propagated literacy and stimulated transformations in individual self-consciousness and bourgeois class formation among Ottoman Muslims by the 1870s.<sup>27</sup> The schools' importance for elite formation also included one unintended consequence. For if Ottoman sultans sought to train new elites to serve them personally, the ideas these men discovered at school led them to transfer their loyalty from the sultan to their own ideal of the state, a fact with consequences enduring to the present.<sup>28</sup>

#### *Governmental expansion*

The role of government expanded vastly during the Tanzimat. In Istanbul, the expansion was physically obvious. Moving to the new, oversized Dolmabahçe palace, the imperial household had its own secretariat (*mabeyn*) to communicate with the rest of the government. The civil, military and religious services had their respective headquarters at the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Âli*), Ministry of War (*Bab-ı Seraskeri*), and the office of the *şeyhülislâm* (*Bab-ı Meşihat*). By 1871, the Sublime Porte included the offices of the grand vezir and the council of ministers, the foreign and interior ministries, and the most important conciliar bodies. Outside the Sublime Porte the civil bureaucracy also staffed the ministries of finance, charitable foundations (*evkaf*), education, trade and agriculture, customs, and land registry.<sup>29</sup>

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 89–107, 160–72.

27 Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 131–73.

28 Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 45–6.

29 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 167–90; Coşkun Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi* (Istanbul: Küre, 2001), pp. 35–76; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 185–90.

Along with the expansion of formal bureaucratic organisations, an unprecedented proliferation of councils (*meclis*) occurred. These are often interpreted as steps towards the creation of representative government. In the provincial administrative councils, the inclusion of elected members and local religious leaders supports that interpretation. However, comparison with other administrative systems also shows another dynamic at work. Historically, boards or councils served as ways either to expand the reach of an inadequately staffed bureaucracy or to meet needs for which there was not yet a permanent agency. In fact, the Ottoman Council on Trade and Agriculture (1838) evolved into a ministry (1871), and the Council of Judicial Ordinances evolved into the Ministry of Justice soon after, among many other examples.

With its expansion, government intruded increasingly into Ottomans' lives. For example, each stage in egalitarian reform produced effects throughout Ottoman society. The local councils brought together officials and local representatives to implement policies about which they often disagreed. Taxation and financial administration were repeatedly reformed. Censuses and surveys of households and income sources were carried out. Istanbulites were exempt from both conscription and taxation; consequently provincials bore the tax burden, and provincial Muslim males bore that of military service. The regulations of 1869 defined their military obligation as four years of active duty, six years of reserve service and eight years in the home guard. At that time, about 210,000 men served in the regular (*nizami*) army, 190,000 in the reserves (*redif*) and 300,000 in the home guard (*mustahfizan*). The 1843 division of the empire into five military zones with an army based in each had created new sites of interaction between the populace and the military. New schools created puzzling new educational choices. New courts appeared, and new laws affected matters as pervasively important as land tenure. Mailing letters (1840), sending telegrams (1855), and travelling by steamship (about 1850) all became possible, largely by government initiative. Major cities acquired such innovations as gas street lights, regulations on construction, new firefighting apparatus and the beginnings of public transport. Modern government began to acquire monumental form with the building of new provincial government headquarters, schools, courts, police stations and docks.<sup>30</sup>

30 Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 254–323, 360–71; Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi*, pp. 24–33; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, pp. 115–32; Dumont, 'Tanzimât', pp. 481–3; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 91–5.

*Provincial administration*

The changes in Istanbul affected the provinces profoundly. For much of the period, reforms were introduced into the provinces gradually, either as pilot projects or as solutions to local crises, as in Lebanon. Not until 1864–71 were provincial administration regulations (*vilayet nizamnamesi*) issued for general application. Despite this gradualism, local administrative reform produced significant impacts throughout the period.

Under the Gülhane decree, the first goal in the provinces was to eliminate tax-farming (*iltizam*) and appoint salaried agents (*muhassıl*) to collect taxes directly. The new collectors' roles were more extensive than their title implied. They were supposed to explain the Tanzimat and the equality of all subjects, set up councils, collect taxes, and register taxpayers and their property. The councils were to bring together officials with representatives of the local populace to discuss tax apportionment and other issues. The collectors were expected to raise what they could from the populace and forward it to Istanbul to finance the reforms. In the long run, replacing many old exactions with the consolidated tax (*vergü*) announced at Gülhane would produce a significant tax cut for tax-payers. The local administrative council (*meclis-i idare*) was to include the collector and his assistants, the local religious leaders and four to six elected members. Inspection missions were also sent out along three routes into the Ottoman Balkans and four routes into Anatolia in 1840. As of 1841, fifty *muhassıls* were serving in ten provinces extending from central Anatolia to Bulgaria, Macedonia and the Aegean islands.<sup>31</sup> However, direct revenue collection was abandoned as early as 1842. The costs of replacing tax-farmers with salaried collectors exceeded the revenues collected in many places. The indirect electoral system made it easy for notables who had oppressed the peasants in the past to gain election to the new councils. Orthodox leaders reported to the Patriarch in Istanbul that that they were ignored or scorned in the councils, and he complained to the Sublime Porte. Tax revolts occurred in a number of places. Tax-farming made a comeback, with some exceptions, surviving as long as the empire lasted.

Yet elements of the programme survived. Local councils endured and multiplied. Needed to assess the consolidated tax, the surveys of households and income sources, launched in 1840, were revised and implemented in 1845 on such a scale that over 17,000 registers survive. Replacing many old extraordinary (*örfi*) taxes, but not the *şeriat*-mandated taxes like the tithe (*öşür*) and the

31 Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi*, pp. 41–7, 101–30, 285–300; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 208–18.

tax on non-Muslims (*cizye*), the consolidated tax (*vergi*) survived. For some years longer, this tax was not farmed out but was collected at the quarter or village level by the headman (*muhtar*) and the imam or priest. Dissatisfaction with the new tax led to a project in 1860 to systematise taxation of real property and income on a proportional basis. However, this endeavour required yet another survey and was consequently implemented only in places where that survey could be carried out.<sup>32</sup>

After the abolition of the new tax collectors (*muhasıl*) in 1842, the provincial administration system began to assume the outlines that would be systematised in the regulations of 1864–71. In 1842, the government revised the hierarchy of administrative districts in regions where the Tanzimat had been introduced, and started to appoint civil officials to serve as chief administrative officers at three levels: province (*eyalet*), district (*sancak*), and sub-district (*kaza*).<sup>33</sup> These officials had supporting staffs and, at least at the higher levels, administrative councils. In 1845, representatives from all the provinces were invited to Istanbul for a general council. After it dispersed, temporary ‘development councils’ (*imar meclisleri*) were set up in the different provinces. The expansion of civil officialdom into provincial administration did more than anything else to increase its numbers. Yet widespread complaints about abuses showed how inadequate the supply of qualified personnel was and how wide a gap opened between reformist ideals and realities on the ground. Separatist movements and foreign intervention expanded such gaps into threats to the unity and survival of the empire. While complaints about excessive taxation were common, Bulgarian evidence indicates that taxes were ‘not oppressive by European standards of the day’.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, under the special regime set up in Lebanon, taxes remained ‘artificially low’, even while the local road network was increased in length thirtyfold. One of the weaknesses of Tanzimat administration may have been that taxation was too lenient to finance the promised reforms.

In the early 1860s, contending with crises anywhere from Bosnia to the Hijaz, the government revised and generalised its provincial administrative system. Foreigners regarded the provincial administration laws of 1864 and 1871 as triumphs of French influence. Whatever the Ottoman reformers drew from France, they drew more from their own experience since 1842, not to speak

32 Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi*, pp. 50–6, 130–40; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 212–18, 343–8.

33 Çadırcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 22–3, 199–202, 208–48.

34 Tevfik Güran, 19. *Yüzyıl Osmanlı tarımı üzerine araştırmalar* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), pp. 174, 207; Palairot, *Balkan Economies*, p. 48; Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 20–1.

of earlier precedents. In particular, Midhat Paşa had conducted an influential experiment in administrative improvement since 1861 as governor of Niş. The 1864 provincial administration law was intended for application in a specially created Danube province with Midhat as governor; his 1869 appointment as governor of Baghdad probably helped to spread the implementation of these policies.<sup>35</sup> The law was revised in 1867 with a few modifications for application in a number of provinces, the Ottoman term for which was changed from *eyalet* to *vilayet*. Further revised, the law was published for general application in 1871 and remained in effect until 1913. By 1876, twenty-seven provinces had been organised under the 1871 law.

The 1871 provincial administration law divided the hierarchy of districts into four levels. In descending order, the levels (and their chief administrators) were the *vilayet* (*vali*), *sancak* or *liva* (*mutasarrıf*), *kaza* (*kaymakam*), and *nahiye* (*müdü*). The four levels were one reason why people who did not know much about Ottoman precedents might think that the law was imitative of the four-tiered French system of local administration. The law assigned the governors many functions and an enlarged staff, many of whom had specialised functions corresponding to those of specific ministries in Istanbul. There were to be administrative councils at each of the top three levels. The councils were to include elected members, Muslim and non-Muslim in equal numbers, as well as official members. In addition, a general council (*meclis-i umumi*) was to bring together representatives of all the districts in the province once a year for a meeting to discuss development issues of province-wide interest. Other provisions concerned the *nizami* courts, as well as the municipal institutions for provincial cities. Special commissions might also be set up for purposes such as refugee settlement. Dissatisfactions with the 1871 law quickly appeared. Already in the short-lived Ottoman parliament of 1877–8, a new provincial administration passed the lower house but not the upper. However, the 1871 law survived until 1913.<sup>36</sup>

### *Intercommunal relations*

Modernising the empire required holding it together and promoting cohesion among its peoples. The Tanzimat included seemingly contradictory attempts

35 Meir Litvak, *Shi'i Scholars of Nineteenth-century Iraq: The 'Ulama' of Najaf and Karbala'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 157–60.

36 Çadırıcı, *Tanzimat döneminde Anadolu*, pp. 249–78; Carter Vaughn Findley, 'The evolution of the system of provincial administration as viewed from the center', in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1986), pp. 3–29; Davison, *Reform*, pp. 136–71.

to achieve this goal. The Gülhane decree granted individual rights with implied equality. The Reform decree of 1856 affirmed religious equality while confirming non-Muslims' traditional communal privileges. The 1856 decree also proclaimed the goal of strengthening the 'heartfelt bonds of patriotism' ('revabit-i kalbiye-i vatandaşî') that united all the sultan's subjects.

Simultaneously optimising equality at the individual, communal and empire-wide levels would prove more than difficult. Yet the struggle to reconcile the rights of the individual, the community and the totality has proven central to the development of modern politics around the world. The Tanzimat reformers faced their version of this problem at a time when identity and difference were becoming politicised in new ways. The concessions to non-Muslims offended conservative Muslims, who resented being deprived of the superior status that the *şeriat* assigned them. Some disturbances of the Tanzimat years, as in Syria and Lebanon, expressed such feelings. Nonetheless, the non-Muslim communities set about reorganising their affairs, and the intelligentsia set about promoting a new, inclusive concept of egalitarian Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*) as an antidote to separatism.

The reorganisation of non-Muslim communal affairs responded to several important issues. One, continuing from preceding periods, was the lengthening list of non-Muslim religious communities seeking official recognition as *millets*. Another issue was the corruption and oppression that prevailed particularly inside the older *millets*. Both the Greek Orthodox and Armenian *millets* were 'corrupt machines of business and politics, manipulated for the advantage of the hierarchies'.<sup>37</sup> At times, both issues interacted. In 1850, Armenian converts to Protestantism, still numbering only a few thousand, gained recognition as the Protestant *millet*. Governed by a bishop with both lay and religious councils, the Protestant organisation provided a model for other communities. The Protestant lay leaders' significant role was especially demanded elsewhere as a corrective to clerical dominance.

Of the historically recognized *millets*, new regulations were approved for the Greek Orthodox (1860–2), Armenians (1863) and Jews (1864). An empire inside the empire, the Orthodox church combined ethnically diverse flocks with a heavily Greek hierarchy and was vulnerable to nationalism for the same reason that the Ottoman Empire was. The result was mounting demands for autocephalism (independently headed, national Orthodox churches) in Bulgaria (1870) and Romania (1885).

<sup>37</sup> Davison, *Reform*, p. 118.

The reorganisation of the non-Muslim religious communities had several important consequences. The drafting of communal regulations (*nizamname*) – sometimes referred to as constitutions – for the non-Muslim communities helped to raise Ottoman constitutionalists’ expectations. Progressive Armenians who contributed to their communal reform advocated a constitution for the empire, and one of them, Krikor Odian, served on the commission that drafted it.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, while reinforcing Ottoman solidarity and creating conditions for specific communities to flourish were philosophically reconcilable, under Ottoman conditions communal reform could not be carried out without reinforcing separatism and thus undermining Ottomanism. Inasmuch as the religious differences basic to *millet* reform seldom matched the ethnic differences basic to modern nationalism, variable and unpredictable consequences ensued, as the Greek Orthodox and Armenian cases illustrate. Among Ottoman religious minorities, only to the Jews were ideas of nationalism or separatism still foreign in this period.

As the communal reforms progressed, the Tanzimat statesmen attempted to foster the new ‘heartfelt patriotic bond’ to hold all Ottoman subjects together. This formed part of a larger effort among Ottoman intellectuals to propagate new political concepts and explain them by redefining old terms. The word *vatan*, originally used to refer to one’s ‘country’ in the localised sense of ‘homeplace’ or the like, had begun to be readapted to mean ‘fatherland’, so recapitulating the evolution of the French term *pays* and its counterparts in other languages. In official usage, the wording of the Gülhane decree connected military recruitment with the defence of the *vatan*. In 1850, the district governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Jerusalem appealed to non-Muslims to join Muslims in aiding the poor and old because all were ‘brothers in the fatherland’ (*ikhwān fī ‘l-waṭan*).<sup>39</sup> The Arabic root from which the term *millet* derived also provided material for the new conceptual vocabulary. The Ottoman usage of the term *millet* to refer to a religious community is illustrated above: *Rum milleti*, the ‘Orthodox millet’, comprised all Greek Orthodox Christians, including native speakers of Arabic, Bulgarian or Romanian, as well as Greek. Yet as ethnicity gained in salience compared to religious identity, some Ottomans began to use the term *millet* to translate the French *nation*.<sup>40</sup> With time, Ottomans adopted

38 Ibid., pp. 120–35; Devereux, *First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, p. 259.

39 Lutfi, *Tarih*, vol. VI, p. 62; Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 176.

40 Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 189, 273–4, 327–9.



the related terms *milli* to mean 'national' and *milliyet* to mean 'nationality'. The continual adaptive reuse of old terms to express new concepts provided one sign of a revolutionary transformation that was starting to occur in the way meanings were produced and conveyed.

The new 'patriotic bond' was intended to take the form of a redefined Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*). Historically, the members of the sultan's ruling elite had been the only people referred to as *Osmanlı*. Equality meant extending that identity to rulers and subjects alike. To consolidate the affective bond among all Ottoman subjects, the 1856 reform decree opened government employment and the elite civil and military schools to all and expanded non-Muslims' rights in the new secular (*nizami*) courts. The employment of non-Muslims in some civil administrative departments attests to the seriousness with which the elites took this policy. In addition, the reference to 'heartfelt patriotism' implicitly recognised the need to infuse the Ottoman ideal with emotional fire. That would become the task of a new form of Ottoman political opposition. Under different circumstances, the Ottoman attempt to reconcile individual, communal and all-inclusive rights and identities might have worked as well as the construction of British nationality had earlier. In its own day, it worked about as well as the attempt to create an 'imperial nationalism' did in Austria-Hungary.<sup>41</sup>

### *Transformation of the political process*

In 1839, political participation was still officially limited to the ruling elites – an interpretation that ignored a rich history of negotiation and resistance by the sultan's subjects. Moreover, while the empire clearly had administrative institutions, it had few or no organised political institutions distinct from them, in the way that modern states have parliaments distinct from their bureaucracies. The ruling elites and the Ottoman intelligentsia were also still virtually identical. What served as politics took the form of factional rivalries, which revolved around personalities more than policies. Great men formed household-based factions and patronage networks. Factional leaders then vied with one another to place their supporters in strategic positions, win the sultan's favour, and discredit their rivals in his eyes. The principle of official slavery made factional politics into a high-stakes game. The loser stood to lose life and fortune; his followers risked their offices, if not their necks.

The legal reforms of the late 1830s increased the security of high office-holding, enabling Mustafa Reşid, Fuad and Âli Paşas to remain at the top far

<sup>41</sup> Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, p. 90.

longer than would have been possible before. At the same time, the political game was changing all around them. Innovative reform stimulated debate over policy alternatives, and politics started to revolve around ideas, not just personalities. For conservatives, the manipulation of the sultan's decree power to sanction policies crafted by his officials heightened the level of controversy, inasmuch as the power that civil bureaucrats wielded in fact belonged to the sultan by right. Under the circumstances, it was only a question of time until a new form of political opposition would emerge among the elites.

Cultural change contributed significantly to this development. Selim III had been a major figure in traditional forms of poetical and musical production, not only as patron but also as poet and composer. In contrast, his successors set standards in the westernisation of tastes. No subsequent sultan rated mention as a poet, the premier form of literary creativity.<sup>42</sup> What connected poetry to politics was the essential role that literary production, especially poetry writing, played in the old factional politics. Historically, Ottoman intellectuals all identified as poets. Those who could not excel at poetry had to find some other way to make a living; employment in a government office was the usual solution.<sup>43</sup> However talented the writer, the route to material reward was through patronage. Except for close relatives, the classic way to form a career-launching connection (*intisab*) to a great man was to display one's talent in verse, preferably in a praise poem. If praising the great man failed, the alternate route to material reward was satire, which might elicit a valuable gift from the victim as an inducement to desist.

While these patterns survived into the Tanzimat, seismic shifts occurred in the context surrounding them. The sultans had been the biggest patrons, and the decline of palace patronage struck a major blow to artists and writers. At the same time, new media of communication, new ideas about language and literary genres, and new forms of individual subjectivity and class formation implied opportunities for writers prepared to address a new audience. During the Tanzimat, Ottoman 'print capitalism' emerged – not just printing, but everything that accompanied the advent of the print media and the bourgeois reading public. The consequences proved revolutionary, both in the short term for Tanzimat politics and in the long term for late Ottoman and modern Turkish culture.

42 Nihâd Sâmi Banarlı, *Resimli Türk edebiyâtı târihi* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim, 1987), vol. II, pp. 748–9, 770–1 and *passim* on Selim III; the index mentions no subsequent sultan.

43 Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Son asır Türk şairler* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim, 1969), biographical encyclopedia about 'poets' and thus incidentally about bureaucrats.

This cultural transformation began obscurely. The first privately owned Ottoman-language newspaper, the *Ceride-i Havadis* (1840), had an English proprietor, William Churchill, but Turkish writers. The first Turkish-owned non-official newspaper was Yusuf Agah's *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (1860). As other newspapers followed, the Ottoman-language press flowered in the 1860s. The first modern-style opposition movement among Ottoman intellectuals, the Young Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlılar*), also emerged.<sup>44</sup> Although they were young men who could have enjoyed the leading statesmen's patronage, the Young Ottomans' responsiveness to the new ideas and media emboldened them to defy authority in devotion to their ideals. They formed a 'patriotic alliance' (1865) to work for constitutional government. Fortune favoured them with a new kind of patron, Mustafa Fazıl Paşa. A rich, alienated member of Egypt's Mehmed Ali dynasty, he invited them to Paris. There, he bankrolled their oppositional activities, including newspapers published beyond the Ottoman censors' reach. The Young Ottomans thus became the first Ottoman intellectuals to go into foreign exile voluntarily rather than compromise their ideals.

Historians tend to view the Young Ottomans as a political movement and emphasise their political ideas. Yet they neither created a party, nor organised the masses, nor fomented a revolution; and their ideas ranged across the spectrum of nineteenth-century modernity. They used their knowledge to critique the Tanzimat and offer their readers a new vision of the world. Their writings overall identify them as cultural nationalists, who strove to create a new Ottoman culture that would be modern without losing its identity in westernisation. Their reputation as heroes of constitutionalism does, however, derive from their political contributions. Compared to the Tanzimat statesmen, the Young Ottomans had a deeper appreciation of not only European but also Islamic thought. In using Islamic terms to convey pivotal ideas of liberal political theory, they not only recycled old terms to convey new ideas, they also adapted the Islamic jurisprudential method of reasoning by analogy (*kiyas*) so as to gauge whether specific reforms were Islamically justifiable. The Young Ottomans' most innovative literary talent, Namık Kemal, used reasoning by analogy to articulate numerous positions later common among Islamic modernists. He justified representative government by citing the Qur'anic injunction to 'consult about affairs' ('*wa shāwirhum fī 'l-amri*'). He legitimised responsible government and popular sovereignty through a contractual interpretation of the *biat* (*bay'a* in Arabic) or oath of loyalty originally pledged at the accession of a new caliph. He identified the European ideal

44 Mardin, *Genesis*, pp. 10–56; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 212–18.

of rule of law with the *şeriat* in Islam.<sup>45</sup> Discussion of some of his literary works will show more fully how his writings reflected the socio-cultural transformations of the times and extended beyond constitutionalism to a wider-ranging attempt to construct an Ottoman culture of modernity.

### Socio-economic change

Although the Tanzimat ended with state bankruptcy, this was a period of significant socio-economic changes. Government revenues remained inadequate to support the reformist policies.<sup>46</sup> Expenditures also lacked effective controls, especially at the palace.<sup>47</sup> On the positive side, Mahmud II's measures to reduce warlordism improved rural security and thus stimulated production. The 1844 coinage reform ended the worst period of monetary debasements in Ottoman history (1770–1840). The bimetallic standard of 1844 lasted with modifications until 1922, although revenue shortages led the government to issue paper money (*kaime*, 1840–62). It depreciated badly, and later issues met the same fate. During the Crimean War the government also began to contract foreign loans. Mismanagement of the foreign debt led to state bankruptcy by 1875. Modern banking institutions emerged in this period, most notably the Ottoman Imperial Bank (1863). Although owned by British and French interests, it served as a virtual state bank in Istanbul.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the government's difficulties, trade and agriculture expanded. The value of both exports and imports roughly quintupled during the Tanzimat. The Ottomans exported mostly agrarian products and carpets; they imported mostly industrial products and some colonial goods such as sugar and spices. The empire partially offset its negative trade balance with Great Britain by grain exports to Italy and France and tribute payments from Egypt.<sup>49</sup> Foreign trade is better documented than internal; however, Ottoman internal trade accounted for probably three-fourths of all trade and also grew in this period.<sup>50</sup>

Ottoman agriculture also grew despite chronic inefficiencies. Abundant land but inadequate labour and capital characterised the agricultural sector.

45 Namık Kemal, *Makalat-ı edebiye ve siyasiye* (Istanbul: Selanik Matbaası, 1327/1911), pp. 165–75 ('Wa-Shawirhum fi'l-Amri'); Mardin, *Genesis*, pp. 287–323; Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi*, pp. 177–215.

46 Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun*, p. 178.

47 Çakır, *Tanzimat dönemi Osmanlı maliyesi*, pp. 55–76.

48 Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Imperial Bank* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Historical Research Centre, 1999).

49 Pamuk, *Monetary History*, p. 220; Palairot, *Balkan Economies*, pp. 42–3.

50 İnalcık and Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 834–41.

The high costs of land transport constrained production by making it unprofitable to ship crops very far for sale. With regional exceptions, the average size of landholdings therefore remained small. However, several factors stimulated agriculture: the end of warlordism; the abolition of fixed-price government purchases (*miri mübaya*) under the free-trade treaties' anti-monopoly provisions; the clarification of titles under the 1858 land law; and the resettlement of Muslim refugees on vacant lands. As a result, while total government revenues nearly tripled from 1848 to 1876, the tithes on agricultural produce (*öşür*) nearly quadrupled.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the impact of imported industrial goods on the Ottoman guilds, Ottoman manufacturing also adapted and grew. The Bulgarian upland towns achieved a rural industrial renaissance by producing woollens and other textiles for the Ottoman internal market. 'There was no question whether native cloth could compete against imports – it was so competitive on the Ottoman market that European goods were largely restricted to the fashion trade.'<sup>52</sup> By contrast, the Bulgarian economy would regress after independence (1878). Nablus in Palestine offers another example of growth, based in this case on growing olives and making soap from the oil. During the Tanzimat, the number of soap factories at Nablus tripled, and their production quadrupled. Thus, 'an ancient manufacturing sector in a small interior city managed to grow and prosper without the introduction of new technology, the development of new techniques, the opening of new markets, or dependence on foreign investment capital'.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the most successful manufactured exports were carpets. Ottoman carpet exports increased seven- or eight-fold in value from 1850 to 1914.<sup>54</sup>

Significant social development accompanied economic change. Systematic census data only exists for later periods. Estimates for 1872 suggest that the empire's population may have been as high as 40 million for all territories (including Egypt and semi-independent Balkan territories), or 23 million for the provinces directly ruled from Istanbul. Of those 23 million, nearly 9 million lived in Europe, and 14 million lived in Asia. Non-Muslims outnumbered Muslims by about five to four in the directly ruled European provinces; in the

51 Güran, *Osmanlı tarımı*, p. 58.

52 Palairot, *Balkan Economies*, p. 72.

53 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, pp. 182–232 (quotation from p. 232); Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 28–9, 37.

54 Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 134–60.

Asian provinces, Muslims outnumbered non-Muslims by over four to one.<sup>55</sup> This was a population in flux in many ways. Ottoman cities experienced strong growth. Between 1840 and 1890, Istanbul grew in population from 400,000 to about 900,000; İzmir grew from 110,000 to 200,000; Beirut grew from about 10,000 to over 100,000.<sup>56</sup> Rural populations were also in flux. Each stage of Russian expansion into the Caucasus and Black Sea region sent waves of Muslim refugees into Ottoman territory, both Muslim Turks and non-Turkish Muslims (Circassians, Abkhazians, Chechens). Loss of Ottoman sovereignty in Balkan territories also led to similar flows. Annual numbers of migrants numbered in the hundreds of thousands from 1854 on, rising to 400,000 in 1864.<sup>57</sup>

Qualitative social changes transformed individual subjectivity and class formation. Although they rightly felt themselves behind the non-Muslim minorities in forming a commercial middle class, Ottoman Muslims formed elements of a bourgeoisie. Its segments were endowed with capital that was either intellectual (civil officials, military officers, writers) or economic (merchants, landowners). With educational reform and expanding literacy, the modernist intelligentsia found its forum in the emerging print media. With the appearance of state schools for girls (1859) and women teachers (1870) and the first Ottoman women's magazine (*Terakki*, 1868) Ottoman Muslim women experienced the same changes.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, culturally conservative Ottoman Muslims, who generally included the merchants and landowners, found their major forum in religious movements. While such movements were many and diverse, the most influential of the era took the form of the reformist Khalidiyya-Naqshbandiyya movement.<sup>59</sup> The Naqshbandis' emphasis on political engagement led them normally to support the state, and their strict *şeriat* observance won them adherents among the *ulema*. The Khalidiyya-Naqshbandiyya and its offshoots achieved exceptional influence, continuing to the present. In time, Ottoman Muslims also created an Islamic print culture, but that essentially occurred after the Tanzimat. Symbolised by the institutions, sociabilities and practices surrounding Ottoman print culture, on the one hand, and the Khalidiyya, on the other hand, two great currents of change were emerging to

55 Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 26, 117.

56 Dumont, 'Tanzimât', p. 487; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-century Beirut* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 2, 28–60.

57 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), pp. 23–58.

58 Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı kadın hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis, 1994), pp. 22–5.

59 Sean Ezra Foley, 'Shaykh Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya', Ph.D. thesis, Georgetown University (2005).

shape Ottoman approaches to modernity. The current associated with the print media and the bureaucratic intelligentsia included exponents of disruptive change and rapid modernisation. The current associated with propertied Muslims and with the religious movements favoured an adaptive approach towards modernity. Most Ottoman Muslims probably sympathised with both movements, unless forced to choose. In later periods, the two trends differentiated more sharply but also interacted dialectically to shape the Turks' future.

### Cultural horizons

Namık Kemal (1840–88) epitomises the widened cultural horizons that accompanied these social changes better than any other writer. He is commonly remembered for reinvesting old terms with new meanings to convey patriotic ideals, but his creativity enabled him to go far beyond changing the use of words. He also transformed old literary forms and pioneered new ones.

His best-known poem, on liberty, uses the conventional forms for a praise poem (*kaside*) in a new, electrifying way.<sup>60</sup> Past poets had written *kasides* to flatter a patron and gain favours. Among several formulaic elements, a *kaside* had to include a *medhiye* praising the patron, a *fahriye* displaying the poet's brilliance and a wish or prayer (*dua*). Usually, the poet includes his own name near the end of the *medhiye*. Unconventionally, Namık Kemal made liberty the subject throughout. In his *medhiye*, he spoke for all men of zeal (*erbab-ı himmet*), using plural, implicitly other-oriented terms; he does not mention his own name but rather that of 'liberty'. In his *fahriye*, he spoke for himself, using mostly first-person, self-referential terms. The two sections summoned both poet and audience not to praise liberty but to defend it. Kemal's wish was that God preserve liberty from adversity.

Realising that modern theatre could reach a broader audience than the reading public, Namık Kemal helped launch modern Turkish theatre with another work, *Vatan yahud Silistre* ('Fatherland, or Silistria', 1873).<sup>61</sup> The play caused demonstrations, which provoked the government to exile the Young Ottomans, including Namık Kemal, and censor the theatre. The play also exposed a fundamental contradiction in the Tanzimat's egalitarian Ottomanism, namely, that the primary motivator to sacrifice for the fatherland was Islam. The melodramatic plot combines mistaken identity with the theme of the heroine disguised as a soldier who follows her beloved into battle. After

60 Önder Göçgün, *Namık Kemal'in şairliği ve bütün şiirleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1999), pp. 7–10.

61 Namık Kemal, *Vatan yahud Silistre* (Istanbul [?]: n. p., 1307/1891–2).

the daring raid in which they blow up the enemy's munitions, the heroine, Zekiye, also discovers that their commanding officer is her long-lost father. Emerging from disguise and resuming Islamic dress, she reunites with her father and her hero, Islam Bey. Islamic gender norms had to be violated to get the story going – in the implausible opening scene, Islam Bey leaps in through the heroine's window. In the happy ending, those norms are restored, as the characters wish long life to the sultan and celebrate their good fortune, *devlet*, the same term used by extension to mean 'state'. The names of both heroine ('Miss Intelligent') and hero ('Mr Islam') are obviously significant; his stands out more in that, unlike hers, it is not in common use as a person's name. The play is in simple language and in prose, except for two patriotic songs. However, it is full of passages in repetitive, chant-like forms conducive to impassioned declamation. The play presents the war-like face of nationalism in heroic terms, leaving later generations to learn how painful it could be to fulfil these expectations in a region where Islam did not motivate everyone to fight for an Ottoman future.

## Conclusion

Although Ottoman defensive modernisation had begun fifty years earlier, reform accelerated during the Tanzimat and affected society pervasively. Even as recurrent crises threatened the superstructure of multinational empire, at its core, state, economy, society and culture all displayed great dynamism in this period. The Tanzimat reforms produced new legislation, programmes, institutions and elites. Statesmen and intellectuals strove to hold Ottoman society together by redefining Ottoman identity and guaranteeing rights at the individual, communal and empire-wide levels. The forces of socio-cultural change proved greater than the government could contain in the case not only of Balkan separatists but also of the competing trends that emerged among Ottoman Muslims. The rise of print culture – and all that was associated with it – enabled the bureaucratic intelligentsia to develop into champions of rapid, disruptive change. More conservative Muslims, stimulated particularly by the Khalidiyya-Naqshbandiyya, favoured a guarded adaptation to changing times. Economic and demographic change supported the emergence and dialectical interaction of these trends. As of 1876, political revolution was still a generation away, but a cultural revolution had already started with the new media, and the brief shining moment of the First Constitutional Period (1876–8) was about to occur.



## The reign of Abdülhamid II

BENJAMIN C. FORTNA

### Introduction

The place occupied by Sultan Abdülhamid II in late Ottoman and Turkish history is as important as it is controversial. As the only reign in the late Ottoman period to be known by the name of its sultan, the ‘Hamidian’ period (1876–1908) stands out among the other eras of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Turkish history. Opinions of Abdülhamid’s legacy reveal a striking degree of contradiction; some authors have criticised the sultan for being ‘undemocratic’ and authoritarian, while others have lionised him as ‘democratic’ and a builder of consensus; he has been both vilified as the ‘red sultan’ and lauded as the ‘last’ or ‘great sultan’. Debate over his place in history continues today, especially in Turkey where it has been the focus of a fascinating and ongoing re-evaluation. Even the subsequent fate of the sultan’s library at Yıldız palace became a subject of controversy, with staunch Kemalists attempting to disperse its collections so as to remove ‘an embarrassing monument to Abdülhamid’s memory’.<sup>1</sup> Whether Abdülhamid is vilified as a reactionary despot or lauded as a key moderniser of the Ottoman Empire and the last defender of Islam from the encroachments of the West, his reign was crucial to many critical developments affecting Turkey and the modern Middle East.

Given the importance of Abdülhamid’s reign, it is hardly surprising that a vast literature has developed around it. Beginning while he was still on the throne, the stream of writings has been joined by a number of other sources to produce a veritable flood. Much of the result, particularly that produced after his downfall, has been quite negative in its assessment. During the Second Constitutional or ‘Young Turk’ Period (1908–18), and especially the early decades of the Turkish Republic, historians tended to be extremely critical of his reign, an unsurprising stance given that the strident secularism of the era

<sup>1</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 169.

was antithetical to the perceived Hamidian posture. During the 1960s, scholars began to reconsider Abdülhamid's reign. The process of rehabilitation has in some cases veered into advocacy, as his legacy has been claimed by Islamists who nostalgically favour the return of a sultan-caliph in the Islamic world and by proponents of the Islamist political movement in Turkey. In the early 1990s when political Islamism was on the rise, the name of Abdülhamid II would sometimes appear on the walls of some conservative districts in Istanbul next to campaign posters for the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party. The subsequent polemical appropriation of Abdülhamid underscores both his importance as a historical figure and his continued relevance to historical and ideological change in Turkey. In this chapter, I place Abdülhamid's reign in the context of both the historical development of the late Ottoman Empire and the subsequent historiographical turns, but focus mainly on the events and currents of the Hamidian era itself.<sup>2</sup>

### Abdülhamid and the preceding Tanzimat era: continuation or deviation?

Histories of the Tanzimat era (1839–76) have tended to emphasise the Western sources of emulation for Ottoman reforms and the passive reception of Western influence. Recently, historians have challenged this interpretation, focusing on the indigenous desiderata of Ottoman officials during the crucial period in which major attempts were launched to overhaul the Ottoman state and place it on a rational administrative footing.<sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship has credited Abdülhamid with continuing and in many cases actually implementing reforms that had only been partially realised in the Tanzimat era. Yet the Hamidian era nevertheless represented an important shift away from a more hopeful and trusting attitude towards Western interaction with the Ottoman state. As we shall see, given the European powers' shift in approach towards the empire and the changing demographic, economic and military circumstances of the Ottoman territories, it is not surprising that Hamidian policy differed from that pursued during the Tanzimat.

Abdülhamid's use of Islam and his attempts to raise the hopes of Ottoman Muslims have been received with hostility by Europeans and subsequent

2 For a thorough review of recent scholarship on the Hamidian period, see Nadir Özbek, 'Modernite, tarih ve ideoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi tarihçiliği üzerine bir değerlendirme', *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 2, 1 (2004), pp. 71–90.

3 See, for example, Butrus Abu Manneh, 'The Islamic Roots of Gülhane', *Die Welt des Islams* 34 (1994), pp. 173–203.

historians. For the Great Powers, which had large Muslim populations in their own empires, the Islamic dimension of Abdülhamid's rule, incorporating both symbolic and practical manifestations, posed a direct challenge. For subsequent generations of historians with nationalist and secularist perspectives, the Hamidian agenda was perhaps equally problematic, as it contradicted their expectations that the empire would naturally move to emulate Western practices when possible. This critique was most acutely observed in the early years of the Turkish Republic, when most things Ottoman were subjected to a campaign of vilification; official Turkish historiography dismissed Abdülhamid's reign as a period of despotism (*istibdad*), dwelling on its secrecy, paranoia and illiberalism. It ignored or de-emphasised other, positive developments, such as a flourishing popular press, education for both girls and boys, and a rapid increase in public services. In other words, the Hamidian era was largely seen as an aberration, because it broke with the perceived spirit of the Tanzimat. The Hamidian implementation of the Tanzimat programme, albeit with an altered rationale that suited the changed circumstances of the time, was only grudgingly accepted and then sometimes only as a grotesque caricature. The intriguing – maddening, to some – mixture of exogenous models and indigenous desiderata sat uneasily with those for whom late Ottoman society was one inevitably divided by an unbridgeable chasm, referred to in the literature as 'cultural dualism'. For this reason, Abdülhamid's reign, though fraught with historiographical controversy, provides a fascinating case study of the interplay of domestic and international considerations in the modern era.

### Background and early influences

Abdülhamid was the product of a union typical of the Ottoman palace. His father was Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–61) and his mother was Tir-i Müjgan, the daughter of a Circassian chieftain. His birth in Çırağan palace on 22 September 1842 was announced with five volleys of artillery, alerting the population of Istanbul to the joyful news; seven days of celebration were held and the lights of the city's mosques were festively illuminated.<sup>4</sup> Prince Abdülhamid's mother's death when he was eleven years old seems to have set him apart in the life of the palace, encouraging both introspection and the suspicion for which he was later to become infamous. He was subsequently entrusted to another of his father's wives, the childless Perestû. Also a Circassian, she devoted herself to

<sup>4</sup> François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II: le sultan calife (1876–1909)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), p. 19.

his upbringing, but it is likely that the loss of his mother, his father's favouring of his more outgoing older brother Murad and the environment of palace politics all encouraged Abdülhamid's tendency towards reticence and secrecy. As a young man he was apparently fond of drinking and female company, but his personal physician reportedly warned him of the adverse affects on his health and he thereafter only consumed the occasional pre-prandial glass of champagne to settle his nerves,<sup>5</sup> a habit that his subsequent partisans in the Islamist camp naturally tend to ignore. However, his religiosity seems to have been genuine, and appears to have sustained him through the most trying of times. More importantly, Islam and its history provided him with an important political and social compass.

Abdülhamid's education was a mixture of influences, reflecting the changing times of the nineteenth century. Like all Ottoman princes, he received instruction from private tutors in a variety of subjects that included such traditional ones as Arabic, Persian, the Islamic sciences and Ottoman history, but also French. He learned to play the piano and developed a life-long penchant for Western classical music and comic opera, eventually having his own theatre constructed in Yıldız palace. By imperial tradition he was to learn a trade; he chose woodworking and progressed to an advanced level, apparently finding it a restorative pastime amid the long hours he devoted to the affairs of state. While in internal exile after his deposition he would have more ample opportunities to practise his craft, and examples of his handiwork can today be seen at Beylerbeyi palace, his last residence.

More important for subsequent political developments was the interest the young Abdülhamid displayed in the practicalities of the modern world. Although not a natural scholar, he possessed an excellent memory and was curious about finance, political economy and history. He sought out information both from high-ranking Ottoman officials and from a variety of personal contacts he cultivated outside palace circles. He developed a long-term friendship with the colourful Hungarian Jew Arminius Vambéry, benefited from the advice of his Greek physician Mavroyeni, and learned much from his personal banker, a Galata Greek named Zarifi who set him on his way to developing an extensive personal portfolio of European securities over the course of his lifetime. In this respect, Abdülhamid's contacts reflected the integration over the course of the nineteenth century of traditional Ottoman economic actors with the financial and cultural networks that were increasingly prominent in the

<sup>5</sup> Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 156.

life of the empire.<sup>6</sup> He also showed a sustained interest in modern farming and animal husbandry. As a prince he began the long-term project of developing a parcel of land given to him by his father into a model and profitable agricultural enterprise.<sup>7</sup> Uninterested in romantic literature, he preferred detective stories, and had an employee of the palace translate them from foreign languages and read to him in the evenings from behind a screen as he fell asleep. The trip he made to Europe in 1867 with his uncle Sultan Abdülaziz seems to have made a very strong and generally positive impression on the young prince, bringing him face to face with signs of the modernity that he strove to institute in the empire during his long reign.

### Abdülhamid II's accession to power and the early years of his reign, 1876–8

The problems facing the young sultan on his accession were immense: a very dangerous situation existed in the Balkans, with a number of rebellions opportunistically watched, if not exacerbated or even instigated, by Russia; Britain, until recently the counterweight to Russia in Ottoman eyes, was essentially neutralised by the surge of popular opinion against 'the terrible Turk'; the Ottoman treasury had effectively declared bankruptcy the previous year; and the circumstances of his own succession meant that Abdülhamid had every right to be wary of the senior officials of his own government. It was hardly a promising start, and few observers would have been able to predict that within five years the sultan would have gathered into his hands the instruments necessary for the longest reign of an Ottoman sultan since the seventeenth century.

Due to an extraordinary set of developments, Abdülhamid became the third sultan to reign during the year 1876. His uncle Sultan Abdülaziz, who had ruled since 1861, was forced to abdicate in May of that year by a *coup d'état* carried out by a constellation of high-ranking Ottoman officials, including Midhat Paşa (the chief advocate of constitutional and parliamentary checks on sultanic authority in this period), military officers, including Minister of War Hüseyin Avni Paşa, and the students of the religious schools, or *softas*. Abdülhamid was apparently appalled by the prospect of a sitting sultan being removed in this

6 Reşat Kasaba, 'A time and a place for the nonstate: social change in the Ottoman Empire during the "Long Nineteenth Century"', in J. Migdal et al. (eds.), *Social Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 214.

7 Engin Deniz Akarlı, 'Abdülhamid II (1842–1918): The 34th Ottoman sultan (r. 1876–1909)', in Kemal Çiçek (ed.), *The Great Ottoman Civilization* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), vol. I, p. 601.

way; in future he would be suspicious of any potential signs of a repetition at his own expense, and wary of the involvement of the office of the *şeyhülislâm* in particular.<sup>8</sup>

The leaders of the coup replaced Abdülaziz with Murad V, who had agreed to promulgate a constitution once installed as sultan. However, owing to his deteriorating nervous condition, which was not helped by the suicide in June of his predecessor, Murad lasted only three months on the throne. As Murad's incapacity for rule became apparent, Midhat Paşa held confidential talks with Abdülhamid, who stood next in the Ottoman line of succession. Abdülhamid agreed to the constitution (and perhaps even left his interlocutor with the impression that the future sultan was a supporter of the liberal cause) but apparently rejected the idea that it be guaranteed by the European powers, as Midhat urged. The back-and-forth nature of these discussions between Abdülhamid and Midhat afforded the opportunity for the future sultan to change the draft constitution in ways that would prove decisive. Abdülhamid later sent Midhat himself into internal exile to the Hijaz (where he was later murdered) by invoking Article 113 on the grounds that Midhat was 'recognized as dangerous to the safety of the state'.<sup>9</sup>

The fragility of Sultan Abdülhamid's position was further emphasised by two failed *coups d'état* that occurred during the first years of his reign. Many writers have accused Abdülhamid of paranoia, but he had real cause for worry. The first and most significant of the conspiracies against him was organised by the Üsküdar Society under the leadership of the so-called 'turbaned revolutionary' Ali Suavi.<sup>10</sup> The society had organised a demonstration outside Çırağan palace aimed at restoring the deposed sultan, Murad, who was effectively imprisoned inside. The attempted coup failed and Ali Suavi was killed when forces loyal to Abdülhamid crushed the uprising. The second conspiracy, that of the Skalieri-Aziz Bey committee, also intended to restore Murad to the throne. The authorities detected the plot and apprehended most of its members before they could launch it.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the efficacy of these two conspiracies, they reinforced young Sultan Abdülhamid's anxieties concerning the potential weakness of his position.

8 Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 161.

9 An English translation of selected articles of the Ottoman constitution of 1876 can be found in Robert G. Landen, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East: Selected Readings* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970), pp. 98–106.

10 Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 175.

11 Florian Riedler, 'Opposition to the Tanzimat State: Conspiracy and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, 1859–1878', Ph.D. thesis, University of London (2003).

But a far greater danger to his reign came in the form of the war with Russia during the years 1877–8. Referred to in Ottoman history as the ‘93 War’ because it was fought during the year 1293 in the Islamic calendar, this conflict was devastating for the Ottoman Empire and instrumental in shaping the subsequent course of the Hamidian era. To fully appreciate both the causes and the subsequent impact of this war, it is necessary to understand the confluence of forces at work. The empire that Abdülhamid inherited upon his accession was effectively bankrupt. Unable to meet the full obligations of its foreign debt in 1875, the Ottoman treasury was in dire straits, leaving the state hostage to financial fortune. Thus when agricultural failings of various kinds occurred in the 1870s, the empire’s precarious fiscal solvency was directly threatened. Financial instability, together with the growing nationalist sentiments across the empire, helps explain the appearance of provincial unrest in the middle of the decade. While the proximate cause of most of these disturbances was fiscal, matters soon escalated, taking on broader national and international significance.

The crisis that eventually produced the ‘93 War began in such a way. When revolts broke out against Ottoman tax collectors in Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1875 and 1876, they set in motion a series of actions and reactions that grew out of all proportion, due to the emotive nature of the revolts’ religious and nationalist implications, Ottoman public opinion and, crucially, the eventual intervention of the European powers. Unfortunately for the Ottomans, the international relations of the so-called Eastern Question – essentially, the issue of what to do with the Ottoman Empire as it shrank – were constantly changing. After the Crimean War and the Treaty of Paris (1856), the Ottoman state had been admitted into the European club and had received a guarantee that Ottoman territorial integrity would be upheld in future. That promise lasted only until the 1870s, when a new alignment of interests increasingly encouraged European powers to solve the problems created by their varying imperial agendas at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. For the Ottomans, the change became apparent with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the decisive defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Britain was now increasingly interested in pursuing her imperial ambitions via Egypt, which, although still officially a part of the Ottoman Empire, was in practice almost a separate entity since the rise of Mehmed Ali Paşa earlier in the century. The defeat of France signalled the arrival of Germany as an imperial power and induced a guarded rapprochement between Britain and Russia. This alignment of the Ottoman Empire’s erstwhile protector and the source of her most formidable threat meant that Russia was to enjoy a much freer hand to meddle in Ottoman

affairs. Indeed, the Ottomans could see the hand of Russia at work, inflaming the already volatile situation in the Balkans.

As the crisis in the Balkans intensified a pattern emerged. The specific local issues, such as the collection of taxes, were quickly forgotten as Russian arms and agents encouraged fellow Slavs to rise up against the symbols of the Ottoman state – or in their absence, the local Muslim population. Local troops and irregulars soon returned the favour and a cycle of attack and counter-attack began, increasing the likelihood that small-scale violence would turn into something much more widespread and difficult to control. At this point, another dimension to the growing conflict – that of European public opinion – loomed into view. Perceptions of the ‘Eastern Question’ were quite volatile, especially when inflamed by the rhetoric of politicians such as William Ewart Gladstone, who used the occasion of the Bulgarian uprising of 1876 to attack his British political adversary Benjamin Disraeli. His pamphlet on ‘the Bulgarian horrors’, by which he meant only Muslim violence against Christians (conveniently ignoring the considerable Christian depredations against the Muslim population), sold 200,000 copies within a month and drastically reduced the British government’s room for manoeuvre.<sup>12</sup>

Both the imperial agendas of the European powers and the growing role of public opinion ensured that the Balkan crises of the mid-1870s quickly became, to the discomfiture of Istanbul, matters of international concern. For example, the Bosnian crisis occasioned the meeting of the ‘three Kaisers’ (that is, the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian monarchs) in Berlin and their production of the Andrassy note (December 1875), which demanded major changes in the way the Ottoman Empire governed its Balkan provinces. Although the sultan reluctantly agreed, the fighting in the region continued. Attention then shifted to Bulgaria, where the government moved quickly against the rebels, producing the aforementioned ‘Bulgarian horrors’ and another international attempt to force ‘reforms’ on Istanbul.

In the mean time, Abdülhamid II rose to the Ottoman throne and preparations for an Ottoman constitution began. While the unprecedented institution of constitutional rule stemmed from the changing internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire, its announcement was timed with international objections in mind. The Constantinople conference had been scheduled for December of 1876 in order for the European powers to decide the fate of the Ottoman

12 Excerpts of Gladstone’s pamphlet may be found in Nazan Çiçek, ‘The battle for British public opinion on Turkey and the Eastern Question: two documents, 1876 and 1904’, in Camrom Michael Amin, Benjamin C. Fortna and Elizabeth B. Frierson (eds.), *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 416–27.



Balkans. On the opening day the Ottoman delegate announced with some fanfare the promulgation of the Ottoman constitution that, in Ottoman eyes, would obviate the need for European involvement in Ottoman affairs, since all Ottoman subjects were now equally protected under its provisions. This announcement, of course, did not satisfy the European delegates, who were in some instances quite hostile to the Ottoman Empire. The conference broke up in early 1877, with Russia preparing for war in order to continue its southward expansion and to reduce the Ottoman Empire's influence over the tsarist empire's own Muslim minorities. Interestingly, Abdülhamid had argued for an Ottoman strategy of appeasement and concession, but the constitutionalists ignored his views and adopted a decidedly uncompromising stance. The resulting conflict was a disaster for the Ottoman state.

Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire in April 1877, having already signed in mid-January an agreement with Austria-Hungary that would allow Russia freedom of movement in the Balkans in exchange for Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war was fought on two fronts, with the Russians attacking through the Balkans in the west and into Anatolia from the east. In the initial stages of the war the Russian armies met little resistance, and their rapid advance was accompanied by a massive slaughter of the Muslim population. Ottoman defences stiffened, especially at Plevna and the Şipka pass (both in modern-day Bulgaria), and to a lesser extent at Kars and Erzurum in the east. But eventually the Ottoman resistance cracked and Russian troops marched on the Ottoman capital, now swollen with Muslim refugees, reaching its outskirts by the end of February 1878 and leaving in their wake what one historian has referred to as 'rivers of Muslim blood'.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, in a sign of what was to come, Abdülhamid had dismissed the parliament after some of its members criticised his conduct of the war.

The results of the war were extremely dangerous for the Ottoman state. Forced to sign a humiliating treaty at San Stefano, the Ottoman Empire agreed *inter alia* to the creation of a very large and independent Bulgaria, which was a key Russian aim; territorial gains for Montenegro, Serbia and Greece in the Balkans and Russia in eastern Anatolia; independence for Serbia, Montenegro and Romania; internal reforms in various Ottoman areas, including Armenia; and a massive financial indemnity to Russia. Far worse in human terms was the continuing exodus of Muslim refugees from lost territory into the shrunken borders of the Ottoman Empire, forcing the state to use scarce funds to feed and shelter them. There was a glimmer of a silver lining for Abdülhamid

<sup>13</sup> Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 148.

## The reign of Abdülhamid II

in that the lopsided terms of the treaty forced the other European powers into action to limit the Russian gains. The Treaty of Berlin of 1878 returned some land to Istanbul and trimmed the size of Bulgaria, and demonstrated to Abdülhamid that limited progress could be made at the expense of Great Power rivalries. But even this came at a high cost – the empire agreed to international oversight of its foreign debt, and Britain demanded Cyprus as the price for negotiating better terms at Berlin. Above all, the empire had still lost approximately 230,000 square kilometres of its territory and between 5 and 6 million of its inhabitants. By far the most important lesson the war imparted was the necessity of avoiding another such conflict. In this task, Abdülhamid was largely successful throughout the rest of his reign, with the sole exception of the war with Greece in 1897, which ended in a decisive Ottoman victory, even though its benefits quickly evaporated due to the involvement of the European powers in its aftermath.

### Consolidation and rule, 1878–96

Coming hard on the heels of the chaotic year of Abdülhamid II's accession, the war with Russia exposed the alarming weaknesses of the empire. But in addition to highlighting the enormity of the task of rejuvenating the empire, the first few years of Abdülhamid's reign suggested some of the possible solutions. His main objectives were preserving the peace; developing a strategic plan to cope with the threats represented by the various interests of the Great Powers; putting the empire's financial and military house in order; restructuring the administrative capabilities of the Ottoman government; and finding a means of achieving 'a sound and practical basis of social solidarity' among the majority of his subjects.<sup>14</sup> The '93 War left Abdülhamid II with a more Asian and a more Muslim empire, demographic realities that would affect the development of his policy in the years to come. Not only were most of the empire's European provinces lost, but the influx of refugees ensured that the remaining areas had a higher proportion of Muslims than had previously been the case. Beyond his conviction that further warfare was to be avoided, Abdülhamid drew other lessons from the conflict. First among them was an extreme wariness of the motivations of the Great Powers. The empire's Crimean War allies Britain and France had abandoned their former policy of working to uphold its territorial integrity and were now helping themselves to its real estate. The British,

<sup>14</sup> Engin D. Akarlı, 'Abdülhamid's attempt to integrate Arabs into the Ottoman system', in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1986), p. 76.

showing a more focused interest on the Eastern Mediterranean after the opening of the Suez Canal, took Cyprus as a result of the Berlin Treaty, and would soon use the pretext of the Urabi uprising to occupy Egypt in 1882; France, although considerably weakened after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, seized Tunisia in 1881. Abdülhamid saw this new turn of events as a betrayal. Britain's behaviour was a particularly bitter pill to swallow, as Abdülhamid had greatly admired the English. In his memoirs the sultan expressed his version of 'perfidious Albion': 'Of all the Great Powers, the most to be feared are the English. This is because giving their word has no value to them.'<sup>15</sup> Only by playing the interests of one power against another could the young sultan hope to make headway in the international arena, and then only marginally, given the political, military and economic state of the empire.

Abdülhamid also sought to buy time in which to implement an ambitious raft of changes aimed at centralising and regularising the control of the central government, modernising the armed forces, educating sufficient numbers of the population to ensure a well-trained and loyal elite, and generally ensuring that the empire was as up to date as possible given the still-vast dimensions of its territory and the paucity of its financial resources. Additionally, Abdülhamid saw the attractiveness of pursuing a policy of Islamic unity in the face of European encroachment. Abdülhamid's Islamic policy, sometimes referred to as 'Pan-Islamism', was a two-sided phenomenon. On the one hand, it was a positive strategy aimed at the majority of his imperial subjects as it sought to take advantage of the new demographic situation and to strengthen the cohesiveness of the empire's Islamic base. On the other hand, it was also a negative or threatening policy intended to remind the European powers, France and Great Britain in particular, that the Ottoman sultan-caliph held considerable sway over many millions of their overseas imperial subjects.

Before Abdülhamid II could turn his attention to the enormous – and enormously expensive – task of reorganising and modernising his empire, he had to address its precarious fiscal situation. The empire had failed to meet the payments on its debt in 1875 and agreed to international oversight of its financial obligations in future. The result was the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (PDA), established in 1881. The chief beneficiaries of this creation were the holders of the Ottoman debt, mostly foreigners who were represented on the council – whereas the Ottoman government only had observer

<sup>15</sup> Sultan Abdülhamid, *Siyasi hatıratım* (Istanbul: Dergah, 1987) (reprint of 1974 Emek edn.), pp. 127–8.

status. Worse, the terms of the PDA's creation gave it the right to roughly 30 per cent of imperial tax revenues – so that the income from whole sectors and regions of the empire were dedicated to paying off the debt. Although the loss of sovereignty inherent in the PDA was galling, the new dispensation was not without some benefits for the Ottoman state. An agreement had been reached without the intervention of the European powers,<sup>16</sup> and the arrangement ensured that the empire would continue to have access to foreign capital and on more favourable terms than had been available in the past.<sup>17</sup> Without this access, Abdülhamid's ambitious plans for large, capital-hungry military and public works projects would have been impossible. In addition, the PDA hired and trained large numbers of Ottoman subjects, a boon both to the economy and to the accumulation of the latest financial knowledge available, and a fitting parallel to the Hamidian efforts to professionalise the civil bureaucracy.

### Legislative and administrative changes

Abdülhamid began the process of asserting his authority over the bureaucracy by sending Midhat Paşa into internal exile during the crisis produced by the war with Russia. He also used this opportunity to prorogue parliament, to suspend the constitution, and to rid himself of other liberal opposition leaders and high-ranking military officers on whom his rise to power had depended. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Sublime Porte, the pyramidal governmental apparatus under the grand vezir, had accumulated considerable power at the expense of the sultan. Abdülhamid reversed this trend through two shrewd policies, both aimed at asserting the authority of the palace over the Porte. The first was the major enhancement of the bureaucratic structure of the palace itself. By gradually expanding the office of the *Mabeyn*, literally the 'in between', that part of the palace where the sultan traditionally received visitors and ministers to the point where it could virtually run the empire, the sultan pulled power back into his own hands.<sup>18</sup> Abdülhamid II took the business of ruling extremely seriously; he delegated little and the clerks of the *Mabeyn* testified to the impressive work rate of the sultan who, fortified

16 Christopher Clay, *Gold for the Sultan: Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance, 1856–1881* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 552.

17 Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 192–6.

18 Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 227 ff.

with numerous cups of coffee, would often work late into the night, especially during periods of crisis or when state business was most intense.<sup>19</sup>

The second plank of Abdülhamid's strategy was to extend the expanded authority of the palace over the workings of the Porte. He accomplished this task through careful attention to the question of ministerial responsibility, which provoked frequent clashes with his grand vezirs, conflicts that were invariably decided in the sultan's favour.<sup>20</sup> During his reign Abdülhamid changed his grand vezir over twenty-five times, and it is clear that he frequently used these changes as a way of asserting his own authority over the bureaucratic establishment as well as a means of placating the various powers, especially Britain, a factor Abdülhamid confirmed in his memoirs.<sup>21</sup> The two main incumbents of this office during this period were Küçük Said Paşa and Kâmil Paşa, who together served a total of ten times.<sup>22</sup> Abdülhamid wrote, somewhat defensively, that all the fuss attributed to his changing the top civil servant was misplaced, but his subsequent statement illuminated the true locus of power in the Hamidian state: 'because whether it is Kâmil or Said, the real Grand Vizier is the one who resides in Yıldız and that is I'.<sup>23</sup> This statement nicely captures the extent to which Hamidian rule combined personal, patrimonial authority alongside the mechanisms of a functioning, rational bureaucracy. In a similar vein, the text of the Ottoman constitution, suspended since the '93 War, continued to be published at the beginning of every official Ottoman state yearbook (*salname*).

### Education: loyalty and manpower

Producing civil servants who were both capable and loyal was a major preoccupation of the Hamidian government. Although the government had made considerable efforts to create a state education system in the Tanzimat era, these plans had been considerably more advanced than the situation on the ground. After getting the empire's financial situation more or less under control by the early 1880s, Abdülhamid II turned his attention to implementing

19 S. Tanvir Wasti, 'The Last Chroniclers of the Mabeyn', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, 2 (1996), pp. 1–29.

20 Engin Deniz Akarlı, 'Friction and Discord within the Ottoman Government under Abdülhamid II (1876–1909)', *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi* 7 (1979), pp. 3–26.

21 Abdülhamit, *Siyasi hatıratım*, p. 118.

22 Ercüment Kuran, 'Küçük Said Paşa (1840–1914) as a Turkish Modernist', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1 (1970), pp. 124–32.

23 Abdülhamit, *Siyasi hatıratım*, p. 118.

the plans for an empire-wide education system.<sup>24</sup> Despite his promotion of his Islamic policy, he chose not to try to direct the new educational changes through the religious hierarchy. Partly as a result of his low opinion of the rank and file of the *ulema* – he thought of them as ‘excessively conservative’ and unfavourably compared them with those produced by al-Azhar in Cairo – he never tried to transform the *medrese* system into a modern education system.<sup>25</sup> For that task he opted to continue along the lines of the educational reforms that he inherited from the Tanzimat era, establishing a parallel but separate system alongside that run by the religious establishment, although he did place many of the *ulema* in the educational hierarchy. He gave particular attention to following the Public Education Regulation of 1869, a French-inspired blueprint for creating a fully integrated imperial schooling system. The ambitious nature of this plan was matched by the keenness of the Hamidian government’s approach to turning it into reality, especially beginning in the early 1880s. Photographs, governmental correspondence and statistics compiled in the Ottoman state yearbooks from this period all show that the words of the 1869 legislation were being converted into bricks and mortar during the Hamidian era.

But more interesting than the pace of Hamidian progress in building an imperial infrastructure for education was the overall conception of education, and the ways in which it was delivered in these new buildings. Abdülhamid II saw education as a crucial battleground for the empire’s future – and one in which the Ottoman state – as in the military, commercial and cultural fields – was badly behind. The sultan believed that the aggressive presence of so many well-funded and well-organised minority and foreign schools, especially those run by the seemingly ever stronger missionary movement, represented a danger to the empire.<sup>26</sup> In particular, Abdülhamid thought that these schools were turning young Ottoman boys – and, increasingly, girls – against their religion and their state.<sup>27</sup> A spirit of competition thus shaped Hamidian education policy; in this respect it was similar to many contemporary education strategies around the world that sought to adapt to the rapid changes of the modern world by drawing on the religious and national sources of past success. In the Ottoman version, the imperial tradition and Islamic morality naturally played

24 Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

25 Abdülhamit, *Siyasî hatıratım*, p. 190.

26 Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, chapter 2.

27 Abdülhamit, *Siyasî hatıratım*, p. 189.

a heavy role as the state attempted to use education to cement loyalty and affinity in its young subjects.<sup>28</sup> In other words, while the original source for the education system Abdülhamid inherited from the Tanzimat era was foreign in inspiration, his government took great strides to render it consonant with Ottoman and Islamic traditions. Although the schools were open to and attended by children of all confessional backgrounds, the Hamidian establishment thought of them, in contrast to their minority and foreign counterparts, as ‘Muslim’ schools. Members of the *ulema* were employed in a variety of roles in the ostensibly ‘secular’ Ottoman state system, and the curricula of these schools reflect considerable attention to Islamic subjects.

In many ways, the educational apparatus that emerged was rigid and at least as interested in controlling its students’ behaviour and discipline – their progress or lack thereof was monitored through the use of a sort of moral report card – as the contents of their textbooks, which were carefully inspected prior to publication. The rigidity and suspicion inherent in the Hamidian educational endeavour could produce unwanted consequences. We know little about the reception of the new schooling among the rank and file of its students, but among the particular group that emerged as the core of the Young Turk opposition movement, we can see the unintended fruits of the Hamidian project. Bridling against the sterility of the content of their school texts and increasingly enervated by the contrast between the rhetoric of the regime and the apparently unchecked decline in the power of the state they were being groomed to serve, some sought refuge in the radical thought of Western Europe, a factor that would contribute directly to the revolution of 1908.

In its virtues and its shortcomings, the educational endeavour of the Hamidian state was symptomatic of its larger agenda. Broadly speaking, Abdülhamid sought to extend the reach of the regime through various means, both tangible and ideological, into the wider society, and to draw into its orbit peoples and regions that had hitherto been treated with benign neglect. On the most obvious level this outreach was effected through the lines inherited from the preceding Tanzimat era: the bureaucratic structure of the state was greatly expanded. Thickening its administrative posture both in the capital and the provinces allowed the state to reach more than merely those who would become its bureaucrats. The Hamidian state also expanded in a variety of other areas, enhancing or in some cases creating outright the apparatus for transforming the relationship between the

28 Benjamin C. Fortna, ‘Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman “Secular” Schools’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, 3 (2000), pp. 369–93.

central government and its subjects – increasingly being treated like citizens<sup>29</sup> – in the legal, medical, fiscal, military and census-taking fields, to name only a few. After the loss of so much Balkan land in the war with Russia, the exigencies of the state meant that new areas needed to be brought under more direct rule by Istanbul. During the Hamidian era we can witness the new attention being paid to areas such as Syria and Transjordan, which had previously received marginal attention from Istanbul.<sup>30</sup> By building new schools, including a special school in Istanbul established for the sons of tribal rulers,<sup>31</sup> by cultivating close ties with provincial notables and sufi shaykhs and by judicious disbursements from his privy purse, Abdülhamid followed time-honoured means of political enticement. Interestingly, the ambitious nature of Hamidian reform meant that he and his governmental apparatus had to rely on local participation, initiative and, to a limited degree, autonomy, all of which had an ameliorating effect on the otherwise seemingly relentless centralisation strategy of the late Ottoman state.

Complementing this rather utilitarian approach was one that worked in the realm of symbolism and ideology and therefore was, theoretically at least, not limited to the practical mechanisms of power. By emphasising the religious dimension of his position as sultan–caliph, Abdülhamid intended to take advantage of the power of image and symbol through such means as ceremony, architecture, the act of bestowing medals and honours, visibly close relations with sufi orders, dedicatory inscriptions, the sultan’s monogram and the language of official pronouncements to his subjects, in as broad a manner as possible.<sup>32</sup> These attempts at ‘image management’ may seem somewhat crude by today’s standards, but in a time when the media for public communication were few, they represented an efficient means of disseminating the official line and asserting the sultan’s virtual presence across the empire. Likewise in the international arena, the sultan was keen to have the empire represented at fairs, conferences and conventions.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, he relied on photography and a widespread network of informants to collect information

29 Selim Deringil, ‘The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808–1908’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993), p. 4.

30 Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1851–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Akarlı, ‘Abdülhamid’s attempt’.

31 Eugene L. Rogan, ‘Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid’s School for Tribes, 1892–1907’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996), pp. 83–107.

32 Selim Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

33 Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, chap. 6.



about what was happening across the empire, a necessity for a sultan who rarely left the confines of his palace.

### The Armenian uprisings and war with Greece

While the 1880s afforded Abdülhamid's sultanate the opportunity to concentrate on implementing his domestic programme of reorganisation and reform, the following decade could not completely avoid the pattern of crisis that had so searingly marked the early years of the Hamidian reign. The combination of internal ethnic conflict, agitation by neighbouring states and pressure from the Great Powers returned, first in the case of the Armenian uprisings of the early to mid-1890s, then in the conflict with Greece in 1897, and finally, much more decisively for the fate of the Hamidian regime, in Macedonia during the first decade of the twentieth century. The Armenian uprisings in the 1890s were in many ways a reprise of the Balkan crisis, in that they featured local animosities inflected with religious and ethnic tensions, resentment over tax collection, fissures within the minority communities pitting the clergy and traditional leadership against radical challengers, and the not disinterested gaze of foreign powers. But there were also crucial differences. The main contrast with the Balkan situation was demographic. Whereas Muslims were in the minority in important areas of Rumelia, in the provinces that were to become inflamed in eastern Anatolia, the Armenian population was much more diffusely settled. Constituting between 6 and 8 per cent of the total Ottoman population, Armenians were not a majority in any province of the empire. Of the 'six provinces' of eastern Anatolia where, apart from Istanbul, most Ottoman Armenians lived, in only one of them did they comprise more than a quarter of the population, according to Ottoman census figures.<sup>34</sup>

The eventual radicalisation of a small but significant element of the Armenian population along nationalist lines was therefore predictably problematic. Autonomy or even independence would entail a major demographic upheaval. The emergence of two Armenian activist organisations, the Hunchak and the Dashnaksutiun (founded by Armenian exiles in Geneva in 1887 and Tbilisi in 1890, respectively), and the adoption of an extremely aggressive terrorist

34 Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, vol. II: *Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 200–1. On the population statistics of late Ottoman Anatolia, see Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia at the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983) and Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

policy intended to catch the attention of the Western powers ultimately proved disastrous. Following the strategy of Bulgarian nationalists in the 1870s, the Armenian revolutionaries frequently incited violence calculated to draw Muslim reprisals and trigger international intervention. The Ottoman government responded to this campaign by forming the 'Hamidiye' regiments of irregular Kurdish troops. The period from 1890 to 1893 featured cycles of attack and counter-attack, but not the kind of major atrocity that would have galvanised overseas attention. A turning point came in 1894, when the Hamidiye units responded to a series of increasingly more desperate provocations with a large-scale slaughter of Armenians at Sasun. The sultan seems to have misjudged the ability of the Ottoman authorities to control the situation – and the extent of Muslim anxiety concerning the Armenian revolutionaries.<sup>35</sup> Once events got out of hand it proved very difficult, if not impossible, for Istanbul to restore order. The unpredictable quality of the 1894–6 events in eastern Anatolia, during which large numbers of Armenians were slaughtered and many others left the empire against the sultan's will,<sup>36</sup> stemmed in part from the fact that the central government had effectively armed Kurdish tribesmen who were geographically remote from and almost completely impervious to the discipline of a modern army, and in part from the government's policy of undermining the local notables so as to appear as the champion of the local Muslims.<sup>37</sup> It was in the period of the Sasun incident that Abdülhamid II became known as the 'red sultan' and by other pejorative nicknames associated with the shedding of blood. Nevertheless, he was able to avoid a major international crisis, in part by convincing the powers that his provincial reforms required more time, and in part by agreeing to a new programme of reforms.

The Hunchaks then pursued an even more desperate strategy. Expanding the field of their activities to include the capital in 1896, they took over the Ottoman Bank, planting bombs and taking hostages. A raiding party set out for the Sublime Porte and an attacker threw a bomb at the sultan while he was on his way to Friday prayers, missing him but killing twenty of his guards. The Armenian activists produced a list of demands and, tellingly, presented them to the Western embassies in the capital. Among these demands were a tax amnesty for five years, following which their tax assessments were to be reduced to 20 per cent of their current value; the appointment of Christian governors in the eastern provinces; the establishment of a Christian gendarmerie;

35 Stephen Duguid, 'The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia', *Middle Eastern Studies* 9, 2 (1973), pp. 148 ff.

36 Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, p. 305.

37 Duguid, 'Politics of Unity', p. 151.

and so forth. Abdülhamid II rejected the demands, but did appoint a number of Christian governors and granted a general amnesty. At this point the motives of the European powers became apparent. Britain attempted to gain Russian approval for the sending of a Royal Navy flotilla to Istanbul. Russia, fearing the rise in British influence that would result, refused; France added her objections. Meanwhile, the Armenian revolutionary organisations, having failed to gain the international backing they were seeking, began to quarrel among themselves and the issue effectively disappeared from the international agenda until it was tragically resurrected in a radically different form during the First World War. The crisis had passed, but both sides felt aggrieved. The numbers of Armenians who were killed or left the empire attests to their suffering. As for Abdülhamid, he had weathered the storm but remained bitter at what he perceived to be a double standard on the part of the Western powers. He wrote: "The Great Powers do not want to know that the Armenians are rebels who attack with sword and dynamite; and that we are the owners of our own land; that they constantly upset us with the Capitulations and other demands. The rights they bestow on the Principality of Monaco they see as excessive for us."<sup>38</sup>

Such was the combination of demography and nationalist agitation in the Ottoman Empire during this period that no sooner had the situation in eastern Anatolia reverted to calm than another area flared up. This time the issue was Greek nationalism and irredentism aimed at breaking areas with substantial Greek populations away from the empire and uniting them with Greece. Although several parts of the empire were targets for Greek nationalist agitation aimed at effecting the revival of the Great Idea (*Megali Idea*) of a Greek empire, it was the island of Crete where the conflict became concentrated in the mid-late 1890s. When new Greek revolts broke out during 1895, at the height of the Armenian crisis, Abdülhamid temporised, changing governors of the island. When he appointed an ethnic Greek there were protests from the Muslims, who comprised roughly 30 per cent of the island's population. When he appointed a Muslim, his Greek subjects were up in arms, demanding union with mainland Greece. The task of maintaining Ottoman sovereignty over the island had become nearly impossible given the intensity of the Greek insurgents' desire for union with Greece. During 1896 the cycle of violence reached an extremely volatile stage. In early 1897 the Cretan rebels announced that the island would be united with Greece and appealed for help from Athens, which duly obliged, sending an expeditionary force that landed on the island.

38 Abdülhamit, *Siyasi hatıratım*, p. 131.

This act provoked a response from the European powers. Remarkably even-handed this time, they demanded a Greek withdrawal and autonomy for Crete that meant only the most symbolic of Ottoman rule.<sup>39</sup> But the Greek government was swept up in the fervid nationalism that was being driven by an organisation called the National Society (Ethniki Hetairia), whose programme envisioned Crete as only one part of a larger plan that included Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia, all under Ottoman rule. The society's volunteers, Greek army officers among them, massed along the Graeco-Ottoman border in Thessaly. The Athens government was forced to follow suit; by February of 1897 there were approximately 25,000 Greek troops awaiting the signal for war. After some cross-border raids by Greek volunteers in April, the Ottoman government declared war on 17 April.<sup>40</sup> The Graeco-Ottoman war was over in barely more than a month. The superior Ottoman forces broke through the Greek lines and continued to march south as defences crumbled. Now the powers put pressure on both sides; the Greeks withdrew their forces from Crete and the Ottomans halted their advance before it reached even deeper into Greek territory. The Ottomans were prevented from keeping the territory they had won but were able to secure an indemnity from Athens. Abdülhamid, initially reluctant to fight, nevertheless saw the benefits of his position, despite the fact that his gains had been snatched away under Great Power pressure and Crete would now remain Ottoman in only nominal fashion. He had sent a stern message to the various Balkan national groups agitating to break away chunks of Ottoman territory. Domestically, the prestige of his victory provided important counter-propaganda against his domestic critics, in particular the emerging Young Turk movement, to which we return shortly.

The period from 1896 to roughly 1905 can be seen as the high water mark of Abdülhamid's reign. Although he had failed in avoiding war altogether, the conflict with Greece was mercifully brief and the results, although greatly reduced by European pressure, were not without advantages for the sultan, who resurrected the title of *gazi*, or fighter for the faith, that he had asserted during the disastrous war of his earliest regnal years. The long period of peace after 1878 had allowed time for the implementation of the Hamidian reforms. This progress was especially evident in the costly but necessary military field, where the relationship that Abdülhamid cultivated with Wilhelmine Germany, an important counterbalance to British and French influence, was bearing fruit. Relations with provinces were largely under control, thanks to the extension

<sup>39</sup> Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, p. 336.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337.

of telegraph and rail lines. This use of technology had both a practical and a symbolic side. The Hijaz railway, funded entirely by Muslim capital, provided an important testimonial to Abdülhamid's commitment to the marriage of religion and modernity.<sup>41</sup> In 1900, when the empire celebrated the sultan's jubilee with great fanfare, the state of the empire, in spite of daunting obstacles, seemed remarkably buoyant.

Away from the state, extremely important changes were at work in the Hamidian era. Everyday life was changing, often dramatically. This was especially true in the urban centres, with the empire's port cities displaying considerable economic expansion and a commensurate development in the social and cultural spheres.<sup>42</sup> Advances in transport, mechanisation, the increase in numbers and visibility of imported goods, popular literacy and the participation of women in the economy and in public life all attest to the vibrancy of life in the Hamidian era as the empire adapted to the rapid pace of change associated globally with the late nineteenth century. The liveliness of the literary field alone, in which important works were being published and debates were being held on language, the role of women in society, and the degree to which Ottoman society should follow the West, all belie the attention that observers paid to the prominence of Hamidian censorship in the political field. In the realm of everyday life we can see the extent to which Ottoman individuals managed to accommodate the influences of the day, whether derived from East or West.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless the period was far from utopian; major economic, social and political problems persisted and extremely serious difficulties for the state lay ahead.

### Dissent and revolution, 1902–8

Abdülhamid's reign was ultimately brought to an end by the convergence of two trends: the development of a growing opposition movement both inside and outside the empire; and the re-emergence of the Balkan problem, this time centring on the intractable situation in Macedonia. Actually, the first signs of opposition to Abdülhamid's reign were hardly menacing. The meeting of a small group of students – it is interesting in the light of the eventual

41 William Ochsenswald, *The Hijaz Railroad* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980).

42 Kasaba, 'A time and a place for the nonstate', pp. 211 ff.

43 Paul Dumont, 'Said Bey – The everyday life of an Istanbul townsman at the beginning of the twentieth century', in Albert Hourani et al. (eds.), *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 271–88.

Turkish nationalist bent of the Young Turk movement to note that all involved were non-Turkish Muslims – at the imperial medical school in 1889 must not have seemed especially portentous at the time. But the opposition movement that began there mushroomed into a network of individuals and groups who shared an antipathy to the Hamidian regime and sought to bring it down. The ‘Young Turk’ movement was in reality an umbrella category that included a vast spectrum of groups with very disparate agendas and origins.<sup>44</sup> The main instrument of the opposition movement became the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), although its name and composition changed several times along the way. A brief overview of several of the protagonists involved provides a sense of the diversity of the social backgrounds and intellectual currents represented. In many respects the chief ideologue of the CUP was Ahmed Rıza Bey. A graduate of the Franco-Ottoman secondary school of Galatasaray, Ahmed Rıza was sent to Paris to study agriculture. Heavily influenced by positivist, Darwinist and atheist ideas in vogue in the French capital, he began to publish the journal *Meşveret* in both French and Turkish. The title drew on the concept of consultation derived from Islamic political history but was intended to convey the sense of the constitution that the opposition movement demanded; the subtitle bore the positivist credo of ‘Order and Progress’ (‘intizam ve terakki’). Another major figure was ‘Mizancı’ Murad Bey, so named because he was the publisher of the journal *Mizan* (The Balance). Educated in the Caucasus and Russia, he came to Istanbul as a young man and worked for the PDA, taught at the School of Civil Administration, wrote both fiction and non-fiction, and espoused a combination of liberalism and Islamic solidarity. When his journal fell foul of the Hamidian regime he went into exile, first in Egypt and then in France, where he quarrelled with Ahmed Rıza. Charismatic and popular, Murad’s return to official employment in Istanbul in 1897 in the aftermath of Abdülhamid’s victory over Greece was a considerable blow to the opposition movement.

A third dimension of the opposition is represented by Sabahaddin, an Ottoman prince who espoused a liberal agenda rooted in decentralisation and private initiative and thus at odds with the *dirigiste* agenda of Ahmed Rıza and the dominant faction of the CUP. Interested in an alliance with Britain and more accommodating to the various Armenian groups favouring autonomy, Prince Sabahaddin’s faction eventually lost out when the movement split during fractious meetings in Paris in 1902; it would return to play an important

44 On the Young Turk movement, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

but again losing role in the politics of the Second Constitutional Period. The fate of the movement took a decisive turn when it was joined by a new type of opposition figure, the young Ottoman military and civilian officers serving in Macedonia. Witnesses to the tactics of the Macedonian gangs, these young officers espoused a more aggressive and hands-on style. Thereafter the CUP could no longer be accused of being merely a glorified debating society. Men such as Enver, Cemal and Mehmed Talât had their hands on the levers of power, in some cases literally – Talât was the chief Ottoman telegraph official in the important city of Salonica. In 1906 they sent representatives to Europe to liaise closely with Ahmed Rıza's faction of the CUP and agreed to reestablish their own group, previously known as the Ottoman Freedom Society, as its domestic branch, and to establish a network of branches inside Ottoman territory, effectively taking over the CUP the following year.

### Deposition, counterrevolution and internal exile, 1909–18

With this activist group taking control of the CUP organisation and the worsening situation in Macedonia, events moved swiftly. Discontent among the Ottoman army was already apparent, but the main source of concern was the escalating situation in Macedonia. In the mean time, Britain and Russia were moving towards a rapprochement inspired by their mutual anxieties over the rise of Germany. In June 1908 King Edward VII and Tsar Nicholas II met at Reval on the Baltic to resolve their differences, among them the situation in the Balkans. They discussed a plan for foreign control that would leave Abdülhamid with only nominal control over his most important Balkan territories. When word of this arrangement, accompanied by rumours of the planned dismemberment of the empire as a whole, reached Salonica, the CUP officers swung into action. Fearing that the sultan would bow to international pressure and perhaps aware that his agents were on the verge of discovering their organisation, Enver and others took to the hills demanding the restoration of the Ottoman constitution. Abdülhamid II responded by sending a delegation of officers and a contingent of Anatolian troops to restore order, but one of the key officers was killed and many of the troops refused to fight. Abdülhamid, seeing the weakness of his position, agreed to restore the constitution and to reconvene parliament after a period of thirty years of abeyance. The Constitutional Revolution had arrived, and with it a new era in Ottoman and Turkish politics. Abdülhamid remained on the throne but his power was now seriously curtailed. In the aftermath of a briefly successful counter-revolution in

## The reign of Abdülhamid II

the name of the *şeriat* led by *ulema*, religious students and soldiers in April 1909, the CUP forced the sultan to abdicate even though he seems to have studiously avoided any role in the counter-coup. He was bundled into a train and sent off to Salonica, where he would remain under guard with his family until the city was on the verge of falling to Greece during the Balkan wars. He was then brought back to the capital where he remained in Beylerbeyi palace on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.

Abdülhamid died there in February 1918, when the Great War and the empire itself were in their final stages. His body was taken in a formal procession before the large crowd that had gathered, many with tears in their eyes, to pay their respects to the last Ottoman sultan who had ruled with absolute power. He was buried in a *türbe* (mausoleum) on the central Divan Yolu in old Istanbul alongside that of his mother, his grandfather Mahmud II, his uncle Abdülaziz and several other members of the Ottoman royal family. His tomb, a modernised nineteenth-century version of the traditional imperial resting place for sultans, looks out over a modern tramway and the cacophonous mixture of East and West that is today's Istanbul – in many ways a fitting scene for a man so instrumental in propelling the Ottoman Empire into the modern world.



## The Second Constitutional Period, 1908–1918

M. ŞÜKRÜ HANIOĞLU

The Young Turk Revolution of July 1908 inaugurated the Second Constitutional Period, which lasted until the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918.<sup>1</sup> Today the Young Turk Revolution and the decade that followed it are typically regarded as if enclosed in historical brackets, as a sort of transition period from late Ottoman history to the Republican era. Yet to contemporaries, the revolution was a watershed. The revolutionaries themselves counted their achievement among the three great 'July events' of modern history: the French Revolution; the American Declaration of Independence; and the Great Ottoman Revolution.<sup>2</sup> We need not accept this verdict, born of a contemporary's exaggerated sense of self-importance, to recognise that in the interlude between 1908 and the subsequent upheavals in China (1911) and Russia (1917), revolutionaries the world over looked to the Ottomans for inspiration. A century later, we are now in a position to see that the events of 1908–18 had a profound effect on the emergence of the modern Middle East and Balkans. Not only did the repercussions of the revolution transform late Ottoman society, laying the foundations for the Republic of Turkey, they remade the political landscape in an area stretching from Basra on the Persian Gulf to Scutari in Albania not far from the Adriatic.

1 Strictly speaking, the period could be said to extend to the occupation of the Ottoman capital in March 1920, to the acceptance of a new constitution by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in January 1921, or even to the formal abolition of the sultanate in November 1922. For the purposes of this chapter, however, it ends with the Mudros armistice, concluded on 30 October 1918.

2 Address titled 'Temmuz İnkılâbât ve İhtilâlâtı ve Osmanlı İnkılâb-ı Kebîri' (July Revolutions and Radical Transformations and The Great Ottoman Revolution), read at the first post-revolutionary congress of the Committee of Union and Progress in October–November 1908: private papers of Dr Bahaeddin Şakir.

## The legacy of the First Constitutional Period

The Second Constitutional Period emerged from the shadow of the first, and bore the burden of its ambiguous legacy. The Ottoman parliamentary order was inaugurated on 19 March 1877, amidst an international crisis that threatened the integrity of the empire. Born of a tenuous compromise between reformist statesmen and a new, ambitious sultan, it survived less than a year. The first constitution was a weak construction that hardly limited the supremacy of the sultan, to whom it granted sweeping powers, such as the authority to exile individuals without trial. It also omitted many fundamental rights, such as the right to assemble peacefully or form political parties. The constitution provided for a carefully selected chamber of ‘yes-men’, whose unswerving loyalty trumped any inclination to express something beyond pleasant advice to the sovereign. When the deputies attempted to move from acclamation to criticism, or perhaps even to legislate like their counterparts in France or Great Britain, their fate was sealed. It was not only the legislative and critical functions of the parliament that the sultan feared, but the more fundamental danger posed by the principle of representation in a multinational empire seething with religious strife and separatist discontent.<sup>3</sup> On 13 February 1878, Abdülhamid II exercised his new constitutional prerogatives and prorogued the chamber of deputies indefinitely. Thereafter the constitutional façade was maintained, but retained little substance.

The constitution represented a novelty in a state with shallow traditions of the rule of law. Its chances of placing limitations on executive power were in any case slim. The real restraints on imperial power during the nineteenth century had come from the bureaucracy. And it was Abdülhamid II’s success in quashing the independence of the Sublime Porte that led to the centralisation of power in the court and inadvertently paved the way for the revolutionary rise of a new and more dangerous rival for power – the military.

## The revolution

The so-called Young Turk Revolution was not, as the name suggests, a large-scale popular uprising of Young Turks throughout the empire; nor was it a liberal reform movement, as was assumed by many at the time. Rather, it was a well-planned military insurrection, conceived and executed in Macedonia by a conspiratorial organisation – the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress

<sup>3</sup> As expressed by a confidant of the sultan, Ahmed Midhat, in ‘Parlâmentolar’, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, 1 May 1896.

(hereafter CUP) – whose leadership harboured quintessentially conservative aims: to seize control of the empire and save it from collapse.<sup>4</sup> The long-term success of the conspirators depended upon latent opposition to the sultan's rule among wide swaths of the population. But their immediate success rested on an alliance between three major elements: the expatriate opposition group the CUP; key officers in the Ottoman military; and several of the guerrilla organisations of Macedonia.

One of the important stepping stones on the path to revolution was the merger in 1907 between the Paris-based opposition group the Committee of Progress and Union (the title used by the committee from mid-1906 until the summer of 1908, hereafter CPU) and the Salonican association of Ottoman officers and bureaucrats known as the Ottoman Freedom Society. The merger enabled the CPU to expand its membership base enormously within the army and turn its focus to Macedonia, then undergoing civil war and in danger of European-sponsored partition. The new focus compelled the CPU to tone down the Turkist element of its propaganda and switch to Ottomanism, a platform better suited to the staging of a rebellion in the ethnic *mélange* of Macedonia. The plan called for the conversion of Ottoman military units into large armed bands, similar to the nationalist guerrilla groups fighting each other in Macedonia at the time (including Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Kutzovlach, Macedo-Bulgarian and Serbian groups), under officers loyal to the CPU. These bands, in conjunction with a CPU gendarme force of self-sacrificing volunteers, were to assassinate important Ottoman officials, seize control of key points in the province, and demand the reinstatement of the constitution. Although success hinged on an alliance with the Albanians – who formed a majority among the Muslims of European Turkey, and without whom victory was inconceivable – the CPU counted on at least tacit support from the non-Muslim bands of Macedonia, in order to portray the revolt as an all-Ottoman revolution and thereby forestall the threat of European intervention.

Two bits of news precipitated the CUP's decision to act in July 1908. First, rumours of a new Anglo-Russian initiative for extensive reform in Macedonia, which threatened to deprive the Ottoman Empire of its tenuous foothold in Europe, reached the CUP leadership. Second, intelligence of a planned pre-emptive strike by the sultan's security apparatus to crush the committee and nip the rebellion in the bud arrived at CUP headquarters. Starting on 3 July 1908, the so-called National Battalions, which were Ottoman military units that defected

4 For more on the CUP and the background to the revolution, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 210 ff.

under the command of CUP members, took to the mountains. Several of the local Macedonian bands joined the rebels, as did many Ottoman military units, including the crucial reserve divisions sent by the sultan from Anatolia to crush them. On the political front, the CUP, in conjunction with several Albanian committees, managed to stage a gathering of Albanians and portray it as a mass ‘Ottoman’ demonstration demanding the reinstatement of the constitution. Other demonstrations followed throughout European Turkey, and all major military divisions in the area declared their sympathy for the rebellion.

By mid-July, the movement had gained such strength that the CUP leaders were convinced they could lead the Second and Third Ottoman Armies in a march on the capital – just as the Rumelian notables had done exactly one hundred years earlier, when they ousted Sultan Mustafa IV and imposed the Deed of Agreement upon Mahmud II. Under the circumstances, the sultan yielded. On 23/24 July 1908 he issued an imperial decree for the convening of a new chamber of deputies.<sup>5</sup> Incredibly, the revolution was so localised at the outset that news of it did not reach the public in Istanbul, the Asiatic provinces and Tripoli of Barbary until after the reinstatement of the constitution. It was only at this point that people began to pour out into the streets of towns all over the empire and that the rebellion in Macedonia began to take on the form of a pan-Ottoman popular revolution. Ordinary Ottomans in various parts of the empire seized the opportunity to rid themselves of all vestiges of imperial authority, such as irksome officials and burdensome taxes. But as they were soon to find out, this was a very different sort of revolution, if indeed it could be considered a revolution at all. In fact, official CUP communiqués issued during July 1908 labelled it an ‘implementation’ (*icra’at*), a ‘period of implementation and action’ (‘*devre-i icra’at ve fa’aliyet*’) and a ‘movement for radical transformation’ (*harekat-ı inkılâbiye*), refraining from using the word for revolution, *ihtilâl*.<sup>6</sup> After the fact, publications by leading CUP members employed the term *inkılâb*, meaning radical transformation.<sup>7</sup>

### The aftermath of the revolution, 1908–14

The Young Turk Revolution overthrew the Hamidian regime under the banner of ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice’. In its place, the revolutionaries

5 ‘Tebliğât-ı resmîye’, *İkdam*, 24 July, 1908.

6 See the undated CUP communiqué of this period: private papers of Dr Bahaeddin Şakir.

7 See, for example, Ahmed Niyazi, *Hatırât-ı Niyazi yahud tarihçe-i İnkılâb-ı Kebîr-i Osmani’den bir sahîfe* (Istanbul: n. p., 1324 [1908]), and Ahmed Refik, *İnkılâb-ı azîm* (Istanbul: n. p., 1324 [1908]).

promised a constitutional monarchy founded upon the rule of law. They envisaged a parliamentary democracy headed by a responsible government and administered by a meritocratic bureaucracy. They expected political parties to replace age-old institutions, such as notable houses and religious orders, as the principal mediums of political participation. They stood for a new fraternal Ottoman identity, united against European intervention in the affairs of the empire. They spoke of a free press, and of virtually unlimited individual liberties. Very few of these things came to pass.

It was not that the revolution produced no change – it set in motion radical transformations in many fields – but rather that the changes it brought about, like those of most revolutions, differed markedly from the expectations of its true believers. The 1908 revolution was unprecedented in three respects. For one, its heroes were conservatives, who viewed their essential task not as destruction and creative reconstruction, but rather as conservation and survival. Somewhat hastily labelled ‘liberals’ by hopeful Europeans, the CUP leaders actually viewed themselves primarily as saviours of the empire. Second, their aim was not destructive but restorative. Unlike the French revolutionaries of 1789, the CUP did not destroy an *ancien régime* in order to build a new one in its stead; unlike the Iranian revolutionaries of 1905–6, they did not replace an absolutist monarch with a novel constitutional regime; nor could they even take credit for inaugurating a brand new consultative body, such as the Russian Duma that emerged from the 1905 revolution. Formally, the conservative leaders of the CUP brought about a *restoration* of the constitutional sultanate established in 1876 and subsequently suspended in practice. Third, the Young Turk Revolution resulted in the gradual emergence of a radically new type of regime that was to become frighteningly familiar in the twentieth century: one-party rule. The CUP retained the sultan, but reduced his stature. It reintroduced the parliament, but under tight control. In the palace, in the bureaucracy and within the military, it was the CUP that, working from behind the scenes but through the existing institutions of government, came to pull the strings of imperial power.

The first challenge confronting the CUP after the reinstatement of the constitution by force was the restoration of order in the empire. The spread of anarchy in the immediate aftermath of the revolution troubled these conservative revolutionaries, whose power was still limited to the European provinces. Accordingly, in conjunction with the Ottoman authorities, they did what they could to prevent the crowds from getting out of control. Still, the first months following the revolution were characterised by a considerable amount of chaos and some new freedoms. Most of the Hamidian bans on organisation and

assembly were lifted overnight, leading to a proliferation of large-scale political demonstrations, economic boycotts, organised workers' strikes and feminist gatherings, all on a scale and frequency unheard of in the Ottoman world up to that point. The spread of strikes, in particular, to small towns with significant worker populations threatened both disorder and economic paralysis.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after the revolution, the CUP made an appeal for the crowds to disperse and return to their homes and places of work.<sup>9</sup> Eventually, they turned to legislation and strict law enforcement as a means of preserving public order.

The preservation of the existing institutions of government was natural for the CUP. All the same, it was a remarkable aspect of the 'revolution'. As there was no legal change in the status of the state, the problem of obtaining international recognition did not even arise. More importantly, the preservation of the old regime reduced the amount of internal opposition faced by the CUP at the outset, thereby simplifying immeasurably their task of asserting control over the machinery of government. Of course, the preservation of the state and its institutions was only one part of the CUP programme; another was the 'restoration' of parliamentary rule. To fulfil this pledge, the CUP immediately pressured the government to schedule the elections promised by the sultan in his capitulatory decree. A transitional government, composed of the *paşas* of the old regime and acting at the behest of the CUP central committee, decreed elections for November–December 1908.

The 1908 elections were remarkably fair; indeed, they may be considered the first and last true elections of this period. In principle, all tax-paying males over the age of twenty-five were eligible to vote. A minimum age of thirty and knowledge of the Turkish language were required of deputies. Every 500 voters elected a representative to an electoral college in a given district, out of a list of candidates drawn up by municipal administrators. Each 50,000 electors selected one of their own to be sent to the chamber of deputies.<sup>10</sup> The number of deputies in the chamber fluctuated according to changes in the size of the population; the chamber of deputies of 1908 had 275 deputies, that of 1912, 278, and the one following the 1914 elections, 255.

The major bone of contention between the CUP and the various ethnolnational communities was the method of representation. Many nationalist

8 See, for example, telegrams from the sub-governor of Zonguldak, [26 August 1908]/no. 86 and [8 October 1908]/no. 121, BOA-BEO/Anadolu-yu Şâhâne Mutasarrıflığı Gelen, 68/19.

9 'Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin dün gazetelerde tebliğ ettiği beyannâme'den', *Neyyir-i Hakikat* 15, [17 August 1908], p. 3.

10 *Düstûr*, vol. II/1 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1329 [1911]), pp. 18 ff.

organisations, with the Greeks in the forefront, vigorously protested against the system of universal representation, maintaining that it would work to the disadvantage of minorities and give Muslims, and especially Turks, disproportionate representation. They demanded quotas for ethno-religious groups,<sup>11</sup> and even threatened to boycott the elections. In the event, deputies of Turkish origin obtained half of the seats in the chamber of deputies, while other Ottoman communities received fair proportional representation despite the absence of quotas.

The elections themselves were celebrated in a carnival atmosphere; huge crowds escorted ballot boxes to the counting centres, bearing flags and placards. The CUP's immense popularity in the wake of the revolution, and their untouchable position as a *comité de salut public*, virtually guaranteed a landslide victory. Still, the free nature of the elections introduced into the chamber many independently minded deputies, and they later formed the core of the opposition to the CUP – a lesson it never forgot.

Whatever liberal affinities the CUP leaders harboured prior to and immediately following the revolution quickly gave way to authoritarian tendencies. Ensuring the survival of the empire in the face of internal and external predators, they felt, necessitated and therefore justified strong measures, including the restriction of fundamental liberties. In any case, it was perhaps inevitable that a conspiratorial party that had carried out a revolution through the exercise of raw power should seek to dominate the post-revolutionary political playing field, as Gamal Abdul Nasser's Free Officers were to rediscover almost half a century later in Egypt. If the anarchic aftermath of the revolution was one development that diminished the CUP's appetite for liberalism, concern over the outcome of the elections was another.

Although the CUP enjoyed a majority in the first chamber of deputies and successfully kept the government on a short leash, its hold on power was far from absolute. As the novelty of the revolution began to wear off, opposition emerged. There were liberals who complained of the CUP's heavy-handed rule; bureaucrats, led by Mehmed Kâmil Paşa, who still dreamt of a restoration of the supremacy of the Sublime Porte; nationalist and proto-nationalist societies that took issue with the CUP's narrow definition of Ottomanism; local groups frustrated at the increasing centralisation of power and the revocation of privileges granted under the old regime; Islamists critical of the secular attributes of the new regime; and socialists who took issue with its socio-economic policies. From very early on, the CUP faced repeated demands

<sup>11</sup> 'Rumların programı', *Sabah*, 2 September 1908.

by political opponents that it relinquish its vague and untouchable status at the pinnacle of power. The insistence of the Central Committee on wielding power from the shadows (see below) provoked fervent outcries both from opportunist opponents and from genuine proponents of liberalism. Specific complaints centred on the super-exclusive status of the committee as saviour of the fatherland and the many prerogatives it exercised, ranging from the right to send telegrams free of charge to its habit of bypassing official channels to offer guidance to central and local governments. A notable liberal critic of the CUP's privileged status and authoritarian tendencies was Sabahaddin Bey, who had fought against the CUP in exile as leader of the League of Private Initiative and Decentralisation. A devout follower of Edmond Demolins, Sabahaddin Bey denounced the dictatorial *étatisme* of the CUP. Instead, he advocated private initiative and decentralisation as the twin remedies for the deep-seated maladies of Ottoman society. The popularity of this alternative among Turks suffered from its inherent appeal to non-Turkish separatists, many of whom made it a key plank of their opposition platform.<sup>12</sup>

The emergence of opposition confronted the CUP with a dilemma, for they could not quash it without betraying the ideals of the revolution. But to accept opposition as a fact of life threatened to undermine their hold on power. As solution to this conundrum, the CUP, soon after the revolution, attempted to absorb or co-opt rival organisations. Some, like the League of Private Initiative and Decentralisation, were falsely declared to have voluntarily merged with the CUP;<sup>13</sup> professional associations, such as the merchants' unions, were mobilised or subsumed under the CUP organisational framework;<sup>14</sup> CUP divisions were created to cater to key interest groups such as women<sup>15</sup> or the *ulema*;<sup>16</sup> and various nationalist organisations were targeted for co-option.<sup>17</sup>

But such measures could not completely stifle dissent. Many organisations, especially those representing various nationalist groups, refused to play along with the CUP. They sought to maintain their independence and contested CUP

12 One of the major Arab nationalist organisations of the period, for instance, named itself the Party of Decentralisation: Ahmad 'Izzat al-A'zami, *al-Qadiyya al-'Arabiyya: asbabuha muqaddamatuha tatarawwuruha wa-nata'ijuha* (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-sha'b, 1932), p. 41. For Sabahaddin Bey's denial of any intent to appeal to such groups, see M[ehmed] Sabahaddin, *Teşebbüs-i şahsî ve tevsi'-i me'zuniyet hakkında bir uzah* (Istanbul: Necm-i İstikbâl Matbaası, 1324 [1908]), pp. 6–7.

13 'Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Merkezi'nden', *Sabah*, 23 August 1908.

14 'İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin itimadnâmesi', *Sabah*, 4 September 1908.

15 Emine Semiye, 'İsmet Hakkı Hanımefendi'yle bir hasbihâl', *İkdam*, 29 August 1908.

16 *Takvim-i Vekayi'*, 3571 (10 June 1335 [1919]), p. 133.

17 [Ahmed Cemal], *Cemal Paşa hatıratı, 1913–1922* (Istanbul: Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekâsı, 1339 [1923]), pp. 246–7.



hegemony. Faced with the impossibility of eliminating opposition through persuasion, the CUP leaders resigned themselves – much like the sultan, whose efforts to dissolve the CUP and all political organisations in the aftermath of the revolution met with rejection<sup>18</sup> – to the existence of independent organisations, including rival political parties. New parties began to emerge soon after the revolution, covering the entire range of the political spectrum. Among these were the religious-conservative Mohammedan Union Party, the centre-left Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the Moderate Freedom-Lovers' Party. However, none of these parties was strong enough to mount an independent challenge to the CUP and they thus tended to coalesce into heterogeneous opposition blocs. The inescapable fact of one-party rule within an ostensibly multi-party system produced tensions that tore apart the fragile fabric of parliamentary democracy. Relations between the CUP and the opposition began to follow a pattern of oppression and conspiracy. In fact, during the entire Second Constitutional Period, power was not once transferred peaceably. And for much of it, power was not really transferred at all.

In April 1909, elements of the opposition united in support of a military uprising in the capital. That a military coup was possible nearly nine months after the revolution requires explanation. Clearly, CUP rule was tenuous, its control over the armed forces incomplete. Immediately after coming to power, the CUP had attempted to expand its hold over the military by removing officers loyal to the sultan. They purged many of the unschooled officers who had risen through the ranks with the blessing of the sultan, who consistently placed loyalty above merit. They revoked certain promotions and decorations decreed by the sultan for his most loyal officers. And they replaced the untrustworthy imperial army in the capital with the so-called 'hunter battalions' from Rumelia. Such measures provoked considerable resentment among the injured parties, who, realising that their time would soon be up, sprang to action. The coup brought CUP domination to a temporary halt. But its leadership was quick to rally supporters in Ottoman Europe. Combining volunteers with the principal divisions of the Ottoman Second and Third Armies in Europe – the very same units upon which it had depended in 1908 – the CUP assembled an Action Army, and marched on Istanbul in force to crush the rebellion.

The open challenge mounted against the CUP in April 1909 prompted its leaders to crack down on political opposition as such. Prevailing upon a reluctant parliament, they drove through a series of controversial measures designed

<sup>18</sup> Grand vezir's office to the inspector general in Salonica, [24 July 1908]/no. 1012, BOA-BEO/Şifre Telgrafnâme, 981-61/15.

to curtail fundamental liberties that posed a threat to CUP domination. To restore order and put a stop to political demonstrations, they imposed martial law, a tool used with increasing regularity in later years. To halt labour unrest, they drafted the heavy-handed Law of Strikes, which banned strikes in all public services and dissolved the labour unions in this sector.<sup>19</sup> To stifle dissent, they issued the Press Law, which restricted freedom of the press. A good example of the CUP's evolving approach to public order was the 'Law of Vagabonds', passed in May 1909. This defined a vagabond as an individual who had not sought employment for two months. 'Vagabonds' were to be arrested, tried and either forced to work in public service or sent back to their birthplace. No appeals were possible.<sup>20</sup>

The pattern of subordinating individual rights to the supreme interests of the state (as interpreted by the CUP) accorded with the ideological predilections of the CUP leadership, most of whom were deeply influenced by a mixture of eighteenth-century French materialism, mid-nineteenth-century German *Vulgärmaterialismus*, late nineteenth-century French solidarism and positivism. As a leading CUP ideologue, Ziya Gökalp, summed it up in his famous poem, 'Duty':

I do not have rights, interests, and desires  
I have my duty, and do not need anything else  
....  
I close my eyes  
I perform my duty.<sup>21</sup>

But opposition continued. In 1911, the same elements that had come together in 1909 to oppose the regime determined to strike once again. But this time their method of choice was political. In November 1911, they formed a new umbrella party, the Liberal Entente, which contained elements as diverse as *ulema* and non-Muslim liberals. The formation of the Liberal Entente was a watershed. Not only did it pose the first serious democratic challenge to CUP rule; from this point on politics became a bipolar struggle, as even parties and nationalist clubs that did not join the Liberal Entente backed it as the major political vehicle for opposition to the CUP.<sup>22</sup> Within twenty days of its formation,

19 Anti-strike legislation began as a temporary law on 8 September 1908 and, after minor adaptations, became regular law on 9 August 1909. See *Düstür*, vol. II/1, pp. 88–90 and 433–6.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 169–73.

21 Ziya Gökalp, *Yeni hayat* (Istanbul: Yeni Mecuma, 1918), p. 17.

22 Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası: II. Meşrutiyet döneminde İttihat ve Terakki'ye karşı çıkanlar* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1990), pp. 50–4.

to the amazement of everyone, the Liberal Entente won a big victory in a by-election held in the capital. Many provincial representatives elected on the CUP ticket saw where the wind was blowing and submitted their resignations to the Committee. To stem the tide, the CUP engineered snap general elections between February and April 1912. Determined to avoid a repetition of the experience of 1908–12, they adopted new measures to control these elections (nicknamed, for this reason, ‘the Elections with the Stick’), including direct intervention in the campaign process, arrest of political opponents, banning of opposition meetings, shutdown of opposition newspapers, use of government resources to support CUP candidates and, finally, corruption of the counting process. CUP intervention was almost certainly responsible for the crushing defeat of the opposition, which managed to retain a mere 6 seats in the 278-seat chamber of deputies.

Frustrated yet again by CUP control of the democratic process, the opposition resorted once more to force. In an echo of 1908, they capitalised on a nationalist uprising in Albania to induce various Albanian commanders in the Ottoman military to mutiny in July 1912. This provoked a major cabinet crisis, in the course of which first the recalcitrant minister of war and then the entire CUP-backed government resigned only one day after receiving their initial vote of confidence. A new government formed under the leadership of the decorated war hero Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, who was not a CUP sympathiser. Assuming it could obtain an easy vote of no-confidence from the chamber of deputies in the event of a clash with the government, the CUP did not at first react. But unknown to the Committee, a secret military organisation, the Group of Saviour Officers, had come into being with the encouragement of a number of high-ranking commanders sidelined by the CUP. On 25 July 1912 this group issued an ultimatum demanding the dismissal of the chamber of deputies. The new, independent grand vezir seized the opportunity to ask the senate, composed of officers and high-ranking officials appointed by the sultan for life, to dismiss the chamber of deputies. Although the senate had little more than ceremonial significance, among its functions was the issue of decrees dissolving the chamber of deputies and calling for new elections, pending approval by the sultan. More significantly, it was an unreformed appendage of the old regime, consisting of prominent Ottomans who owed their careers to the sultan and could therefore be expected to side with the opponents of the CUP if the latter faltered. That the CUP had not seen fit to control this body until 1912 was therefore a serious error. On this occasion, the senate, approving of this civil coup against the CUP, dismissed the chamber convened less than four months before.

In effect, the putsch of July 1912 marked the end of the Ottoman parliamentary experiment. Significantly, the CUP was not the organisation responsible for its termination. The chamber of deputies would not meet again until after the elections of 1914, but by then the CUP had established a virtual one-party regime. Thereafter, as the mobilisation effort shifted power to the executive, the parliament lost much of its potency and met with decreasing frequency. During the decade-long Second Constitutional Period, the chamber was in session for only four-and-a-half years (with interruptions). Between December 1908 and July 1912 it held 473 sittings, whereas from 1915 to 1918 it held only 253 sittings.<sup>23</sup>

Shorn of its most effective political weapon, an obedient legislature, and faced with opposition from within its main power base, the army, the CUP had no choice but to capitulate. Once again, the force of the opposition revealed the fragility of CUP control, both civilian and military, four years after the revolution. One of the new factors that contributed to the strengthening of domestic opposition at this juncture was the accumulation of foreign policy failures (see below). Although the CUP attempted to capitalise on the heroic role played by CUP officers in the defence of Tripoli and Cyrenaica against the Italians in 1911–12, on balance the criticism of the CUP over the war strengthened the opposition immensely.

For a brief period, from August 1912 to January 1913, the CUP, beaten and humiliated, rejoined the ranks of the opposition. The government of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, and the succeeding one under Mehmed Kâmil Paşa, worked hard to crush the Committee. The formation immediately after this episode of an ideological challenge in the form of the Nationalist Constitutional Party, a Turkist organisation critical of the CUP's lip service to Ottomanism, damaged the Committee's standing still further. But the state of emergency and panic surrounding the Balkan crisis of late 1912 provided an opportunity for the CUP. As the crisis reached a fever pitch, the Committee organised mass rallies in support of war, and launched a large-scale propaganda campaign designed to underscore the government's lack of determination in the face of the threat. Although they failed to realise their main ambition and topple the government, their vocal campaign contributed to the outbreak of the disastrous Balkan Wars, in the course of which enemy forces reached the final Ottoman defence line at Çatalca.

The imminent threat of defeat in the war provided the occasion for the recovery of power by the CUP. On 23 January 1913, a CUP strike force raided

23 Tark Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de siyasal partiler*, vol. III: *İttihat ve Terakki, bir çağın, bir kuşağın, bir partinin tarihi* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), p. 171.

the grand vezir's office, forced him to resign, and compelled the sultan to rubber-stamp the appointment of a new cabinet. The opposition struck back six months later, on 1 July 1913, when a group of hired assassins murdered the grand vezir, Mahmud Şevket Paşa. This action, however, proved insufficient to dislodge the CUP, which launched a harsh campaign of repression, in the course of which a large number of dissidents, ranging from *ulema* to socialists, were rounded up and sent into exile. A thorough purge of the armed forces followed, justified by the poor performance of the CUP's opponents in the first Balkan War. The CUP generals Enver and Cemal Paşas became minister of war and minister of the marine respectively, symbolising the final assertion of Committee control over the military. Single-party rule was solidified and CUP control remained effectively unchallenged until the empire surrendered.

### Political life under the CUP

Initially, the Committee chose to rule from behind the scenes. The conspiratorial mindset of the CUP leaders, their conservative predilections and reluctance to confront tradition, the protection afforded by the continuity of traditional institutions, and a reluctance to expose their young, unknown and inexperienced cadres to the risks of public scrutiny – all these considerations may have played a role in the decision to stay in the shadows. Whatever the reasoning behind it, the decision not to publicise the names of the central committee members shrouded the CUP in mystery, laying the foundations for an institutional cult that would replace the personality cult that had surrounded Sultan Abdülhamid II. The Committee regarded itself – and wanted to be seen by others – as the sacred agent of imperial redemption and the guarantor of the empire's future security. The veil was lifted somewhat during the first open congress of the CUP in 1909, but the aura of secrecy remained till the end of the empire. In any event, the decision meant that the very fact of CUP power – its physical hold on the reins of government – was hidden from the public view at the outset. The Committee did not at first visibly take over the traditional institutions of power, the court and the Sublime Porte. But it did control their actions. Thus, if a governor seemed unreliable, the CUP would order the grand vezir to fire him. If a military unit was suspected of disloyalty, the Committee had the minister of war carry out a purge. The capricious edicts of the sultan were thus replaced by equally whimsical decrees issued by the anonymous members of the central committee. In addition, starting with the appointment of Talât Bey (Paşa) as minister of the interior and of Mehmed Cavid Bey as minister of finance in 1909, the CUP also gradually started to

exercise direct control over important offices, a process that ended in its total domination of the bureaucracy in 1913.

Despite the secrecy, a few details about key individuals within the CUP leadership have become apparent. The crucial reorganisation of the CUP on the road to revolution was carried out by Dr Bahaeddin Şakir, a representative of the activist faction, in 1905–6. The shift to an activist platform marginalised the hitherto predominant intellectuals within the Committee. Dr Bahaeddin Şakir, frequently described as the Stalin of the CUP, and Dr Nâzım, another of the architects of the reorganisation, became the *éminences grises* of the organisation. Although they distanced themselves from intellectual debate, they also represented the Turkist ideological strand within the Committee. The hand of the men of action was strengthened by the merger with the Ottoman Freedom Society, following which Talât Bey (Paşa), organiser of dissident activity in Salonica, rose to prominence. The revolution itself naturally strengthened the position of military men within the Committee. Two officers in particular, Enver and Cemal Beys (Paşas), later stood out and became the military leaders of the CUP. Though scholarship has spoken of a triumvirate of Enver, Cemal and Talât Beys (Paşas), in reality the situation was more complex. First, Dr Bahaeddin Şakir and Dr Nâzım continued to be very influential in decision making in the early years following the revolution. Second, as the CUP came to control more areas of government and society, new leaders appeared. The need to deal with such fields of specialised policy as economics and societal mobilisation pushed men like Mehmed Cavid Bey, a financial expert, and Kara Kemal Bey, an organiser of societies and cooperatives, into the limelight. Finally, the renewed need for an ideological framework for action brought Ziya Gökalp to the fore. A self-taught sociologist and devout follower of Durkheim, he was awarded a seat on the central committee in 1912. There were few men of charisma among the senior leadership. The military hero Enver Bey was an exception, but he gained power as an individual only during the Great War. As a rule, decisions were taken collectively, and there was no deviation from the discipline required for the projection of the institutional cult. The shared interest in thwarting the rise of any one individual to a position of prominence ensured that this practice continued.

The very nature of the CUP as an organisation remained somewhat murky in the aftermath of the revolution. On the one hand, it grew into something approaching a mass party. At the same time, it retained its conspiratorial qualities and avoided the full institutionalisation of one-party rule. The CUP never formally abolished or outlawed rival parties or non-party organisations in the empire. Ostensibly, all Ottoman political organisations were equal before the

law throughout the Second Constitutional Period. To maintain the pretence of a free, multi-party system, the CUP in 1909 resorted to the fictitious distinction between the ‘committee’ (*cemiyet*) and the parliamentary group supporting it, which was the ‘party’ (*fırka*). There was little substance to this distinction, as the committee nominated all deputies and senators in its parliamentary faction. In 1913, the CUP expanded its definition of ‘the party’ to include the committee itself as well as the organisation’s press organs.<sup>24</sup> But by then, its control of the political system was assured.

The structure of the CUP in power exemplifies these ambiguities. In theory, the general congress of the CUP constituted the highest decision-making body of the organisation. The congress, which met annually, was made up of the members of the central committee, deputies and senators who were CUP members (between 1911 and 1913 only their representatives attended), representatives of the local organisations and clubs, general inspectors, and editors of the Committee’s official organs; it appointed the central committee members and revised organisational regulations. In practice, the supreme decision-making organ of the CUP was the central committee – a secretive board of between seven and twelve individuals (the number fluctuated), which issued directives to the formal institutions of state: the cabinet, the military and the bureaucracy. Beneath the central committee lay an elaborate structural hierarchy designed to inflate the organisation and create the illusion of mass participation, as well as promote the entrenchment of the CUP in society. But this structure, unlike the Communist Party of the USSR, did not rival or duplicate the executive branch of government. The central committee presided over a number of ‘Special Branches’, which dealt with organisational matters in various sectors, such as women, *ulema*, provincial centres, local and district centres, and military and civil clubs. In 1913, the organisation was restructured. The general congress was preserved and all deputies and senators were again allowed to attend annual meetings. But in addition, a general assembly was created to coordinate the two main policy aspects of CUP activity: its actions as the supreme governing organisation of the state, and its parliamentary activity through party representatives in the chamber of deputies and senate. The assembly was composed of a general director, a legislative secretary and council, an organisational secretary, the members of the central committee, cabinet ministers who were CUP members, and representatives of the general congress. In addition, two new

24 Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti program ve nizamnâmesidir: 1329 senesi Umumî Kongresi’nde tanzim ve kabul olunmuşdur (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Hayriye ve Şürekâsı, 1329 [1913]), p. 14.

departments were formed to increase CUP penetration of society: a provincial organisation department and a department of clubs. A separate department coordinating activity in Istanbul retained its independence.

Incredibly, the seat of the central committee of the CUP remained in Salonica, where the annual congresses were also held, until 1912. This fact helps explain the tenuousness of the CUP's position in the early post-revolutionary years and emphasises the extent to which the organisation was a Macedonian phenomenon. After the revolution, as the CUP transformed itself from a highly compartmentalised and conspiratorial organisation into something approaching a mass party, the composition of its membership changed, and its centre of gravity shifted eastwards. As the doors of access to the lower levels of the organisation were thrown open to mass membership, notables and merchants flocked to proliferating local branches of the CUP across the empire. Overwhelmed by a flood of applications for membership, the CUP centre tended to approve petitions for the establishment of local branches on the basis of superficial information concerning their members.<sup>25</sup> To a certain extent, the chaotic formation of local branches only loosely controlled by the centre in Salonica followed the pre-revolutionary pattern of weak control from Paris over the parts of the organisation lying deep within the empire. In both cases, the initiative for new branches was mostly local. But there was a difference: whereas in the pre-revolutionary era, opposition to the status quo constituted the major incentive for CUP applicants, after the revolution prospective members viewed the organisation either as a means for political advancement or as a vehicle for the pursuit of local claims. Thus in Mosul in 1908, two rival CUP branches were formed at about the same time, each claiming exclusivity and vying for recognition by the CUP headquarters in Salonica.<sup>26</sup> By 1910, the number of CUP branches across the empire had multiplied from 83 on the eve of the revolution (several of them just minor cells) to 360, while membership grew from roughly 2,250 to 850,000;<sup>27</sup> although the CUP had clearly become a mass organisation, the extent of central control over this unwieldy structure was debatable. In any case, the provincial appendages of the CUP were largely cut off from the process of policy formulation at the centre. They were also institutionally detached from policy implementation, which was still in the hands of the traditional bureaucracy.

25 'Osmanlı İnkılâb-ı Kebîri nasıl oldu?', *Musavver Salnâme-i Servet-i Fünûn* 1 [1910], pp. 102–3.

26 Governor Zeki Paşa to the grand vezir's office, Mosul [1 October 1908]/no. 390, BOA-BEO/Şifre Telgrafnâme, 693–28/4.

27 'Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti', *Haftalık Şûra-yı Ümmet*, 203 [13 January 1910].



Although the CUP grew and became increasingly institutionalised, it never became a true mass party within which power could be rendered legitimate and participatory in the Bolshevik or Nazi sense. On the surface, this was due to the lack of charismatic leadership; the CUP never produced a Lenin or a Hitler. But just as significantly, this failure may be traced to the same combination of ideological deficiencies and structural barriers that had thwarted the attempts of its predecessors to establish a sound political basis for the modern Ottoman state. The main task that the CUP leaders took upon themselves was the preservation of the multinational empire. There were two problems with this programme: first, it was essentially a conservative platform that held little potential for galvanising the masses into undertaking a vast effort of destruction and reconstruction. Second, the status quo held little appeal for large segments of the population. There was a fundamental incompatibility between the aims of the Turkist core of the CUP and those of the non-Turkish populations of the empire. Indeed, the main threat to the survival of the empire came from separatism on the periphery. To win over the separatists, the CUP adopted a prudent policy of inclusiveness. But the inclusion of diverse population groups with little in common within the ranks of a single party inevitably led to ideological incoherence. There was no class or ethnic basis for membership. There was only a vague and shifting interpretation of Ottomanism. Not surprisingly, the political platforms of the various branches contradicted each other and that of the central committee, which controlled them only weakly. In this sense – as well as in the conservative agenda buried under the revolutionary rhetoric – the CUP resembled the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, which dominated Mexican politics for much of the twentieth century. Ultimately, the CUP's power depended upon its control over the army and on the perception that it was the only force capable of defending the empire. Under the near-constant threat of war from abroad and rebellion at home, this was a strong case.

The tugging and pulling between political parties masked a more fundamental set of changes in the traditional balance of forces within the Ottoman political system brought about by the CUP. These affected the court, the Sublime Porte, the legislature and the military. The sultan, who had barely escaped deposition by making himself the father of the constitutional regime, prudently assumed a low profile immediately after the revolution. But this did not mean that he accepted its results. On the contrary, he resented his diminished stature in the new regime and his role as a legitimising figurehead charged with rubberstamping central committee decisions. A showdown was therefore inevitable, and it was not long in coming. In early August 1908, the

sultan provoked an open confrontation with the committee by claiming the constitutional authority to nominate the ministers of war and of the navy, in addition to the grand vezir and *şeyhülislâm*. The CUP, overruling him, forced the cabinet to resign. To make sure the message was understood, the central committee dispatched a delegation with detailed policy instructions for the new government,<sup>28</sup> and provided the minister of war with a list of key military appointments he was to make.<sup>29</sup> But the obstructionism of the sultan had convinced the CUP leaders that Abdülhamid II had to go. The ‘counter-revolution’ of 1909 provided the CUP with an ideal pretext for deposing Abdülhamid II, which it arranged on 27 April 1909. The final reduction of the court to insignificance was completed with the accession of Abdülhamid II’s weak successor, Mehmed V (Reşad, r. 1909–18); he displayed little inclination to intervene in affairs of state. Although the CUP leaders initially sought to limit the power of the sultan through constitutional amendments in 1909, they came to realise that a subservient sultan, empowered to act on their behalf, could be of great use in maintaining the façade of a constitutional monarchy. Further amendments, proposed in 1912 and approved in 1914, restored several of the sultan’s more convenient executive powers, such as the authority to prorogue a recalcitrant chamber of deputies. Mehmed V’s successor, Mehmed VI (Vahdeddin, r. 1918–22), exploited the humiliation of the Mudros armistice in 1918 to try to reinstate the power of the court, but to no avail. The institution of the sultanate, for centuries at the heart of Ottoman might and identity, was effectively dead.

Similarly, the Sublime Porte, already cut down to size by Abdülhamid II, lost all hope of restoring the bureaucracy’s former stature in the aftermath of the revolution. At first, the CUP manipulated the traditional rivalry between the court and the Sublime Porte by taking away powers from the former, in accordance with its overall strategy of weakening the sultan, and giving them to the latter. But these were minor concessions, such as the restoration of official control over provincial governors, whom Abdülhamid II had made report directly to the palace.<sup>30</sup> The key to the weakening of the bureaucracy lay in the new restraining effects of representational politics. First, the CUP balanced its wariness of a powerful legislature with a willingness to use it, within limits, to control the bureaucracy. Second, the very circumstances brought about by the restoration of a chamber of deputies, as Russia was

28 See the undated, twenty-article instructions given to Rahmi Bey, who led the CUP delegation: private papers of Dr Bahaeddin Şakir.

29 BOA-A.AMD.MV. 90/1 [9 August 1908].

30 BOA/BEO, file 265634 [6 May 1909].

discovering at about the same time, turned the bureaucracy's dreams of a return to unfettered rule into fantasy. As bureaucrats soon found out, simply ignoring the deputies was not an option. When Mehmed Kâmil Paşa (leader of the last effort of officialdom to restore responsible government in 1895)<sup>31</sup> attempted to place the Sublime Porte above the parliament and the CUP, he received the first vote of no confidence in Ottoman history, on 13 February 1909. A third factor that weakened the bureaucracy was its increasing subservience to the CUP. Although actual membership of the CUP – unlike membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – never became a condition for service, loyalty to the Committee became a key criterion for advancement. And while the CUP did not carry out any significant purge of officialdom during the Second Constitutional Period, it did finally assert its direct control in 1913, when leading Committee members took over virtually all important posts in the bureaucracy.

Likewise, the parliament, the prime institutional product of the constitution, soon withered away. Although it was the harbinger of constitutional revolution, the CUP, once in power, developed a distaste for strong legislatures. As adherents of Gustave Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules*, CUP leaders looked down on the motley crew that filled the chamber of deputies.<sup>32</sup> More importantly, they came to share Abdülhamid II's concern about the ability of a strong parliament to undermine the regime and aggravate ethno-religious conflict. Yet they could not afford to betray their revolution by abolishing the parliament; nor were they prepared to lose the parliament's legitimising benefits, as the supposed voice of the people, by openly confronting it. Instead, the CUP managed to bypass the legislature by means of the cabinet. CUP leader Enver Paşa is once said to have remarked: 'If there is no law, make one.'<sup>33</sup> The cabinet began to issue so-called temporary laws confirmed by imperial decrees while the chamber of deputies was not in session. Over time, temporary laws overtook legislation in the parliament as the principal lawmaking mechanism of the state. Many important decisions were confirmed as temporary laws, without any discussion in the chamber. Examples include the grant of autonomous fiefdoms to local Arab leaders,<sup>34</sup> passage of the controversial

31 [Mehmed Kâmil], *Hatırat-ı Sadr-ı Esbak Kâmil Paşa* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1329 [1911]), pp. 108–9, 190–6.

32 Enver Bey (Paşa) to a German woman with whom he frequently corresponded, 'Ayn al-Manşur, 2 September 1912, Ernst Jäckh Papers, Yale University, MSS 466, Box 1, Folder 40.

33 Tunaya, *İttihat ve Terakki*, p. 386.

34 See the temporary law of 22 January 1912, which ratified the Da'ân contract granted to Imam Yahya Hamid al-Din on 20 October 1911: BOA-DVN. 37/1. See also the temporary

Family Law of 1917 (see below) and above all the farcical dismissal of the chamber of deputies on the very day that the fateful German–Ottoman alliance was signed, 2 August 1914. As these examples demonstrate, the CUP was not prepared to tolerate any consequential role for the legislature in a debate on policy, let alone in its formulation.

But if the CUP outmanoeuvred its new competitors and reduced the old nineteenth-century contenders for state power to subservience, it also brought back to the forefront a power broker absent from Ottoman politics for more than a century: the army. The role played by the armed forces in Ottoman politics, often in alliance with the *ulema*, had traditionally been a decisive one. It was to become so once again. Indeed, the very success of the CUP, first in mounting a revolutionary challenge to the *ancien régime*, and then in the struggle to remain in power, rested on its ability to penetrate the armed forces and stage the return of the military to prominence for the first time since the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826. The CUP was a militarised political organisation even before the revolution. The overwhelming majority of CUP members prior to July 1908 were army officers. When the sultan gave in to the CUP's ultimatum in July 1908, he surrendered not to a group of starry-eyed idealists in exile, but to the effective commanders of a substantial portion of the Ottoman military's officer corps. Militarisation of the organisation, in both structure and spirit, continued after the CUP seized power. Shortly after the revolution, the CUP converted the units of self-sacrificing volunteers into a paramilitary force that coexisted uneasily with the military and the constitutional regime. It also established a network of military clubs, through which thousands of new officers swelled the ranks of the organisation's membership.

To the CUP, the army was in the first instance an indispensable tool against domestic and foreign opponents. The opposition's attempts to sunder the deep-seated ideological ties that bound the military to the CUP ultimately failed. Despite legislative measures sponsored by the opposition which prohibited the involvement of military personnel in politics, the CUP managed to maintain its dual political–military character until the collapse of the empire. But the CUP leadership regarded the military as far more than just an instrument of power. For them, it embodied the institutional core of Colmar von der Goltz's idea of 'a nation in arms'. The Committee assigned to the military a significant role in shaping a new, militarised Ottoman society.<sup>35</sup> This was made explicit very

law of 10 September 1914, which ratified the contract granted to 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud on 28 May 1914: BOA-DH.SYS. 25/103.

<sup>35</sup> See Ali Fu'ad, 'Ordu ve millet', *Asker* 1, 1 [3 September 1908], p. 16 and Ahmed Refik, 'Von der Goltz: Hayat ve asân', *Servet-i Fünûn* [15 July 1909], pp. 138–9.

early on. As one of the Committee leaders put it in 1908: ‘The two powers, the CUP and the Ottoman Armed Forces, which have been formed by the great majority of the Ottoman nation, can annihilate the supporters of tyranny at any time.’<sup>36</sup> The establishment of what was in effect a one-party system in 1913 provided the CUP with an opportunity to realise its vision of a nation in arms. One example of this policy was the mobilisation of youth within a paramilitary framework;<sup>37</sup> another was the establishment of a paramilitary Special Organisation composed of CUP leaders and self-sacrificing volunteers directly attached to the ministry of war.

Having displaced the traditional loci of power within the Ottoman political system, the CUP employed new legitimising forces to buttress its rule. The military ethic was the first. The second was the concept of ‘the people’. The claim to rule on behalf of the people was no innovation, although the term employed, *hakimiyet-i millîye* (national sovereignty), was a new one coined by the CUP. But the Committee proved more skilful at giving substance to this fiction than the old regime had ever been, especially through the adroit manipulation of an elected legislative body. The need to bolster authoritarian rule with the appearance of the sanction of the people was the single most important factor behind the CUP’s persistence down the constitutional path, although the parliament caused the CUP nearly as much grief as it had caused Abdülhamid II. The following anecdote is telling. When Lieutenant-Colonel Enver Bey stormed the Sublime Porte at the head of CUP volunteers in the *coup d’état* of 1913, he forced the grand vezir to draft a letter of resignation at gunpoint. The grand vezir accordingly wrote that he had been compelled to resign ‘at the instance of the armed forces’. But Enver Bey insisted that he amend the letter to read: ‘at the instance of *the people* and the armed forces’.<sup>38</sup> Elitism in the political thought of the CUP thus coexisted with an acute awareness of the symbolic value of the power of the people.

The third force that the CUP leaders used in consolidating power was the press. Here again, they were not creating something that had not existed under the old regime. But as members of a conspiratorial organisation in exile, one which had depended upon the clandestine dissemination of smuggled journals and propaganda pamphlets to project their political message, the CUP leaders were especially aware of the capacity of the press to form public opinion,

36 ‘Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Osmanlı ordusu’, *Şûra-yı Ümmet*, 18 October 1908.

37 Zafer Toprak, ‘İttihat ve Terakki’nin paramiliter gençlik örgütleri’, *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi* 7 (1979), pp. 93–113.

38 BOA-A.AMD. 1345/41 (1331.S.14) [23 January 1913].

and highly skilled at its manipulation. Upon coming to power, they formed a host of official and semi-official organs, and a series of other publications, to help them broadcast their message, monopolise public space and consolidate their hold on power. Following the precedent set by Abdülhamid II, they also exercised a severe regime of censorship, beginning in 1913. The combination of a skilful propaganda machine, a loyal press and effective restrictions on freedom of speech ensured that CUP policy gained a favourable reception among large parts of the literate population, while the opposition, which initially posed a fierce challenge to the CUP-sponsored press, was effectively silenced, particularly after 1913.

The Second Constitutional Period also witnessed important changes in the way the central government interacted with the empire's various religious and ethnic communities. The relative freedom of the first few years after 1908 did not do away with existing tensions; on the contrary, it aggravated them. Thus CUP policies only made things worse. The cancellation of all privileges of non-Turkish Muslim groups, the launching of an aggressive centralisation campaign and the demand that all citizens place their Ottoman identity above any other – all these were bound to provoke a strong reaction. As the CUP itself became increasingly penetrated by Turkist ideas, the difference between 'Ottoman' and 'Turkish' became ever more blurred. And as the dominant culture emerged from the convenient ambiguity of Ottomanism, non-Turks began to feel less and less comfortable. Attitudes in the periphery hardened, and the appeal of the alternatives offered by various Christian and Muslim ethno-nationalist organisations grew accordingly. Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian nationalisms were already strong at the time of the revolution. Under the CUP, Albanian and Arab nationalisms became significant movements, while Kurdish and Circassian proto-nationalist sentiments gained momentum. With a centre predisposed to view all demands for the recognition of difference as evidence of separatism, and a periphery decreasingly inclined to compromise, all-out war was inevitable. A strongly Turkist version of Ottomanism faced off against increasingly intransigent nationalisms that at best sought to reduce Ottoman identity to an unimportant, secondary symbol. To be sure, this was primarily a struggle among overrepresented elites; also, it did not infect the more established classes within many of the non-Turkish communities. Even those who had opposed the Hamidian regime – such as the Armenian *amira* class of rich artisans and bankers – continued to reject the nationalist call for independence outside the Ottoman framework until 1915. Nevertheless, referent consequences are evident in the political map of the post-Ottoman Balkans and Middle East.

## Diplomacy and war

The event that prompted the CUP to launch the revolution was the Anglo-Russian initiative for Macedonian reforms in the summer of 1908. But while the revolutionaries did in fact succeed in blocking the reform programme, they failed to satisfy soaring Ottoman expectations for an end to the European obsession with the Eastern Question. As long as it remained an opposition group in exile, the CUP could rail against the sultan's alleged weakness in selling out the empire to its enemies without the need to offer a viable alternative. But with power came responsibility and the recognition of limited means. Along with the sultan's powers, the CUP leaders inherited his weak hand in the face of European pressure. They could not hide it for long. When Austria-Hungary announced the unilateral annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (and brought Europe to the brink of war) in the first week of October 1908, the saviours of the empire could do little more than lodge an official protest and back an economic boycott of Austrian goods. And when Bulgaria defied Ottoman suzerainty by notifying the Sublime Porte of its independence in a telegram, the CUP was powerless to react.<sup>39</sup> That the Great Powers showed more concern for Serbia's reaction than for that of the Ottomans was an indication of the extent to which the balance of power in the Balkans had changed.

Like their predecessors in power, the leaders of the CUP faced the necessity of securing a Great Power alliance upon which they could depend for protection. However much they might claim to loathe 'imperialism' – Ottoman imperial practices did not qualify as such in their eyes – they had no choice but to align with an imperialist power; defence of the empire required it. To be sure, ideological convictions did hinder their pursuit of realpolitik in at least two ways. First, the CUP leaders continued to resist any attempt to intervene in Ottoman affairs, especially when it came to reforms favouring non-Muslims. Second, their habitual anti-imperialist rhetoric did not make for good public relations in Europe. But only pragmatic considerations explain why the CUP leaders, who, prior to the revolution, had reserved their harshest words for

39 For the best documentary accounts of these episodes, see Ludwig Bittner et al. (eds.), *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914: diplomatische Aktenstücke des österreichisch-ungarischen Ministeriums des Äusseren*, vol. I (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1930) and T. Todorova and E. Stelova (eds.), *Dokumenti po obiaviavane na nezavisimostta na Bulgariia 1908 godina: iz tainiia kabinet na kniaz Ferdinand* (Sofia: Izd-vo na Bulgarskata akademiia na naukite, 1968).

the British,<sup>40</sup> made Great Britain their natural first choice for an alliance as soon as they came to power.<sup>41</sup> They were to be disappointed. When the new leaders proposed to Sir Edward Grey that Great Britain consider an alliance with ‘the Japan of the Near East’, he politely turned them down.<sup>42</sup> Against the common threat of Russia, Germany was an obvious second choice. As early as August 1908, in a transparent bid to open the door for an alliance, the CUP relayed a message to the Germans, informing them that in the event of a ‘general European conflict, the Ottoman empire would take the German side’.<sup>43</sup> But Wilhelm II, who wished to preserve the benefits of the Ottoman–German partnership established under the old regime, and had high hopes for future Ottoman military capacity with German training,<sup>44</sup> was unable to deliver the sort of fundamental guarantees the CUP so desperately needed. With key German allies Austria-Hungary and Italy waiting in the wings to pounce upon the Ottoman periphery (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Tripoli of Barbary and Cyrenaica), the emperor was not yet in any position to guarantee Ottoman territorial integrity, let alone enlargement.

Both these failed attempts to secure a Great Power alliance underscored the extent to which the Ottoman strategic environment had deteriorated since the late nineteenth century. First and foremost was the transformation of British defence interests in the Middle East following the occupation of Egypt, formalised in 1896 by Lord Salisbury’s decision to base Great Britain’s defence of her interests in the Near East on Egypt. For the Ottomans, this meant the abandonment of a half-century of unspoken British commitment to upholding the status quo in the Ottoman core. A related factor was the gradual removal of British restraints on Russian expansionism. The Anglo-Russian détente of 1907, a catastrophe from the Ottoman perspective, completed the process of isolation by removing the enmity upon which the defence of the empire ultimately rested. The obvious German alternative was never as good as the British alignment had been, in particular because the German *drang nach Osten*

40 See, for example, Bahaeddin Şakir, ‘Yirminci asırda Ehl-i Salib ve İngiltere dostluğu’, *Şûra-yı Ümmet* 132 (1 April 1908), pp. 2–3.

41 See, for example, ‘Osmanlılar ve İngilizler,’ *Şûra-yı Ümmet*, 16 December 1908.

42 Grey to Lowther, 13 November 1908 (private), Sir (Viscount) Edward Grey’s private papers, Turkey, 1905–10, PRO/F.O. 800/79.

43 Lancken to Bülow, Paris, 18 August 1908 (A.13323), Nachlaß Fürsten von Bülow, Bundesarchiv (Berlin), nr. 82.

44 See his minute on von Metternich’s memorandum dated 14 August 1908/no. 8906, *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, vol. XXV/2: Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme (eds.), *Die english-russische Entente und der Osten*, Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1925), p. 608.



was as threatening as it was beneficial to the Ottomans. When the worsening situation in the Balkans is added to this gloomy picture, and in particular the emergence of Bulgaria as a regional power, one can begin to appreciate the strategic predicament bequeathed by Abdülhamid II.

Given the negative balance of forces, armed neutrality – the policy followed by Abdülhamid II over the previous two decades – no longer offered a viable alternative to commitment. But as no alliance materialised, there seemed to be no other choice but to continue Hamidian policy. Thus, when the Italians embarked upon a *mission civilisatrice* and attacked the last real Ottoman territory in Africa in September 1911, and the British Foreign Office once again turned down a desperate Ottoman plea for alliance and intervention,<sup>45</sup> the Ottoman government was left to defend its honour alone.

Tripoli of Barbary and Cyrenaica, which formed the Ottoman province of Tripoli, were among the most underdeveloped regions of the empire. But as the last African territories still ruled from Istanbul, they possessed a sentimental value that far outweighed their strategic significance (the Ottomans, after all, had proudly described their empire as a Sublime State sprawled across three continents). Italy's long-standing designs on Tripoli stemmed from two motives: the wish to compete with France, which had established a protectorate over Tunis in 1881, in North Africa; and the need to compensate for the ignominious defeat at the hands of Menilek II of Ethiopia in 1896. Over the course of almost two decades, the Italians managed to persuade one after another of the Great Powers of Europe to acquiesce in this disturbance of the balance of power. Once Italy had obtained permission from all her Great Power partners by 1909, the issue was reduced to one of timing. The CUP's acerbic anti-imperialist rhetoric and resolute defensive measures – e.g. a ban on land purchases by the Banco di Roma in the province of Tripoli – provided ample excuses for the Italian administration. On 28 September 1911, Italy issued a twenty-four-hour ultimatum to the Ottoman government. Announcing imminent invasion of the province and demanding Ottoman non-intervention, the ultimatum was clearly meant to be rejected.<sup>46</sup> The surprisingly conciliatory response from the Ottomans, which provided assurances for 'the expansion of Italian economic interests in Tripoli and Cyrenaica', was to no avail, as the decision to invade had already been taken.<sup>47</sup>

45 PRO/FO 371/1263 file 48554 (31 October 1911).

46 'Ultimatum from Italy to Turkey regarding Tripoli', *American Journal of International Law* 6, 1 (January 1912), pp. 11–12.

47 'The Turkish Reply to Italian Ultimatum regarding Tripoli', *ibid.*, pp. 12–14.

The defence of distant Tripoli proved no easy matter for the Ottomans, whose performance was closely monitored by the restless new powers of the Balkans. Their principal problem was one of supply and reinforcement. North Africa could be reached by sea across the Mediterranean or by land via Syria, Palestine and Egypt; the superior Italian navy blocked the first route, while the British in Egypt impeded the second. Incredibly, the small local garrison and an Ottoman-trained militia, led by Ottoman officers smuggled into the region (including the military hero of the 1908 revolution, Enver Bey), managed to put up an effective resistance, compelling the Italians to confine their operations to the coastal strip under naval cover. To break the military stalemate, the Italians opted to expand the war and put military pressure on Ottoman possessions elsewhere, occupying Rhodes and other islands of the Dodecanese, bombarding Ottoman towns on the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts (such as Beirut and al-Qunfudha), and increasing military aid to Muhammad 'Ali al-Idrisi, a local challenger to Ottoman authority who had established a small sufi state in parts of the sub-province of 'Asir. But the Ottomans held firm, yielding little ground in the Ottoman–Italian talks at Quchy in August and September 1912.

The sudden emergence of a new threat in the Balkans altered Ottoman calculations. The danger of a two-front war compelled Ottoman negotiators to liquidate the lesser conflict and come to terms with the Italians. A final agreement was concluded on 18 October, the very day major hostilities began in the Balkans. The settlement squeezed out of the Italians allowed the Ottoman side to save face and maintain the pretence of continued sovereignty. The Ottoman sultan appointed a viceroy and a *kadi* to enforce the *şeriat*, and announced the grant of autonomy to Tripoli of Barbary and Cyrenaica.<sup>48</sup> But in reality, Tripoli became an Italian colony. The last of the Ottoman lands in Africa was lost.

The Italo-Ottoman war exposed the difficulty of defending the empire's long coastlines. That even a second-tier European power could occupy Ottoman islands, bombard coastal towns and dispatch troops all around the Mediterranean and Red Sea at will pointed to a mortal weakness. One possible remedy was to build a modern navy; but to construct a fleet almost from scratch was a time-consuming and vastly expensive undertaking. Ottoman ruling circles concluded once again that it was absolutely vital to secure the protection of a Great Power, preferably one with a strong navy. They also determined to reach compromises with rebellious rulers in other far-flung regions of the Arab world – most notably, with Imam Yahya Hamid al-Din of Yemen, who,

48 See *Düstûr*, vol. II/4 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1331 [1913]), pp. 690–1.

like Muhammad 'Ali al-Idrisi, enjoyed Italian backing. The lessons learned in North Africa were reinforced by the course of events in the Balkans.

A Balkan alliance against the Ottoman Empire was one of the least expected developments of the early twentieth century. The mutual hostility of Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks and the irreconcilability of their aspirations in Ottoman Macedonia made a tripartite alliance all but inconceivable. Abdülhamid II had attempted to form a Balkan League with Greece, Serbia and Romania to check the rise of Bulgaria, which, thanks to extensive military reform, was on the road to becoming a major regional power. Serbian leaders, sensing the turning of the tide, frustrated Abdülhamid II's early plans and formed an alliance with Bulgaria in 1904. The CUP continued the sultan's efforts when, in 1908, they made an unsuccessful bid to exploit the crisis over the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to herd Serbia back into an alliance with Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire against Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, but without success.

Meanwhile, Russia's growing involvement in the Balkans, stoked by rising fear of Germany, almost produced a broad Balkan alliance with Ottoman participation. But Balkan hostility towards the Ottoman Empire was such that this was not possible. Moreover, the Balkan states smelled weakness in the Ottoman war effort against Italy, and they decided to make the most of it. The negotiations sponsored by the Russians produced the worst possible result from the Ottoman perspective: a Serbo-Bulgarian accord, reached in March–April 1912. Then, in May 1912, Greece and Bulgaria, the two great rivals over Macedonia, concluded an alliance, and subsequent Serbo-Montenegrin, Greco-Montenegrin and Bulgarian-Montenegrin understandings rounded off the preparations for an assault on the remaining European domains of the Ottoman Empire with a view to their final partition.<sup>49</sup> The circle of hostility was complete.

It was clear from the start that this alliance of rivals would not last. Accordingly, pressure mounted for an immediate opening of hostilities. Seizing on the pretext of the Ottoman failure to comply with the twenty-third article of the Berlin Congress of 1878, which called for Macedonian reform, the Balkan allies rushed towards war. The Ottoman government, caught unprepared and fearful of another military disaster, adopted a conciliatory attitude and promised reforms. But this merely worsened its position at home – where it was already under pressure from the CUP in opposition – and did nothing to appease its Balkan predators. Great Power warnings against modifications to the status

49 E. Christian Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912–1913* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 87–9.

quo failed to stop the allies from launching hostilities. Montenegro took the lead on 8 October, followed by the three larger Balkan states on 18 October.

In the ensuing war, the Balkan allies inflicted the most humiliating defeats on the Ottoman armies. Within weeks, all of European Turkey was lost, with the exception of three besieged fortress cities, Scutari in Albania, Janina and Edirne, while the victorious Bulgarians were on the march against the final Ottoman defence line at Çatalca, a mere 37 miles from Istanbul. Ottoman appeals for Great Power intervention proved unavailing. From the European perspective, the situation contained the dangerous potential for a Russo-Austrian conflagration, which could easily set the entire continent ablaze. The Great Powers, accordingly, focused on forcing a ceasefire and convening a conference to discuss the future of the Balkans. The armistice of 3 December paved the way for two parallel conferences in London. At the first, Ottoman and Balkan delegates met to discuss the future of European Turkey and the Northern Aegean islands. At the second, the ambassadors of the Great Powers debated a general settlement in the Balkans. The first set of negotiations broke down on 6 January 1913. The second resulted in a note to the Ottoman government, warning it to sign a peace treaty, or face the consequences alone. All the while, Edirne, which had been the capital of the empire between 1365 and 1453, remained under siege. The CUP took advantage of the situation to carry out its coup and return to power under the slogan of 'Free Edirne!' In February, hostilities resumed but Ottoman efforts to relieve the siege of Edirne failed, and the city fell on 26 March 1913. Defeated on the battlefield, the CUP-led government had no choice but to sue for peace.

The Treaty of London of 30 May 1913 heralded the end of the Ottoman presence in Europe. It also signalled the beginning of a major conflict between the Balkan allies over the division of the spoils. The Bulgarian surprise attack on her erstwhile allies on 29/30 June backfired, as Greece, Romania and Serbia declared war on Bulgaria and scored decisive victories in the battles that ensued. But the dissolution of the Balkan alliance also provided the Ottomans with the opportunity to recover some of their losses. Defying the warnings of the Great Powers, the Ottoman army marched on Edirne, recapturing the city on 22 July. The Ottoman government signed peace treaties with Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia in September 1913, November 1913 and March 1914, respectively. No peace treaty was concluded with Montenegro.

Many historians consider the Balkan Wars an essential link in the causal chain leading to the Great War. They were certainly a major disaster for the Ottomans. A defeat of this magnitude at the hands of former subjects was a very difficult pill to swallow. Reducing the empire of three continents to an

Asiatic state, it shattered Ottoman pride and self-confidence. On top of the humiliation, the Ottoman government had to deal with staggering losses of men, *matériel* and territory, as well as the difficulty of resettling hundreds of thousands of refugees pouring in from the lost regions. The relinquishment of territories rich in non-Turks, and the ensuing atrocities against Muslims in the occupied lands, dealt the Ottomanist ideal a shattering blow, giving the upper hand to the Turkists in the internal debate over the basis of loyalty in the empire. Inevitably, the loss of the European provinces prompted a revision of the geographical image of the empire among the Ottoman ruling elite. For centuries, the empire had rested on two central pillars, Rumelia and Anatolia, between which nested the imperial capital. Suddenly, the Arab periphery almost appeared as part of the new heartland. Some influential politicians and pundits went so far as to propose the removal of the capital from Istanbul to a major town in central Anatolia or northern Syria.<sup>50</sup>

Ottoman statesmen learned three principal lessons from the Balkan Wars. First, the wars underscored the fact that without a Great Power protector, the empire's days were numbered; the Ottoman–German alliance of the following year must be regarded in this context. Second, the wars proved the futility of written assurances from the Great Powers as a group. Events made a mockery of the pre-war European diplomatic note, which stated that the Great Powers would not tolerate any change in the status quo in the event of a war.<sup>51</sup> Only a formal alliance based upon mutual interest would do. Third, the wars demonstrated to the Ottomans that they had to do all within their power to eliminate major sources of confrontation with the Great Powers of Europe, and come to terms with their foremost domestic rivals on the periphery, if they were to avoid further war and foreign intervention.

In June 1913, the CUP leadership once again applied to Great Britain's secretary of state, Sir Edward Grey, in the hope of negotiating an alliance. Once more they were rejected.<sup>52</sup> In 1914, they extended similar proposals to Austria-Hungary in February, to Russia in May and to France in July; all turned them down. The Germans too refused Ottoman appeals in 1912–13. Only the July crisis of 1914 altered their calculations.<sup>53</sup> But even then, it is important to

50 Tunaya, *İttihat ve Terakki*, pp. 481–3.

51 Poincaré à MM. les Ministres de France à Sofia, Belgrade, Athènes, Cettigné, 7 October 1912, *Documents diplomatiques: Les affaires balkaniques, 1912–1914*, vol. I (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1922), p. 99.

52 Joseph Heller, *British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), p. 80.

53 Mustafa Aksakal, 'Defending the Nation: The German–Ottoman Alliance of 1914 and the Ottoman Decision for War', Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University (2003), p. 63.

understand that it was the Ottoman administration that was begging for an alliance, not vice versa. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and the top military commanders opposed the alliance, believing that the Ottoman Empire was militarily worthless and would prove to be a major burden in the event of war. Only the personal intervention of Wilhelm II – who calculated that an Ottoman–Bulgarian alliance would tip the scales in favour of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and that the Ottoman caliph could incite a worldwide rebellion of Muslims against the Allies – secured Germany's assent. At long last, on 2 August 1914, the Ottoman government succeeded in concluding a formal alliance with a Great Power of Europe, fully expecting that this would provide the sorely needed guarantee of territorial integrity that had eluded it in the past. The Germans would have cause to be thankful for this decision; the Ottomans would live to regret it.

To minimise frictions with the Great Powers and support the quest for an alliance, the Ottoman government also sought to liquidate major sources of conflict on their periphery. Of these, the most important concerned Great Britain, the new power of the Near East, whose interests clashed with those of the Ottomans all over the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. The Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1914 virtually divided the Arabian Peninsula between the two powers, and secured Ottoman recognition of the treaties concluded between Great Britain and local leaders on the Arabian coastline, accords which had hitherto been rejected as an infringement on Ottoman sovereignty.<sup>54</sup> Great Britain's role as protector of Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, together with its presence at nine points between Aden and the Ottoman province of Yemen, thereby acquired legal recognition from the only power in a position to challenge them. The major loser in this deal was 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud, who was forced by the British to recognise Ottoman suzerainty, although in practice his control of Najd and al-Hasa was not contested.

The second potentially explosive issue the Ottoman administration tried to settle was the decades-old Armenian Question, and the related fate of the Six Provinces of Eastern Anatolia. Ever since 1878, successive Ottoman administrations had managed to avoid the implementation of the pro-Armenian reform programme stipulated in the sixty-first article of the Berlin Treaty. In early 1914, under heavy Russian pressure, the Ottoman government finally gave in. According to the new reform scheme, which went against CUP principles, two large provinces would be carved out of Eastern Anatolia and each placed

54 BOA-Muahedenâme, 242/11; 242/14; 376/2; 369/2.

under a European governor-general.<sup>55</sup> The CUP leaders, who had come to power bent on defying the Great Powers, establishing central control over the empire and halting the drift towards disintegration, had clearly yielded to the forceful logic of *realpolitik*. But with the major flashpoints seemingly under control by the summer of 1914, they seemed at least to have earned a breathing spell from war and foreign intervention.

## The Great War

The outbreak of war caught the Ottoman Empire at a dreadful time. Fresh from defeat at the hands of former Balkan subjects, the imperial army was a shambles. A crash programme of military reconstruction, launched in December 1913 with the help of German advisers under General Liman von Sanders, had achieved little by the summer of 1914.<sup>56</sup> Since 1910, several developments – two wars, huge losses of territory, population and revenues, and the ongoing struggle against Albanian revolutionaries in Albania and rebel Arab leaders in the Arabian Peninsula – had aggravated the empire's already precarious financial position. Consequently, no European power felt enthusiastic about enlisting the Ottoman Empire as an ally in a war that practically everyone expected to be over in months, if not weeks. The German government, yielding to pressure from the Kaiser, cautiously drafted the Ottoman–German Alliance Treaty of 2 August 1914, making no promises for the post-war division of spoils. The Ottomans, for their part, refrained from making a specific commitment to enter the war.

The failure to accomplish the first objective of the Schlieffen plan – to knock out France within forty days of the outbreak of war – and Russian advances into East Prussia drastically altered German expectations from the Ottomans. Originally conceived as a deterrent that would tie down a number of Russian and British divisions in the Caucasus and in Egypt, the 'worthless ally' (a phrase coined by Helmuth von Moltke) became more valuable by the day. The German government increased its pressure on the Ottoman government to join the war effort and open new fronts, but a majority within the CUP and in the Ottoman cabinet wished to stay out of the war until the completion of mobilisation, the arrival of German financial aid, the adherence

<sup>55</sup> *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, vol. XXXVIII: Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme (eds.), *Neue Gefahrenzonen im Orient, 1913–1914* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1926), pp. 1–189.

<sup>56</sup> Liman von Sanders, *Fünf Jahre Türkei* (Berlin: A. Scherl, 1920), pp. 30–3.

of Bulgaria and Romania to the Entente, and signs of German victory on the Western Front. A confident minority, led by the minister of war (and leading CUP member) Enver Paşa, pushed to join the war sooner, so as to secure a significant share of the spoils. In particular, the CUP eyed territorial compensation in the Aegean and in the Caucasus, the re-establishment of full Ottoman sovereignty in the Arabian Peninsula and a renewal of some form of control in North Africa. When two German cruisers, the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, approached the Ottoman coast pursued by the Royal Navy on 10 August, Enver Paşa acceded to their request for safe haven in Ottoman territorial waters; the pro-German clique within the cabinet later engineered their fictitious purchase and incorporation into the Ottoman navy, a step that all but destroyed Ottoman neutrality. However, the Allies, fearing the spread of war to new fronts, restricted their reaction to a naval blockade. The arrival of these men-of-war and of German financial aid strengthened the hand of the pro-German faction within the Ottoman administration. In coordination with the German military, the pro-German faction of the CUP drew up a plan for a surprise naval attack on Russian Black Sea port cities. Unknown to the cabinet, elements of the Ottoman navy, under the command of its German admiral, Souchon, executed this plan on 29 October 1914. Against opposition from several ministers, including the grand vezir, both the central committee of the CUP and the majority of the government opted to defend the *fait accompli*. Thus, the empire found itself once again, and for the last time, at war.

In August 1914, the Ottoman army numbered some 600,000 soldiers and 38 combat divisions. In the life-and-death struggle that ensued, the Ottoman government drafted a total of 2.6 million men. Total Ottoman casualties over the course of the four-year war amounted to some 725,000 (including 325,000 dead and 400,000 wounded). No less than 202,000 Ottomans were taken prisoner, mainly by Great Britain and Russia. The scale of attrition and desertion was enormous: on the day of the armistice, only 323,000 men remained at their posts,<sup>57</sup> and more than a million marauding deserters were wreaking havoc throughout the empire. The war was ruinous from an economic perspective as well: in addition to the destruction wrought by war, the Ottoman government spent Lt 398.5 million (equivalent to 9.09 billion gold French francs) on the war effort.<sup>58</sup> In 1918 the Ottoman Empire was not just defeated, it was bankrupt.

57 Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Ana ben ölmedim: Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türk esirleri* (Istanbul: T. İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001), pp. 47–8.

58 By comparison, Great Britain spent 235.7 billion gold French francs, Germany 243.1 billion, Belgium 5.9 billion, Bulgaria 3.6 billion and Serbia 3.2 billion. See M[aurice] Larcher, *La guerre turque dans la guerre mondiale* (Paris: E. Chiron, 1926), p. 636.



If the Ottomans suffered crippling losses, they also exacted a heavy toll from the enemy. The primary Ottoman contribution to the Entente's war effort must be considered the pinning down and attrition of large Russian and British forces on four fronts that would not otherwise have existed. The Ottoman armies fought against the Russians in the Caucasus, and against the British in the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia and the Suez Canal/Syria-Palestine. In two of these theatres, in the Caucasus and on the Suez Canal, Ottoman offensives ended in disaster. Ottoman defensive efforts on the other two fronts, however, proved far more effective; their greatest single achievement was undoubtedly the defeat they inflicted on the British and their allies in the Dardanelles between March 1915 and April 1916. They inflicted 40,000 casualties (including prisoners of war) on the British forces at Gallipoli, and forced them to withdraw in April 1916. Less dramatically, they succeeded in delaying the British advance up from the Persian Gulf through Mesopotamia. Although the British finally captured Baghdad in March 1917, they had not taken Mosul by the time of the armistice. The Ottomans also assisted the Entente forces on the Macedonian, Romanian and Galician fronts in Europe, and engaged in minor military operations in different parts of the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and Iran.

The magnitude of the Ottoman contribution to the war effort is perhaps best appreciated by considering the size of the forces thrown against the empire. Over the course of the war, Great Britain deployed 2,550,000 troops on the Ottoman fronts, constituting 32 per cent of the total number of troops deployed; at one point, the British had 880,300 men fighting the Ottomans, or 24 per cent of the British armed forces. The Russians initially mobilised 160,000 troops on the Caucasian front. By September 1916, they had 702,000 troops facing the Ottomans in Anatolia and Iran out of a total force of 3.7 million. Additionally, 50,000 French troops fought the Ottomans, mainly at the Dardanelles. The Italians dispatched an expeditionary force of 70,000 soldiers to quell a rebellion of the local militia in Tripoli and Cyrenaica aided by the Ottoman government. Total casualties on the Ottoman fronts (both Ottoman and Allied) amounted to a staggering 1,400,000.<sup>59</sup> Another way to evaluate the Ottoman contribution is to ask how the course of history might have been changed without it. Had the Ottoman Empire maintained its neutrality in the war, there is little doubt that the Allies would have won a quicker victory. Moreover, both the Bolshevik Revolution and US participation in the war might never have occurred.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 617–34.

The direct military contribution of the Ottoman Empire to the war effort surprised her allies, who had looked forward mostly to the Ottoman declaration of *cihad* (*jihād*), expected to result in a global rebellion of Muslims against their colonial masters. In this, they were disappointed. On 14 November 1914, Ottoman *ulema* issued the last *fetvas* (*fatwās*) for an Ottoman *jihād*, for which they used the phrase ‘Grand *Jihād* (*Cihad-ı Ekber*)’, usually reserved for spiritual struggle.<sup>60</sup> Subsequent appeals in Arabic called upon the Muslims of the world to rise up in support of the Ottoman war effort. The government even obtained *fatwās* from Shiite clerics to extend their appeal to non-Sunni Muslim sects.<sup>61</sup> Their pleas went virtually unanswered.

Although they successfully held off the British assault on Istanbul at Gallipoli, the Ottoman armies could not block the British advance through Palestine and Mesopotamia indefinitely. A British-instigated uprising in Arabia, known as the Arab revolt, made matters worse. The situation was bleak in 1917 when the outbreak of revolution in Russia gave the Ottoman war effort a new lease on life. The Bolsheviks’ separate peace with the Entente powers at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 restored to Ottoman possession the territories occupied by Russian forces during the war, in addition to the three eastern provinces lost to Russia in 1878. The Ottomans exploited the sudden collapse of the Russian front to launch a final military offensive into the Caucasus, which brought them to the shores of the Caspian Sea at Baku. But the fate of the empire depended upon the outcome on the Western Front, and it soon became clear that the Germans would not win.

Following the Ottoman entry into the war, the Allies held detailed discussions concerning the partition of the Ottoman Empire. They determined, in the words of Lord Asquith, to ring the death-knell of ‘Ottoman dominion, not only in Europe, but in Asia’.<sup>62</sup> Variations of the plan appeared as new members joined the coalition (e.g. Italy and Greece) and old ones dropped out (e.g. Russia), but they all boiled down to a single essence: the empire was to be dismembered and all regions inhabited or historically claimed by non-Turkish ethno-religious communities were to be detached. After the United States joined the war, such schemes increasingly came under the moral framework of the ascendant doctrine of national self-determination. Faced with the loss of the Two Holy Sanctuaries in the Hijaz, the caliphate lost its moral grounding.

60 ‘Cihad-ı Ekber ilâni ve fetva-yı şerif’, *İslâm Mecmuası* 15 [19 November 1914], p. 440.

61 Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı tarihi*, vol. III / 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1953), pp. 324–5.

62 ‘The prime minister’, *The Times*, 10 November 1914.

Undermined by the principle of national self-determination, the multinational empire faced the certainty of extinction.

One of the most tragic events of the war was the deportation of much of Anatolia's Armenian population. On the grounds that the Armenian revolutionary committees were actively aiding the Russian enemy, the Ottoman government decided to deport all Armenians affiliated with the Armenian Apostolic Church from the war zone (on the Caucasian front) to Syria. In practice, many Armenian communities outside the war zone and many members of the Armenian intellectual and cultural elite were also uprooted. The deportations, accompanied by massacres and carried out with brutality under harsh conditions of climate and hunger, led to massive loss of life and the termination of the Armenian presence in Anatolia.

### The economy

From an ideological standpoint, the CUP leadership stood for state control of the economy, and was committed to the abolition of the much-reviled capitulations and the dissolution of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (PDA, an international debt collection body established in 1881). But the responsibilities of power and the dire reality of the empire's economic condition forced the CUP to adopt a more pragmatic line. The most immediate concern was to maintain the confidence of foreign investors in the economic policy of the new regime. Although early Committee decisions reveal a certain tendency to support domestic producers (such as grape producers on the Aegean coast) against foreign companies,<sup>63</sup> there was no attempt to bring about radical changes in the economic realm in the first five years of CUP rule. Mehmed Cavid, the Committee's leading economist, who ran the Ottoman economy as minister of finance and as a senior adviser on economic policy throughout much of the Second Constitutional Period, was a fervent advocate of liberal economics. Under his tenure, the number of Ottoman joint stock companies set up with foreign capital actually increased between the revolution of 1908 and 1913.<sup>64</sup> Most of these were partnerships between Ottoman non-Muslims and European entrepreneurs. But the contradictions between liberal policies and the *étatist*, Turkist and anti-imperial elements of the CUP platform could not be sustained for long. The Balkan Wars may be regarded as a turning

63 See the CUP Izmir branch's memorandum to the central committee, 15 June 1325 [28 June 1909]/no. 379, and the CUP special commission's report dated 3 July 1325 [16 July 1909]; private papers of Ahmed Rıza.

64 Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de 'Milli İktisat'* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1982), p. 86.

point in economic policy as well. Anti-Western, pro-Muslim and Turkist sentiments peaked, making it easier for the CUP to temper its liberal policies and promote the so-called ‘National Economy’. This was a concept intellectually influenced by Friedrich List and the German historical school, which combined the principles of state control over the economy with favouritism towards the Muslim/Turkish bourgeoisie. The idea was to protect Muslim and Turkish entrepreneurs and producers by means of the imposition of high customs tariffs, the abolition of foreign legal and economic privileges and the creation of a new financial and transportation infrastructure in support of local manufacturing.

In 1913, the government sponsored the Temporary Law for the Encouragement of Industry, which sought to protect domestic industrialists by means of customs, tax and land privileges.<sup>65</sup> In 1914, it took advantage of the European crisis to abolish the capitulations unilaterally.<sup>66</sup> But it was the mobilisation of resources to wage the Great War, and the corresponding rise in nationalist fervour, that provided the impetus for the full implementation of the ‘National Economy’. One component of this policy, as enunciated at the 1916 congress of the CUP, was the establishment of state control over all aspects of economic life.<sup>67</sup> The government created new institutions to implement this vision, including the Special Trade Commission (in 1916), the Ministry of Provisioning (in 1918) and the Central Exchange Commission (in 1917). The second pillar of the ‘National Economy’ was a blend of protectionism, autarky and state-sponsored promotion of the role of Muslims and Turks in the economy. Ostensibly, state intervention in the economy favoured domestic companies in general. Some measures, such as the sharp rise in customs tariffs in 1915, undoubtedly benefited all domestic producers. But the ‘National Economy’, often cast as a policy of Ottoman self-reliance, in fact concealed a Turkist agenda that was altogether new in Ottoman history. The biggest losers from this policy were foreigners, non-Muslims and non-Turks. But in practice, it benefited mostly Turks, as most CUP and government support – both bureaucratic and financial – went to aid Turkish entrepreneurs in setting up ‘national’ companies and banks. The most ambitious new financial institution was a national central bank that was to replace the foreign-owned Ottoman Bank by 1925. Named Ottoman National Honour, the new bank

65 *Düstür*, vol. II/6 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1334 [1918]), pp. 108–14.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 1273.

67 *Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti program ve nizamnamesidir: 1332 senesi Umumi Kongresi'nde ta'dil ve kabul edilmiştir* (Istanbul: Tanin Matbaası, 1332 [1916]), pp. 5–7.

was established in 1917,<sup>68</sup> too late to make a difference to Ottoman economic prospects. The sultan, CUP members, deputies and state bureaucrats figured prominently in Ottoman National Honour's list of shareholders; the Ministry of Finance purchased the unsold shares. The CUP created a myriad of other economic organisations, such as cooperatives for Muslim and Turkish manufacturers and artisan societies. Such groups supported the goal of 'nationalising the economy' while at the same time deepening organised political support for the CUP. At first, these efforts produced insignificant results; in 1915, Muslim and Turkish entrepreneurs combined owned only 42 companies in the empire, whereas 172 firms were listed under non-Muslim ownership. By 1918, Turkish Muslim industrialists formed an overwhelming majority.<sup>69</sup>

Financing a long, total war on four distant fronts was a daunting challenge. To meet it, the government initially obtained credit from its German ally and sold Ottoman war bonds at home. But as expenditure mounted, recourse was increasingly had to the printing-press. This was the third and final Ottoman attempt to introduce paper money. Over the course of the war, the Ministry of Finance issued Lt 161 million in banknotes. At first, these held their value reasonably well. But during the last two years of the war, the banknotes steadily lost value against gold. This was especially true the further away from the capital one was: in May 1917, a paper bill with the nominal value of Lt 1 traded for coinage at the exchange rates of 0.35, 0.30, 0.25, 0.10 and 0.08 in Istanbul, Konya, Aleppo, Mosul and Baghdad, respectively.<sup>70</sup> Seven instalments of banknotes between 1915 and 1917 (the last one with no securities) produced enormous inflationary pressures, resulting in soaring price indices. In 1918, the Ottoman cost of living index reached 1,823 (1914 = 100). The equivalent figure was 203 in Great Britain, 293 in Germany and 1,163 in Austria-Hungary.<sup>71</sup> Defeat brought not only political disintegration, but also economic collapse.

### Ideas, culture and society

One of the hallmarks of the Hamidian regime was state repression of basic freedoms. A wide network of intelligence agents and informers provided the palace with reports on any suspicious activity. A modern apparatus of censorship, whose ever-expanding list of banned words ranged from 'Macedonia' to

68 *Düstûr*, vol. II/9 (Istanbul: Evkaf Matbaası, 1928), pp. 42–3 and 184–5.

69 Toprak, *Milli İktisat*, pp. 191 ff.

70 Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de ekonomi ve toplum, 1908–1950: İttihat-Terakki ve devletçilik* (Istanbul: Yurt Yayınları, 1995), p. 23.

71 *Ibid.*, pp. 162–3.

‘dissatisfaction’, effectively muzzled dissenting voices. Abetted by the spreading practice of self-censorship, it turned newspapers and journals into official mouthpieces, subsidised and directed by the palace. All this stunted intellectual growth. Under Abdülhamid II, a cultural, non-political form of Turkism was allowed to flourish in Istanbul.<sup>72</sup> A benign form of scientism was likewise tolerated; it won many adherents among the intellectuals of the imperial capital, who enthusiastically adopted the theses of mid-nineteenth-century German *Vulgärmaterialismus*.<sup>73</sup> But censorship dulled the political edge of the ideological debates in the capital, which, consequently, lost its intellectual pre-eminence to Beirut and Cairo. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Syria gained prominence as a centre of the Salafiyya movement. The Balkans witnessed the acceleration of nationalist and socialist debates among non-Muslims in towns such as Salonica and Monastir, while they lost their importance as centres of Ottoman culture. The most explosive political ideas came in the form of underground publications smuggled into the empire from Europe and Egypt, but their circulation was limited.

The brief burst of revolutionary freedom after 1908 awakened the capital from the thirty-year slumber imposed by the Hamidian censors. The revolution unleashed pent-up intellectual potential, spawning a renaissance in the capital and major towns of the empire. In the summer and fall of 1908, public debates flared up over issues ranging from Islamic modernism to socialism, and from materialism to feminism. The raucous debates of that moment of liberty are recorded in a score of newspapers and journals that mushroomed in the anarchic aftermath of the revolution, often publishing a single maiden issue, only to disappear by the time of the elections of November–December 1908.

As in so many other domains, the CUP found itself restoring elements of the very Hamidian regime against which it had railed in opposition. The CUP leaders in power turned out to have no more tolerance for free political debate than their predecessors. At first, they were not yet in a position to suppress it. But after the elections, successive governments, aided by the new Press Law, exercised more control over publications. Martial law, which became increasingly standard amidst war, counter-revolution and rebellion, reinforced the restrictions on freedom of expression. The CUP adopted a particularly harsh policy towards the opposition press. Though it has never been

72 See David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish nationalism, 1876–1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 14 ff.

73 See M. Şükrü Hanioglu, ‘Blueprints for a future society: The Ottoman materialists on science, religion, and art’, in Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.), *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy* (London: Routledge – Curzon, 2005), pp. 39 ff.

proven, it was widely believed at the time that CUP self-sacrificing volunteers were behind numerous assassinations of leading opposition journalists in 1909 and thereafter. Closure of newspapers and journals became standard practice once more. But many publishers were resourceful enough to respond to such closures by re-launching their journals under slightly different titles; the journal *İctihad*, for example, reappeared under the names *İstihad*, *İşhad*, *Cehd* and *Âlem-i Ticaret ve Sanayi*, before finally closing in response to dire threats from the authorities. The opposition applied many of the same methods to the CUP during its brief stint in power in 1912. With the shoe temporarily on the other foot, CUP journalists and thinkers found themselves hounded into prison and exile by government agents.<sup>74</sup> CUP publishers, in turn, copied the survival tactics of the opposition: the semi-official newspaper of the CUP, *Tanin*, appeared as *Senin*, *Cenin*, *Renin* and *Hak* in the space of six months.

When the CUP returned to power on the heels of the raid on the Sublime Porte in January 1913, it trampled on what remained of freedom of the press in the empire. Thereafter, the public exposition of any idea frowned upon by the CUP leadership, such as Arab nationalism or socialism, became virtually impossible. Official attitudes hardened still further in response to the stillborn *coup d'état* of June 1913 and the Ottoman entry into the war in November 1914. During the Great War, the few newspapers that remained relied on government supply of printing paper to issue two-page dailies made up largely of fulsome praise for the CUP's leadership of the war effort.

Officially, the battle of the printing presses prior to 1913 pitted the CUP's Turkist version of Ottomanism<sup>75</sup> against Sabahaddin Bey's decentralisation thesis.<sup>76</sup> But intellectuals of all ethnic and religious stripes were more concerned with nationalism. Thus the undercurrent of debate divided the Turkish press, where debate centred on the competing definitions of Ottoman identity and Ottomanism, from community journals in other languages, which tended to promote proto-nationalist or nationalist platforms at variance with CUP policy. Popular non-Turkish newspapers such as *al-Muqtabas* (Damascus), *al-Mufid* (Beirut), *Amalthia* (İzmir), *Neologos* (Istanbul), *Lirija* (Salonica) and *Jamanak* (Istanbul) adopted a critical position towards the CUP's Ottomanism. Several smaller community organs, such as *al-Hadara* (Istanbul), *Azadamard* (Istanbul), *Foni* (Istanbul), *Narodna volya* (Salonica), *Tomorri* (Elbasan) and *Bashim' i Kombit*

74 See 'Feci' bir akbet', *Alemdar*, 29 November 1912.

75 See, for example, Hüseyin Cahid, 'Millet-i hakime', *Tanin* [7 November 1908].

76 See, for example, Ahmed Midhat, 'Adem-i merkezîyet', *Takvimli Gazete*, 12 December 1912.

(Monastir), spoke out more vociferously in favour of regional autonomy or even independence.

It is remarkable that the Turkist proclivities of the CUP leadership, which were at variance with the group's primary mission of saving the multinational empire, crept into the CUP-backed press in a political form at a relatively early stage.<sup>77</sup> But the idea of Turkish separatism inevitably took a back seat to cultural Turkism, and was subsumed under the increasingly murky, but infinitely malleable notions of Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism, until the collapse of the empire became a distinct possibility in the latter stages of the Great War. Like Abdülhamid II before them, the CUP leaders were pragmatists first, and ideologues only when possible. Their ideas and policies did not always match.

The Turkists' project consisted of three main stages. First, they aimed to foster a national consciousness among the Turks of the empire, similar to the process of awakening undergone by the South Slavs, through creation of a national history and language.<sup>78</sup> Then, Ottoman Turks would extend a helping hand to their brethren in other parts of the world, particularly in Central Asia.<sup>79</sup> Finally, in the distant future, they would realise the dream of Pan-Turkist political unity. Obviously, the existence of non-Turkish ethnic groups in the empire presented a stumbling block to the realisation of these purist ambitions. But the Turkists avoided confronting this reality, and instead chose to assault the very notion of an 'Ottoman' identity as promoted by the Tanzimat, which stood accused of robbing the Turks of their sense of self.<sup>80</sup> The Balkan Wars fuelled the spread of such sentiments, as the Ottomanist dream was shattered in the clash between former masters and subjects, and the empire shed many of its nationalities to become more Muslim and more Turkish. The important precedent set by predominately Muslim Albania, which had resorted to arms against the CUP's version of Ottomanism and its centralising policies, and then declared independence in November 1912, proved that Muslims too could seek an independent destiny outside the confines of the Ottoman state. To be sure, the shrunken empire still contained sizeable non-Turkish ethnic groups – chief among them Arabs, Armenians, Kurds and Greeks<sup>81</sup> – but a good portion of

77 Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, pp. 34–46 and 62 ff.

78 Köprülüzâde Mehmed Fu'ad, 'Türklük, İslâmlık, Osmanlılık', *Türk Yurdu* 4 (1329 [1913]), p. 695.

79 Address of the president of Turkish Hearths, Hamdullah Subhi, in *Türk Yurdu* 4 (1329 [1914]), p. 1069.

80 Yunus Nadi, 'Tanzimatçıların iflası', *Tasvir-i Efkâr* [12 March 1913].

81 The total population of the empire in 1914 was 18.5 million, of whom 15 million were Muslims, 1.73 million were Greeks and 1.16 million were Armenians. Since Kurds and Arabs were lumped together with the Turks as Muslims, it is difficult to give estimates of their



the Ottoman Greek population was lost, as were almost all the Albanians, the Bulgarians, the Kutzo-Vlachs and the Serbs. The Turkist solution to this vexing problem was to square the circle: a strong Turkish-dominated centre would champion not only the values of the Turks, it would stand for Arabs and Greeks as well.<sup>82</sup> The contradictions inherent in this untenable arrangement escaped even the more far-sighted Turkists such as Ziya Gökalp, who avowed: 'He who does not say he is a Turk cannot become the ruler of the Turk/Those who does not love the Turk cannot remain Ottoman.'<sup>83</sup>

The war against Russia in the East inevitably heightened Turkist interest in Turan, the mythical Turkic homeland stretching from Anatolia to Central Asia. Turkists defined Turan in two ways. One definition held that Great Turan included the land between the White Sea, on Russia's north-western Arctic coast, and Finland, as well as Central Asia, the Caucasus and parts of Iran, Afghanistan and Anatolia – an area of 11,700,000 square miles with 56 million inhabitants of Manchu, Turkic and Finnish origin. The second, more modest, definition designated an area from Kazan to Afghanistan and from Iranian Azerbaijan to the Balkans – covering 4,170,000 square miles with 43 million inhabitants of Turkic stock.<sup>84</sup> Although the CUP leadership condoned the publication activities of the advocates of Turan, there is no evidence to support the contention that they were guided by an active Turkist or Turanian agenda prior to 1914. Turan was a dream, to be fulfilled only in the distant future in the wake of a momentous upheaval. But the war now provided the opportunity for just such an apocalypse, and the possibility of Russian collapse must have factored into CUP calculations concerning the war from an early stage. The most important effect of Turkist ideas on the CUP lay in the redefinition of the concept of Ottomanism. Over time, the CUP adapted Turkist principles to attribute a pivotal and dominant role to the Turks in the history and future of the empire. From the revolution onwards, and especially after 1914, Turkish values and symbols flooded the official notion of Ottomanism.

Debate on religion and modernisation came second to discussion of nationalism, Ottomanism and the role of Turks in the empire's administration. The

relative share of the population. See Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 170 ff. The Arab population was certainly the largest ethnic group after the Turks, and formed an overwhelming majority in the Arab provinces; the Kurdish population was much smaller, but geographically concentrated.

82 Köprülüzâde Mehmed Fu'ad, 'Türklük, İslâmlık, Osmanlılık', p. 692.

83 Gökalp, *Yeni hayat*, p. 35.

84 Tekin, *Turan* (Istanbul: Türk Yurdu Kitabhanesi, 1330 [1914]), pp. 118–19.

Hamidian regime had sponsored Islamist publications to strengthen the legitimacy of the caliphate and galvanise Muslim populations within the empire.<sup>85</sup> Both branches of the Islamist opposition – the Salafis in Syria and the modernists surrounding Muhammad ‘Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida – had worked closely with the Young Turks. But they did not manage to penetrate the Ottoman heartland. Ironically, it was the secularist revolution of the Young Turks that marked the beginning of a strong Islamic modernist movement in the central regions of the empire. The leaders of this movement, such as Filibeli Şehbenderzâde Ahmed Hilmi, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı and Babanzâde Ahmed Na‘im, took a strong pro-constitutionalist stand.<sup>86</sup> They vigorously refuted arguments pointing to the irreconcilability of constitutional government with Islam.<sup>87</sup> And they reinterpreted the Islamic concept of *mashwarat* (consultation), which classically referred to consultation between the ruler and his advisers, to mean representation of the people by means of a parliament.<sup>88</sup> The modernists showed their progressive inclinations in numerous *responso*. When, for instance, a man from Central Asia inquired whether ‘the imam of a prayer leader who reads newspapers is perverse’, their response was: ‘A Muslim who reads daily newspapers should be preferred to others who do not as a candidate for the role of prayer leader.’<sup>89</sup>

But the underlying contradiction between the CUP leaders, who had a use for religion only inasmuch as it legitimised their rule, and the modernists, for whom life under a revived Islam was the paramount goal, meant that relations were quickly strained. Disillusioned, many Islamists joined the opposition. The most politically active of them formed the Union of Mohammedans, a party that spearheaded the counter-revolution of 1909. Although mainstream *ulema* avoided direct involvement, they continuously protested against the domination of the CUP and the secular proclivities of some of its leading members. The attempts of modernists to Islamicise the constitution and formulate a modern theory of Islamic government in many ways echoed the programme begun by the Young Ottomans half a century before. Their efforts bore some fruit in 1909, when a commission led by *ulema* deputies amended many articles

85 See, for example, Nazif Sürürî, *Hilâfet-i mu‘azzama-i İslâmiye* (Istanbul: Tahir Bey Matbaası, 1315 [1897]), pp. 6–23 and Yusuf b. İsmâ‘il al-Nabhani, *al-Ahadith al-Arba‘in fi wujub ta‘at amir al-mu‘minin* (Beirut: al Maṭba‘a al-Adabiya, 1312 [1894]), *passim*.

86 Abdülaziz Kolçalı, *Kur‘an-ı Kerim ve Kanun-i Esasi: hürriyet, müsavât, usûl-i meşveret, hürriyet ve hududu* (Istanbul: n. p., 1326 [1908]), *passim*.

87 ‘İslâmiyet ve Kanun-i Esasi’, *İkdam*, 26 July 1908; and ‘Ulema-yı İslâm ve meşrutiyet idare’, *İkdam*, 2 August 1908.

88 Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, ‘Mevâiz’, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 8 [15 October 1908], p. 128.

89 İsmail Kara, *İslâmcıların siyasi görüşleri* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1994), p. 82.

of the new constitution.<sup>90</sup> But this victory on paper did not prevent the CUP from pushing mainstream Islamists and the *ulema* into the background.

Although the CUP approved the revised constitution, it also implemented a series of legal initiatives that followed a clear secularising agenda. One example is the limitation of the power of the *şeriat* courts, beginning in 1909; another is the Temporary Family Law of 1917, which granted Muslim women a partial right of divorce based upon a liberal interpretation of Hanbali law, and limited polygamy by allowing women to stipulate monogamy as a condition in their marriage contracts. These reforms were spearheaded by a faction of the CUP led by members and Ziya Gökalp. Labelled ‘Turkist-Islamists’ by their opponents, these thinkers promoted the notion of a modern Islam limited to private faith and ritual.<sup>91</sup> They believed that many obsolete Islamic practices, such as polygamy, could be eliminated through liberal interpretation of traditional sources by the *ulu’l-al-amr* (those vested with authority), and the supplementation of classical law with ‘urf (custom).<sup>92</sup> Despite vehement rejections from mainstream Islamists,<sup>93</sup> CUP policy as a whole tended to follow this particular brand of Islamism, which carried the transformative potential to foster modern morals for a modern society.

In spite of the strong secularist tendencies of many of its leading members, the CUP opposed the new Westernisation movement that emerged as a by-product of late Ottoman materialism. The spread of a popularised version of mid-nineteenth-century German *Vulgärmaterialismus* among the Ottoman elites under the ‘pious sultan’ Abdülhamid II was an astonishing development. The Ottoman scientific discourse spread from Beirut and Cairo to the Ottoman capital, where, under the constraints of censorship, its proponents, intellectuals and dilettantes, only hinted at the conflict between religion and science. Evading the censor by hiding under the innocuous mantle of science, the promoters of *Vulgärmaterialismus* not only translated into Turkish important parts of leading German theoretician Ludwig Büchner’s magnum opus *Kraft und Stoff*, but turned many popular journals into Ottoman versions of *Science pour tous* or *Die Natur*. The revolution provided them, for the first time, with the opportunity to express the materialist gospel openly. A full

90 Tefik Tarık (ed.), *Mu’addel Kanun-i Esasî ve İntihab-ı Meb’usan Kanunu* (Istanbul: İkbâl Kütübhanesi, 1327 [1912]), pp. 3–11.

91 Ziya Gökalp, ‘Dinin içtima’î hizmetleri’, *İslâm Mecmuası* 34 (13 August [1915]), pp. 741–3; 36 (10 September [1915]), pp. 773–6; and 37 (24 September [1915]), pp. 791–6.

92 See, for example, Mansurizâde Sa’id, ‘İslâm kadını: ta’addüd-i zevcât İslâmiyette men’ olunabilir’, *İslâm Mecmuası* 8 [1914], pp. 333–8.

93 See, for example, Ahmed Na’im, ‘Müdafa’at-ı diniye’, *Sebil’ür-Reşad* 298 [28 May 1914], pp. 216–21 and 300 [11 June 1914], pp. 248–50.

translation of *Kraft und Stoff*, complete with its most explosive chapter, ‘Die Gottes Idee’, which the scientific intellectuals had not dared to publish under the old regime, appeared in 1911; it sold 2,250 copies in less than two years.<sup>94</sup> Translations of many similar works in the same genre appeared, especially those of Ernst Haeckel. As materialist journals proliferated, the popularity of Westernisation surged. The most influential such journal was deliberately, and provocatively, named *İctihad* (*Ijtihad*). Established in Geneva in 1904, the journal ran for more than five years in Cairo, and then significantly moved to the Ottoman capital. Other important journals were *Felsefe Mecmuası* (Journal of Philosophy), which promoted *Vulgärmaterialismus* as the philosophy of the future, and *Yirminci Asırda Zekâ* (Intelligence in the Twentieth Century), a popular illustrated journal of science.

Late Ottoman materialists envisioned a modern, Europeanised society in which science reigned supreme. They inhabited a simplistic world, where progress, guided forward by the unerring light of scientific truth, would inevitably triumph. The movement split on two major issues. One was the future role of religion in society. Abdullah Cevdet, the editor of *İctihad*, along with his materialist friends Celâl Nuri and Kılıçzâde Hakkı, sought to forge a new moral basis for society based upon an improbable synthesis of Islam and *Vulgärmaterialismus*. Baha Tevfik and Ahmed Nebil, on the other hand, promoted a variant of monism, cleansed of religion, as the philosophy of the future. They agreed, however, that Westernisation (*garbçılık*) was one of the necessary preconditions for the transformation of society. Accordingly, they promoted European customs and manners, even publishing books on good manners, while deriding Ottoman habits. Significantly, a blueprint for the Westernisation of society drafted by Kılıçzâde Hakkı in 1913 included almost all the reforms later implemented by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the founder of modern Turkey.<sup>95</sup>

A backlash against all things Western set in after the Balkan Wars. It inspired several key thinkers associated with the Westernisation movement to reconsider their positions. In 1914 Celâl Nuri wrote in an article entitled ‘The Noble Quality of Enmity’ (‘Şîme-i husumet’) that Ottoman Westernisation should be achieved against Europe, much as the Japanese owed their success to their anti-Western antagonism.<sup>96</sup> This approach, which appealed to many Turkists,

94 [Baha Tevfik], ‘Tenkid-i felsefi: Ali Kemal Bey’in 8 Haziran tarihli *İkdam* Gazetesi’ndeki makalesine cevabdır’, *Felsefe Mecmuası* 5 [1913], p. 68.

95 [Kılıçzâde Hakkı], ‘Pek uyanık bir uyku’, *İctihad* 55 [6 March 1913], pp. 1226–8; 57 [20 March 1913], pp. 1261–4.

96 Celâl Nuri, ‘Şîme-i husumet’, *İctihad* 88 [22 January 1914], pp. 1949–51.

provided the foundation for the early Republican idea of an ambivalent love–hate relationship with Europe – admiration for Europe’s material progress, advanced science and way of life, mixed with disdain for its alleged anti-Turkish prejudice and neo-Crusader mentality. Dr Abdullah Cevdet rejected this thesis, and penned a pungent response entitled ‘The Noble Quality of Love’ (‘Şîme-i muhabbet’), which depicted the relationship between Europe and Ottoman society as that between a teacher and his ‘grateful pupil’, and asserted that there was no alternative to European civilisation, which must be accepted ‘with its roses and its thorns’.<sup>97</sup> The ensuing debate resulted in a major schism within the Westernist movement between so-called ‘Total Westernisers’ and ‘Partial Westernisers’. But after the outbreak of the Great War, the authorities effectively muted the Westernist movement, whose message undermined the CUP’s propaganda of *jihād*. Sharif Husayn ibn ‘Ali’s citation of insults to Islam in *İctihad* among his reasons for revolt against the empire proved that CUP fears were not groundless.<sup>98</sup>

Another ideological movement towards which the CUP adopted an ambivalent stance was the Ottoman women’s movement. Until the revolution, the palace had attempted to harness the voice of women primarily by means of a conservative mouthpiece, the *Ladies’ Gazette*. Women’s rights, like practically every other cause, benefited from the brief interlude of political freedom that followed the revolution. The hostility of the CUP leadership towards feminism did not prevent them from attempting to co-opt the power of women by sponsoring various women’s organisations, which included several Ottoman feminists. To a certain extent, their success may be gauged from the pro-CUP position adopted by the mainstream women’s movement, especially after 1913. The most important women’s journal in 1913–14 was *Kadınlar Dünyası* (World of Women). The journal promoted a de-politicised brand of feminism, centred on the demand for an end to discrimination against women in society. Typical grievances included the segregation of men and women on public transport, restrictions on women’s education and work, and legal disadvantages, especially polygamy.<sup>99</sup>

Here again, it was the transformative experience of the Great War that served as a catalyst for change. The mobilisation effort provided a new basis for Ottoman feminism as the embodiment of the patriotic ideal as applied to

97 Abdullah Cevdet, ‘Şîme-i muhabbet’, *İctihad* 89 [29 January 1914], pp. 1979–84.

98 Mehmed Selâhaddin, *Bildiklerim: İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin maksad-ı te’essüs ve suret-i teşekkülü ve Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye’nin sebep-i felâket ve inkısâmı* (Cairo: Emin Hindiye Matbaası, 1918), p. 106.

99 Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı kadın hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis, 1994), pp. 79 ff.

women. Volunteering to serve as a nurse in a field hospital or as a labourer in the ranks of the women's worker divisions became the new model of female virtue in time of war. The CUP consciously played on these themes to galvanise women to action and strengthen its control over the mainstream women's movement. The National Defence Society, a Turkist organisation established in February 1913 to sponsor patriotic cultural activities, such as the collection of donations or patriotic gatherings for women, became very active during the war.<sup>100</sup>

The National Defence Society was one of several semi-official 'national' organisations set up by the CUP and by means of which it gradually established its domination in the cultural field – a process hastened by the onset of war. The unfortunate consequence of increasing government control after 1913 was decreasing diversity in cultural life. In terms of cultural richness, the period of 1908–12 has not been rivalled since in most of the Ottoman successor states.

The rising pitch of nationalism had a profound impact on Ottoman literary output. Even before the revolution, exiled authors of Arab, Armenian, Albanian and, to a certain extent, Kurdish origin began to publish what may be termed nationalist literature. Literary activity among Greeks, Kutzo-Vlachs and Macedo-Bulgarians was heavily influenced by literary movements in Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. Young Turk authors, whose main obsession was with politics, paid some attention to the purification of the Turkish language as a means to awaken a national consciousness. But such ideas were far from dominating literary circles, where work for the most part followed the vogue of *l'art pour l'art*.

The transformation of the *millets* into ethno-religious communities dominated by nationalists, coupled with the seizure of power by the CUP, produced a sea change in literature. Art lost its introspectiveness, and came to be associated with the promotion of nationalist goals. Among Turks, the new journal *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens), to which many CUP members contributed, called for Turkish to be simplified, for Arabic and Persian grammatical rules to be abandoned and for literature to be harnessed in the service of Turkish nationalism.<sup>101</sup> The place of Islam was, as we have seen, a matter of debate. While many Turkist literati tried to reconcile Islam with nationalism, others embraced social Darwinism<sup>102</sup> and levelled thinly disguised criticism at Islam's domination of Turkish culture. Mehmed Emin (nicknamed 'the National Poet') had

100 Nâzım H. Polat, *Müdâfaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991), pp. 43 ff.

101 Yusuf Ziya Öksüz, *Türkçenin sadeleşme tarihi: Genç Kalemler ve Yeni Lisan hareketi* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1995), pp. 77 ff.

102 Mehmed Emin, *Türk sazı* (Istanbul: Türk Yurdu Kitapları, [1914]), pp. 115–16.

written as far back as 1899, 'I am a Turk/My religion and race are sublime.'<sup>103</sup> By 1914, he was already distancing himself from Islam, and praising the pre-Islamic religion of the Turks. He wrote of 'Turks worshipping the God of War in Mount Tanrı', a mountain in Eastern Turkistan mentioned in early Turkic mythology.<sup>104</sup> Ömer Seyfeddin, the leading short-story writer of the era, identified the materialists Büchner and Haeckel as 'the thinkers who have granted humanity most of existing truth'.<sup>105</sup> Similar trends are observable in other Ottoman communities; parallels to *Genç Kalemler* are the Armenian journals *Mehean* and *Nawasard* (Istanbul), the Albanian journal *Koha* (Korçë), the underground Arab journal *Lisān al-'Arab / al-Muntadā al-'Arabī* (Istanbul) and the literary sections of the Kurdish journals *Roj-i Kurd* and *Hetav-i Kurd* (Istanbul).

## Conclusion

The Mudros armistice of 30 October 1918 marked not only the end of the war but the end of an era. The surrender of the Ottoman government and the subsequent flight of the leading members of the CUP terminated the Second Constitutional Period and, more broadly, the Ottoman period as a whole. Although it is commonly assumed that the Young Turk Revolution produced drastic changes in Ottoman domestic and foreign policy, there was far more continuity with Hamidian patterns than is generally recognised. The 1908 revolution marked a watershed not because of the introduction of new policies in its wake, but because it made possible a sea change in the structure of the ruling elite. Although the CUP began in stark opposition to Abdülhamid II, the realities of power compelled it to follow his policies far more often than it would have liked. There is something symbolic in the famous picture taken at the state funeral of Abdülhamid II in 1918, in which the entire CUP leadership is seen following their opponent's casket in solemn procession.

Politically, the most significant change that took place in this period was the introduction, however incomplete, of representation through party politics. For the first time in the history of the empire, politics was the business of political parties sponsoring competing policies and visions of the future. Although political pluralism itself was not long lasting, it caused a far more enduring change in the nature and composition of the Ottoman ruling elite. The

103 Mehmed Emin, *Türkçe şiirler* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekası, 1334 [1918]), pp. 41–2.

104 Mehmed Emin, *Tan sesleri* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekası, 1331 [1915]), pp. 25–6.

105 Ömer Seyfeddin, 'Beşeriyet ve köpek', *Piyano* 7 [3 October 1910], p. 78.

revolution marked a changing of the guard, as new elites were swept up into politics both in the machinery of central government and in communal organisation. The old elites that worked within the framework of Hamidian Ottomanism, such as the Armenian *amira* class of bankers and rich artisans allied to the clergy, or the Albanian, Kurdish and Arab notables who traded their loyalty for imperial privileges and a free hand in communal administration, lost power under the new regime. So did the religious establishments. Muslim, Christian and Jewish religious leaders lost so much ground to the nationalist elites in the Ottoman heartlands that only in the most distant and loosely held regions of the empire in Arabia did successor states defining themselves in religious terms emerge. Even Sharif Husayn of Mecca bowed to the slogans of the age, announcing his revolt on behalf of an imagined 'Arab nation'. Members of the traditional elites who jumped on the nationalist bandwagon did so largely because they had no alternative.

The new elites empowered by the installation of a parliamentary system in a multinational empire were, for the most part, secular nationalists. Mostly Turkish members of the CUP rose to positions of prominence in the army and the bureaucracy, while non-Turkish nationalists came to the fore as parliamentary deputies or regional leaders of separatist movements. Lacking the economic power and social status enjoyed by the traditional elites, the nationalist leaders exploited the new liberties of the post-revolutionary period to consolidate their power using newspapers, journals and the ballot box. Through elections, they came to enjoy legitimacy as 'the representatives of the people' – although they might disagree amongst themselves as to who the 'people' really were – and sought to assert the power conferred by this legitimacy in the struggle over the future of the empire.

Wars acted as a catalyst for the disintegration of the empire and the redrawing of the political map of the Balkans and Middle East, giving birth to fourteen successor states dominated by the elites formed during the Second Constitutional Period. In Turkey, the overwhelming majority of the Republican leaders were former CUP members; in the other successor states, nationalist elites speaking the anti-colonial rhetoric pioneered by the CUP held a disproportionate share of power for many decades following the Ottoman collapse. Thus the emergence of an intellectual, nationalist vanguard at the expense of the traditional religious and propertied elites stands out as the most significant socio-political legacy bequeathed by the Second Constitutional Period.

The revolution and its aftermath also saw the rise of the military in Ottoman society. Although defeat in war thwarted the Ottoman project for building a nation in arms, the militarisation of society and politics became a common



feature of many of the Ottoman successor states, including Turkey. Along with the militarisation of politics, the Second Constitutional Period left another lasting imprint on post-Ottoman political geography: the creation of a hollow institutional façade legitimising the ruling party. Once promoted and accepted, such fundamental tenets of a free society as elections, the right to representation, freedom of the press and the right to assemble could not simply be suspended. But they could be largely emptied of meaning. In fact, the constitutional travesty that emerged during the Second Constitutional Period became the model for nearly all the nation-states that established themselves upon the ruins of the empire. One sees this pattern even in the most oppressive dictatorial regimes, such as Enver Hoxha's Albania, or the Ba'ath leaderships in Syria and Iraq, which still felt it necessary to hold sham elections, maintain the illusion of an elected parliament and sponsor a robust press tightly controlled by the state.

Ironically, the CUP's triumph in 1908 proved as much of a victory for its political opponents. For four critical years, the leaders of the Committee struggled to maintain their grip on power, in part because they could not resolve their dilemma in choosing between the urge to dominate and the lofty principles of the revolution. The CUP's entire revolutionary platform rested on the case for a constitution. Immediate retreat from this goal would have been tantamount to betrayal of the people, and might have resulted in the loss of power. The 'people' turned out to be at once a considerable force of legitimacy and a serious threat to CUP control. The restoration of the constitution and the institution of freely contested elections soon proved a boon to the CUP's challengers. The parliament was at once a legitimising asset and an independent-minded body that hindered the CUP's freedom to implement their empire-saving programme. Eventually, the constitutional regime was emptied of substance, even though it retained its form.

The conflict between the CUP's Turkist agenda and the multinational reality of the empire was another of many dilemmas that were resolved in an unsatisfactorily pragmatic fashion, resulting in an attenuation of revolutionary principle and the formulation of ambiguous policy. Just as the CUP's 'Ottomanism' was supposed to appeal to non-Turkish communities while preserving the Turkist agenda, so too a secular interpretation of Islam was meant to pacify the *ulema* while maintaining the essentials of the scientific platform. Perhaps a more uncompromising ideological attitude and the adoption of a supra-national platform like that of the Bolsheviks in Russia might have saved the empire from these contradictions. But the sort of social upheaval openly espoused by the Bolsheviks was alien to the CUP world view. In this respect,

the CUP leaders resembled the Tanzimat statesmen who, promoting the new while preserving the old, fostered an ambiguous dualism. They kept the sultan, but introduced the Committee; maintained the Islamic identity of the regime, yet endorsed secularism; espoused Turkism, yet professed Ottomanism; advocated democracy, but practised repression; attacked imperialism, but courted empires; and proclaimed *étatisme* while promoting liberal economics.

An uncharitable estimation of the CUP in power would attribute the ambivalence of their policies to a failure of imagination. A more generous evaluation would recognise that the CUP, like the leaders of the Tanzimat before them, and unlike the leaders of the Ottoman successor states that followed in their wake, had to come to terms with the fact that they ruled a multinational empire. They were not free to build a new state and society from scratch, primarily because they were not prepared to relinquish the empire. Ultimately, the revolutionaries of 1908 could not transcend the framework of the late Ottoman order bequeathed to them by Abdülhamid II, which they had come together to overthrow. It was up to a younger generation of revolutionaries, no longer burdened by the responsibilities of empire and the challenge of nationalism, to abandon the Ottoman past and build something radically new.

## The struggle for independence

HASAN KAYALI

An investigation of modern Turkey's roots, of its political traditions, socio-economic transformations, and cultural heritage, can reasonably start in the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of Turkey as sovereign nation-state, though, occurred late, when its new boundaries were determined with international recognition in 1923, and the community inhabiting its current space reimagined itself through the Republican state's programmatic effort to inculcate a novel understanding of nationhood. While inflected by the transformations of the past, both nationhood and stateness as they crystallised in the 1920s bore a direct and overwhelming imprint of the contingencies of the previous decade's wars. This decade of warfare began with the Ottoman–Italian war over Libya in 1911 and culminated in a struggle for independence in those territories of the Ottoman Empire that remained unoccupied at the signing of an armistice in October 1918 but were subsequently encroached upon by the Entente (or 'Allied') forces.<sup>1</sup>

The profound transformations of war in the empire's truncated territories set the stage for the Turkish, or Kemalist, revolution. In the pantheon of twentieth-century Middle Eastern revolutions, ranging from military *coups d'état* and revolts against colonial rule to regime change with profound social repercussions, the Kemalist revolution has a unique place. It followed from an

<sup>1</sup> There are only a few works in Western languages on the struggle for independence. The most comprehensive and recent is Stanford J. Shaw's *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, 1918–1923: A Documentary Study* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2000). Erik Jan Zürcher has studied the period closely, particularly in his *The Unionist Factor: The Rôle of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905–1926* (Leiden: Brill, 1984). Andrew Mango's biography of Mustafa Kemal devotes a long section (part III) to the independence struggle (Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999). Also Elaine D. Smith, *Turkey: The Origins of the Kemalist Movement and the Government of the Grand Assembly (1919–1923)* (Washington, DC: Judd & Detweiler, 1959). Numerous chronicles, memoirs and local histories of the period have been published in Turkish, but there is a dearth of interpretative monographs.

independence movement that entailed sustained armed struggle and stands out as the prototype of anti-imperialist liberation movements in the twentieth century.

The most devastating phase of the Ottomans' 'long war' ended with surrender after a string of setbacks that they and the other Central Powers suffered in 1918. The armistice of Mudros, signed on 30 October, provided a brief respite and exposed to view the transformations that the Ottoman polity and society had undergone since the beginning of the First World War: in Anatolia alone three to four million (more than one-fifth of the population) had lost their lives; about one quarter of the dead were soldiers or other combatants, and the rest victims of wartime deprivation, disease and ethno-religious carnage.<sup>2</sup> The wars had ravaged physical infrastructures, as well as the morale and livelihood of the survivors. The vast Arab-populated southern provinces of the empire were under foreign occupation. The Armenian population had been dislodged and all but wiped out. The resignation of the Talât Paşa cabinet earlier in the month had ended the decade-long, and increasingly more draconian, grip of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) on the government.<sup>3</sup>

Mudros also marked the beginning of a struggle for survival under the new geo-political circumstances engendered by defeat in the First World War. Galvanised by renewed occupation and the threat of mortal losses, the struggle lasted five years and further transformed state and society. When the Lausanne Peace Treaty of July 1923 restored the main lines of the Mudros ceasefire as new political boundaries, it consigned the Ottoman state to history and spawned the new state of Turkey, which was to be declared a republic in October 1923.

As in the other two defeated empires of Austria-Hungary and Germany, in the Ottoman Empire, too, defeat and surrender occasioned a crisis of legitimacy; and the states that eventually supplanted the empire were envisioned as nation-states. Empire's exit, however, was considerably more drawn out in the Middle East, particularly in the rump of the Ottoman realm to the

2 Already tentative Ottoman population estimates become particularly problematic for the war years due to the inherent chaos of combat, population movements and widely differing population and death counts for the non-Muslims of the empire. Justin McCarthy has used Ottoman and Turkish population data to conclude that 3.5 million Anatolians died between 1914 and 1922: *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), p. 139. Erik Zürcher estimates military casualties (including Arab soldiers) of the First World War at around one million (approximately 325,000 soldiers killed in action, 60,000 who died from wounds, 400,000 from disease and 250,000 missing or prisoners of war): 'Between Death and Desertion: The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I', *Turcica* 28 (1996), pp. 256–7.

3 Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

north of the armistice line, consisting of Anatolia and Thrace. It was marked by accommodations to military defeat and demobilisation, by protest and resistance, and by renewed and prolonged warfare. The political and social structures of the state metamorphosed during the protracted struggles to be recast at the Lausanne Treaty and during its immediate aftermath.

Turkish historiography has generally solemnised the half-decade from 1918 to 1923, aside from the first few months viewed as the death throes of empire, as the era of the vindication of the Turkish nation. The underlying assumption is that the Turkish nation had long ago come of age, but had been repressed by the imperial culture and structures, only to be liberated with Ottoman military collapse and, all but miraculously, delivered from foreign predation by an emergent leader, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). Turks' retrospective designation of the period as the era of their national liberation affirms a teleology of national redemption with little regard to the constitutive role of unfolding political, social, military and international circumstances and contingencies. The transformation was more tortuous and pragmatic, and nationness more ambiguous during this period, than canonical accounts of Turkish history suggest – prominent among them Mustafa Kemal's 'Speech', a seven-day oration that he delivered in the Republican People's Party Congress in 1927, which has since been accepted as the master narrative of the founding of the Turkish nation-state.<sup>4</sup>

### Negotiating defeat and occupation (October 1918–August 1919)

Defeat had become certain by the autumn of 1918 with the British push into northern Syria and the severing of Ottoman communications with allies Germany and Austria-Hungary following Entente victories in the Balkans. The retrenchment of Ottoman armies discredited the CUP and afforded Sultan Vahdeddin, who had succeeded to the Ottoman throne as Mehmed VI after his brother Reşad's death (3 July), the opportunity to reassert the authority of the palace. Defections from the CUP and the formation of splinter parties signalled the end of the Committee's monopoly on power.

From the Ottoman government's weak position, there was little room for negotiation when Ottoman and Allied delegations met for the ceasefire agreement at Mudros, a town on the Aegean island of Lemnos. Representing the

4 Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Istanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938 [1927]), trans. as *A Speech Delivered by Mustapha Kemal, President of the Turkish Republic, October 1927* (Leipzig: K. F. Koehler, 1929).

new and short-lived Ahmed İzzet Paşa government, Minister of the Navy Rauf (Orbay) accepted the British Admiral Calthorpe's dictates in order to secure an end to the hostilities: Ottoman units in occupied areas would surrender; the rest of the Ottoman army, with the exception of small contingents needed to maintain security, would be demobilised; the British army would stop its advance northward from Syria and Mesopotamia; the Entente powers would control communications, strategic sites and installations including the Dardanelles and Bosphorus forts, and preserve the right to occupy territories beyond the armistice line 'in the event of a situation arising which threatens the security of the Allies', including the six Armenian provinces 'in case of disorder'.<sup>5</sup>

Within days of the signing, the top leadership of the CUP, including Talât, Enver and Cemal Paşas, fled the capital by sea, first to Russia and then to Germany. They were subsequently hunted down by Armenian militants who sought revenge for their role in the massacres of Ottoman Armenians. Talât was murdered in Berlin in 1921 and Cemal in the Caucasus in 1922, where he was casting around for an opportunity to re-enter Anatolia. Enver was killed the same year in a typically quixotic adventure, leading the armies of the Afghan king against Bolshevik troops in Central Asia. The CUP's strongmen were gone, but its organisational infrastructure remained intact. Unionists still dominated the chamber of deputies, whose regular four-year term, due to end in the autumn of 1918, had been extended on grounds of the war emergency. Thus, even as the Ottoman Empire surrendered militarily, its parliament continued to function. The chamber of deputies was closed in December, but after new elections re-opened in 1920, albeit briefly.

The armistice suspended active military operations at positions that had been reached by British forces and were no longer defended by retreating Ottoman armies. This armistice line resembled modern Turkey's future frontiers, leading to the perception that the Mudros accord was a foundational document that outlined the boundaries of a new state. However, the tumultuous aftermath of Mudros complicates such determinism. Neither the Ottomans nor the Allies regarded it as the blueprint for a permanent settlement. As the Ottomans grappled with the harshest of the ceasefire terms imposed on a Central Power, fighting continued or resumed in different parts of the Ottoman lands, and the Entente sought to gain maximum geo-political advantage in violation of Mudros's already onerous terms.

5 J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East: A Documentary Record, 1914-1956* (Princeton: D. van Nostrand Company, 1956), vol. II, pp. 36-7.

Before the ink of the signatures had dried, British forces in northern Mesopotamia occupied oil-rich Mosul in a northward thrust. The Entente countries had long-standing and mutually recognised territorial interests in the Ottoman Empire, interests formalised in the Constantinople Agreement (1915) and the Sykes–Picot Agreement (1916). Advancing the guarantees secured for the Armenian provinces, the French landed in the Eastern Mediterranean port of Alexandretta and occupied all of Cilicia (the provinces of Mersin, Adana and environs) by the end of December. England occupied Maraş and other districts to the east, including Ayntab in the Aleppo province, which had been divided by the Armistice line. Russia had staked out Istanbul and eastern Anatolia, but its withdrawal from the war after the 1917 Revolution was followed by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918, in which the Bolshevik regime relinquished such claims, including those over the districts of Kars, Ardahan and Batum, which Russia had acquired from the Ottoman Empire at the Berlin Congress in 1878. Kars and Ardahan came to be contested between the Ottomans and a new Armenian state that declared independence from Russia in May 1918, while British forces occupied oil-rich Batum in Georgia in order to check both the Ottomans and the Bolsheviks. Mudros's clauses authorising the Entente powers to control strategic locations, railways and ports led to their effective occupation of port cities and inland communication centres, and the presence of an Allied fleet anchored off Istanbul's shores.

Vahdeddin counted on cooperation with the Entente powers to preserve his incumbency and retain monarchical rule over a portion of the Ottoman patrimony, even though the aftermath of Mudros offered little hope to anyone who relied on the Entente's goodwill. He closed the parliament in December using powers that the CUP had restored to his easily manipulated predecessor. As the compromised independence of the empire's remnants awaited a resolution in the peace conference, Vahdeddin's title as sultan became little more than a sinecure. He could compensate for the circumscription of his temporal authority by emphasising his caliphal prerogatives. A caliph dependent on British goodwill was good colonial policy for Britain. Vahdeddin also had the support of segments of the capital's cosmopolitan elite, who valued British favour for the sake of the state's survival.

The victors continued their occupation of strategic sites while tightening their hold on the capital. On 8 February 1919, the French general Franchet d'Espèrey made a choreographed entry into Istanbul as the commander of the Entente and other allied troops, which included a Greek contingent. He docked at the heart of old Istanbul and entered the city on the back of a white horse, in apparent emulation of Mehmed II, the Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople

in 1453. Spectacle aside, a lingering but half-hearted occupation would be beset by disputes between d'Espèrey and the British Commander of the Army of Black Sea, General Milne.<sup>6</sup> The compliant sultan appointed as grand vezir his brother-in-law ('Damad') Ferid Paşa, who was to head five different cabinets between March 1919 and October 1920. Ferid had led the 'Liberal' opposition to the CUP and advocated the promotion of private initiative and greater local and communal prerogatives.<sup>7</sup> The British cooperated with the Damad Ferid government to round up Unionist leaders, officers and statesmen in the capital and send them to war tribunals, and many to detention and exile in Malta.

The crackdowns failed to suppress a public sphere of unprecedented vitality and breadth that crystallised in Istanbul after the Armistice at the confluence of different factors: the removal of censorship with the collapse of the CUP; the need to address the ramifications of Mudros in the respite from fighting; and the elimination of the principal forum for political deliberations with the closure of the parliament in December 1918. The press and political and cultural associations flourished, and an attempt in February 1919 to impose censorship was defeated under protests.<sup>8</sup> The terms of the Mudros agreement and the principles proclaimed by President Wilson constituted the backdrop for vibrant debates on what was desirable and what could be feasible. While the capital was the hub of this public sphere, particularly in terms of civic associations, the provincial press also proliferated.<sup>9</sup>

The ignominious dissolution of the CUP gave new life to its opposition. The Hürriyet ve İtilaf (Liberty and Entente) Party, suppressed since 1913, was revived in 1918. Several other political parties with minor differences in outlook emerged. Liberty and Entente's traditional pro-British proclivity and its closeness to the palace compromised it under the circumstances of foreign occupation and the palace's acquiescence. A diverse group of professional and civic societies, educational delegations and political parties came together under the umbrella of a National Congress (Milli Kongre) that called for broad

6 Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul under Allied Occupation, 1918–1923* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 60–4.

7 Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, pp. 99, 104.

8 Sina Akşin, *İstanbul hükümetleri ve milli mücadele* (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992), vol. I, p. 155; Zeki Arıkan, *Mütareke ve işgal dönemi İzmir basını (30 Ekim 1918–8 Eylül 1922)* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1989), p. 11.

9 Tank Zafer Tunaya devotes an entire volume to the civic and political associations of the era in his *Türkiye'de siyasal partiler*, vol. II: *Mütareke dönemi* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986). On the press, see Ömer Sami Coşar, *Milli mücadele basını* (Istanbul(?): Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları, n.d.) and Bünyamin Kocaoğlu, *Mütareke'de İttihatçılık* (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2006).



action above all factionalism to defend unity and independence in a manner consistent with Wilson's declaration.<sup>10</sup>

Wilson's Twelfth Point coupled political self-determination with nationality in stipulating the 'Turkish portion' of the rump empire as the repository of sovereignty.<sup>11</sup> This formulation imparted legitimacy to ethnic identification among Muslim groups as a basis for political self-determination, not least because the Twelfth Point also called for autonomous development of the 'other nationalities'. After 1918, several Kurdish societies came into existence, chief among them the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti) as did a National Turkish Party (Milli Türk Fırkası), a Society for the National Improvement of the Laz (Laz Tekamül-ü Milli Cemiyeti) and the Society for the Protection of the Near Eastern Circassians' Rights (Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti).<sup>12</sup> The popular resistance that gradually crystallised in Anatolia and Thrace, drawing adherents and opponents from each of these and other ethnic communities, was to appropriate Turkishness, consistently conflated with Muslimness, as its idiom and the basis of a supra-ethnic identity mobilised against foreign occupiers.<sup>13</sup>

As the Paris peace talks progressed in the spring of 1919 without Ottoman representation, proposals for a Western mandate in Anatolia energised public discourse. A mandatory arrangement held out the hope of maintaining a degree of territorial integrity and independence, both of which had been jeopardised after wartime losses and post-war occupation. Because the sultan favoured British cooperation for the protection and perpetuation of his caliphal role, the palace was not averse to a British mandate. A newly formed society called the Friends of England (İngiliz Muhibleri Cemiyeti) advocated such a solution openly. Others, including such activist intellectuals as Ahmed Emin (Yalman) and Halide Edip (Adivar), were reconciled to the need for external

10 Tunaya, *Mütareke dönemi*, pp. 150–6; Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. I, pp. 185–8.

11 The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of an autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

12 Tunaya, *Mütareke dönemi*, pp. 186–203, 456, 531, 606–9.

13 Erik J. Zürcher, 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish nationalists: identity politics, 1908–1938', in Kemal Karpat (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 169, 173; Howard Eissenstat, 'Metaphors of race and discourse of nation: racial theory and the beginnings of nationalism in the Turkish Republic', in Paul Spickard (ed.), *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 245–6. See also Karen Barkey, 'Thinking about consequences of empire', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds.), *After Empire* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 106–9.

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assistance but favoured the United States as the prospective mandatory power of the rump empire.<sup>14</sup>

The decapitated CUP's extant structures and secondary cadres, some still active within the Istanbul government and the provinces, rallied against occupation and tutelage.<sup>15</sup> The fear that parts of the empire then or previously populated by Christian groups might have to be ceded was the single most significant impetus behind the beginnings of resistance in Anatolia. A prospective large-scale return of surviving Armenian deportees could have tipped the balances in favour of Armenian pluralities or majorities, thus providing the justification for independence or annexation to the Armenian state centred in the Caucasus. The Mudros agreement allowed the Entente rights of intervention in the Armenian provinces (rendered as the 'six provinces' in the Ottoman text, referring to Erzurum, Sivas, Diyarbekir, Mamuret el-Aziz, Van and Bitlis). The inclusion of Armenian units in the French occupation forces in Cilicia<sup>16</sup> increased suspicion about an Entente commitment to the creation of an Armenian entity in Anatolia.

Eastern Anatolian Muslims feared a return of exiles to reclaim their properties as much as they did a redrawing of international boundaries that would place Muslim populations within a sovereign Armenian state. Even in the absence of Armenian sovereignty, a sizeable Armenian presence in these provinces could invite foreign intervention on the Armenians' behalf. It was, therefore, no coincidence that some of the first organised political groups of the resistance, called the defence of rights (*müdafaa-yı hukuk*) organisations, were formed in areas with historical Armenian and Greek populations, specifically the two largest eastern cities, Erzurum and Trabzon, and Eastern Thrace and Izmir. The people of Kars formed an Islam Council (Kars İslam Şurası) as early as 5 November 1918. The council became the nucleus of a regional organisation that convened as a congress in different incarnations and established the transitional government of Southwest Caucasia in January (Cenub-u Garbi Kafkas Hükümet-i Muvakkate-i Milliyesi). The organisation was the prototype of future congresses in Anatolia. It was dismantled in April 1919 by British troops in occupation of Batum and the Azeri capital, Baku.<sup>17</sup>

14 Salahi Ramsdan Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy, 1918–1923* (London: Sage Publications, 1975), p. 13.

15 Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, esp. chap. 3.

16 Robert F. Zeidner, 'The Tricolor over the Taurus: The French in Cilicia and Vicinity, 1918–1922', Ph.D. thesis, University of Utah (1991), pp. 141–55.

17 Bülent Tanör, *Türkiye'de kongre iktidarları (1918–1920)* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 1998), pp. 194–203.

The history of the early nodes of resistance organised by local notables and army officers, with an increasing reliance on local armed bands, has been obscured by two interrelated dispositions of subsequent official history. One is the tendency to glorify the resistance as a seamless movement, united and inexorably driven by a Turkish national spirit. This view undermines the crucial role that early and isolated local forces and defence organisations played in mobilising resistance. The second is the tendency to accord Mustafa Kemal the primary, if not exclusive, role in the achievements of the resistance. While Mustafa Kemal played a pivotal role in the consolidation of the movement starting in the summer of 1919, some local groups became active as soon as the hostilities of the Great War ended, constituting the basis for unified action against the Entente's scramble for Anatolian territories in the years to come.

The victors' competing claims and the priority accorded to European issues at the peace conference delayed and complicated the determination of Anatolia's status. Greece advanced claims on western Anatolia based on ideological, historical and demographic factors, which Britain received with favour. Italy was suspicious of Greek designs on south-western territories, which the Triple Entente had pledged to Italy in the secret London Agreement of 1915 and reaffirmed as falling within that country's sphere of influence in the 1917 Treaty of St Jean de Maurienne. At the end of March 1919, Italian forces landed in Antalya and moved north and north-west to Kuşadası, Akşehir and Afyon within weeks. In the middle of May, the Allies allowed the landing of Greek forces in Izmir, the second-largest city and port of the rump empire.

The invasion of western Anatolia and Thrace was a step in the implementation of the Greek kingdom's expansionist agenda. An irredentist *Megali Idea* ('Great Idea') harking back to the Byzantine period had motivated Greek nationalists since the turn of the nineteenth century. The centrepiece of the expansionist project, Constantinople, was now under international control; but western Anatolia, which had many Greek-plurality towns, and the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea, or ancient Pontus, where conversion and expulsion had much diluted the Greek presence, seemed within reach to form a new greater Greece.<sup>18</sup> The British allowed the Greek navy to invade Izmir, not so much out of sympathy for historical rights or demographic arguments, or simply to reward Greece and its staunchly pro-Entente prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, for an eleventh-hour entry into the war on the Entente side, as out of necessity. In 1919, the British occupation forces were spread thin in the Middle East, from Baghdad and Syria in the south to the Caucasus and the

<sup>18</sup> Michael L. Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919–1922* (London: Allen Lane, 1973).

Black Sea in the north. Depleted by the long war, Britain lacked the ability and will to commit further troops to curb resistance in Anatolia. Italian ambitions in south-western Anatolia and French designs in Syria and south-eastern Anatolia could have potentially undermined the British influence in Asia Minor; hence Britain favoured the control of the western region through the Greek proxy. Autonomous Kurdistan and independent Armenia were to emerge as other such proxies in the peace negotiations.

The Greek landings caused a visceral response in Istanbul and Anatolia – first, popular demonstrations, then, as the occupation expanded, popular armed resistance. As a result of the physical and psychological debilitation of years of war, some residents of the empire were prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to tutelary political frameworks proposed in peace talks, but most Muslims saw Greek annexations as a mortal threat. The losses to Greece of Balkan territories including western Thrace and parts of Macedonia, and the memory of exile and expulsion from these lands, were fresh in the minds of the Muslims. Demonstrations started on the day of the invasion, not only in towns under imminent Greek threat (Aydın, Denizli, Kütahya) but also further inland (Konya, Havza, Erzurum).<sup>19</sup> In Istanbul, protests that began with university students boycotting classes culminated in two meetings in the Sultanahmet Mosque on 23 and 30 May. Under banners proclaiming Wilson's Twelfth Point, an estimated 200,000 people listened to speeches delivered by intellectuals, including Halide Edip and other women.<sup>20</sup> The Allied commissioners in Istanbul were sufficiently impressed to extend an invitation to the Ottoman government to make a representation at the Paris Peace Conference. The banning of public meetings in Istanbul did not stop demonstrations in the provinces or other forms of protest. A letter campaign sent, according to one estimate, 130,000 postcards to Allied representatives and to President Wilson urging him to stand by his Principles.<sup>21</sup> The occupation of Izmir energised the disparate but increasingly overlapping elements mobilising against occupation or threat of occupation: local bands, defence of rights groups, a Unionist organisational network (Karakol) and army officers.

Armed bands had participated in the First World War's endemic inter-communal fighting. They gained strength in manpower and arms from the

19 Doğu Ergil, *Milli mücadelenin sosyal tarihi* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1981), p. 67.

20 Halide Edip Adıvar, *The Turkish Ordeal* (Westport: Hyperion, 1981; repr. of 1928 edn.), p. 30; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Milli mücadele başlarken*, vol. I: *Mondoros Müttarekesi'nden Sivas Kongresi'ne* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959), pp. 89–90; Kemal Arıburnu, *Milli mücadelede İstanbul mitingleri* (Ankara: Yeni Matbaa, 1951); Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 614–28; Akşin, *Istanbul hükümetleri*, vol. I, pp. 307–8.

21 Arıburnu, *Milli mücadelede*, pp. 24–5.

demobilisation of regular army units in the post-Mudros period. Their activity had been abetted by the CUP and its intelligence and propaganda organisation, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Special Organisation), during the war. In October 1918, the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa was reconstituted as the Umum Alem-i İslam İhtilal Teşkilatı (The General Revolutionary Organisation of the World of Islam),<sup>22</sup> an attempt to mobilise popular resistance in the name of Islam, faced with impending surrender to the Entente. The bands knew the terrain, had access to arms and availed themselves of solidarity through patronage and clientship. Some were organised along ethnic networks of such immigrant groups as the Albanians and Circassians. The circumstances of the occupation tested and realigned the allegiances of these bands, as the occupying Greek army, too, hoped to harness their manpower and local knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

Local defence of rights organisations took up the task of coordinating the resistance under the leadership of provincial notables such as landowners and communal religious leaders, as well as merchants, officials and professionals. In the absence of a regular army, these groups led the militias against Greek forces, but also had to contend with their opportunistic impulses.<sup>24</sup> The armed resistance that crystallised is known as the *kuva-yı milliye*, a term that is translated as ‘national forces’ according to later connotations of the word *milli*, but more accurately rendered as ‘popular’ or ‘indigenous’ forces. Whether to conceive of the *kuva-yı milliye* as national forces or indigenous/popular forces is not merely a semantic problem; it has ideological implications about the meaning and origins of Turkish nationalism. The problem is only exacerbated by the fact that the word *milli* also had a distinct connotation of religious community. Thus, the modern Turkish citizen reads a different meaning into the word from what it connoted at the time. The popular forces that came into being through local initiative became more coordinated over time, constituting a resistance over a wider territory, eventually submitting to unified command and assuming a broader commonality that is more accurately described as ‘national’.<sup>25</sup>

Officers of the demobilised Ottoman army took an important role in the coordination of the resistance. Most were of provincial background and had

22 Erik Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), p. 140; Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p. 84.

23 Ryan Gingeras, ‘Imperial Killing Fields: Revolution, Ethnicity and Islam in Western Anatolia 1913–1938’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto (2006).

24 Ergil, *Milli mücadele*, p. 48.

25 For an analysis of the diverse and changing meanings of the word *millet* and *milli*, see Béatrice Hendrich, *Milla–Millet–Nation: von der Religionsgemeinschaft zur Nation?* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003).

spent the greater part of their careers in the provinces. The officers were committed to the Ottoman state, but not inclined to submit to Allied dictates after their recall to Istanbul. They had borne the brunt of the military defeat and been forced to disarm their troops. While the sultan was anxious to quell the disturbances of motley groups in Anatolia, dispatching advisory commissions to the provinces led by Ottoman princes, he had not altogether given up on the defence of the land. By March 1919, General Kazım Karabekir, the wartime commander of the Caucasus army, was reassigned to Erzurum to lead the most significant chunk of the truncated Ottoman army. Karabekir landed in Trabzon on 19 April 1919 and arrived in Erzurum two weeks later.<sup>26</sup> Officers and civilian officials cooperated with the secret Karakol to gather intelligence and smuggle arms, men and *matériel* out of Istanbul.<sup>27</sup> Some secured assignments in Anatolia that allowed them to take part in the organisation of the resistance. Thus, for example, army commander Ali Fuad (Cebesoy) returned to his former post in Konya in March after unsuccessfully urging Mustafa Kemal to join him in Ankara as his second-in-command.<sup>28</sup> Some weeks later, just before the Greek invasion of Izmir, Mustafa Kemal accepted an assignment as inspector of the Ninth Army in Erzurum to monitor intercommunal conflict and demobilisation in the Black Sea region and eastern Anatolia and sailed to Samsun.

The earliest date that Turks observe in their national lore is 19 May, 1919 – a day that hardly appeared as memorable at the time. ‘On May 19’, as every Turkish schoolchild can report in a well-rehearsed formula, ‘Mustafa Kemal set foot on the soil of Samsun.’ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk later invoked his landing in Samsun a few days after the traumatic invasion of Izmir as the beginning of the Turkish struggle, thus welding the popular resistance to his life story.<sup>29</sup> Even though Mustafa Kemal had prestige as a representative of the sultan, he found that he could not be effective faced with British opposition to the augmentation of security forces in the region and pressure on the government to have him recalled.<sup>30</sup> He threw in his lot with the popular forces, which he subsequently helped unify.

During Mustafa Kemal’s first weeks at his new post, resistance intensified in the west and the local leaders prepared to convene a congress. At the end of June, delegates convened in Balıkesir to decide on the organisation of

26 Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal harbimizin esasları* (Istanbul: Emre Yayınları, 1995), pp. 46–9.

27 Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p. 82.

28 Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. I, p. 359.

29 This is also where his famous speech in 1927 starts. See Atatürk, *Nutuk*, p. 1.

30 Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 663–4.

militia forces, their coordination with the defence of rights groups and practical matters pertaining to armaments and logistics.<sup>31</sup> It met for a second time at the end of July, days after Damad Ferid returned from Paris empty-handed,<sup>32</sup> and called for a general popular mobilisation invoking Wilson's Twelfth Point for self-determination. The second Balıkesir Congress coincided with another that had been called by defence of rights groups in the east in the town of Erzurum (23 July–7 August).

Mustafa Kemal issued a declaration in the town of Amasya together with other prominent Ottoman officers Rauf Bey, who had now resigned from his military duties, and Ali Fuad. Dispatched widely to the provinces, the 'Amasya circular' made a case for the inability of the Ottoman government to meet its obligations and argued for the establishment of an alternate political body. It called for a congress to meet in the town of Sivas and asked all provincial sub-districts to send representatives. It urged popular demonstrations against Istanbul's attempts to cripple the resistance movement by prohibiting the telegraphic communication of defence of rights organisations. The circular sought to broaden and coordinate the resistance in Anatolia.<sup>33</sup>

The previously planned Erzurum meeting constituted the dress rehearsal for the broader congress called by Kemal and his associates. Some sixty delegates representing local defence of rights organisations of the eastern regions and Trabzon met in Erzurum on 23 July. Mustafa Kemal and Rauf participated as Erzurum delegates upon the voluntary resignation of two of the province's elected delegates in their favour. Kemal formally submitted his resignation from the army and was elected as chair of the congress, heralding the important role he would play in the resistance.

Like the Balıkesir meeting, the Eastern Anatolia Defence of Rights Association meeting in Erzurum was a regional convention. Its first resolution proclaimed the eastern Anatolian and Black Sea regions as integral parts of the Ottoman community, specifically citing the 'six provinces'. The resolutions also emphasised that Christian minorities could not be granted privileges that would undermine 'political sovereignty (*hakimiyet*) and social equilibrium'. These phrases unmistakably referred to Armenian claims in the east and Greek designs on the Black Sea coast. All Muslims, the congress declared, belonged to the defence of rights organisation. The congress insisted on the preservation of the integrity and independence of the *vatan* (country, homeland) and *millet* (community, people, nation), while expressing a willingness to accept

<sup>31</sup> Ergil, *Milli mücadele*, pp. 73–9.

<sup>32</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 242.

<sup>33</sup> Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 674–5.

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scientific, industrial and economic help from a disinterested state.<sup>34</sup> The congress called for the parliament to reconvene and oversee the government's decision and adjourned after electing a representative committee with Mustafa Kemal as its president. The Erzurum Congress was the precursor of the movement that began in the autumn of 1919 to liberate, as stated in its resolutions, the 'inseparable territories' within the Mudros 'borders' inhabited by those united in 'religion and race', two terms with the same connotation in the minds of many of those inhabitants.<sup>35</sup>

### Political and military consolidation of the independence movement (September 1919–December 1920)

The Sivas Congress was smaller (thirty-eight delegates) than the Erzurum meeting and convened for a shorter period (4–11 September 1919), but it was more widely representative of the Anatolian provinces. Its delegates adopted Erzurum's resolutions with a more forceful rejection of all occupation.<sup>36</sup> To underscore the unification of the resistance movement, the Sivas Congress decided that the local defence of rights organisations be brought under the umbrella of an Anatolia and Rumelia Defence of Rights Committee (Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-ı Hukuk Cemiyeti). The congress closed after it elected its own representative committee, also to be chaired by Mustafa Kemal.

The language of the congress resolutions echoed the Wilsonian points. As the peace conference deliberated mandatory arrangements, Wilson sent a commission under General James Harbord to appraise the compatibility of a mandate scheme in Anatolia with his Fourteen Points. Harbord recommended in October 1919 that a single mandate should be assigned to Anatolia by the League of Nations. According to the intelligence officer of the American high commissioner in Istanbul, 'British claims to Mesopotamia and Palestine were reluctantly recognized, but anything beyond this was an unnecessary partition of Turkey'.<sup>37</sup> Before Washington could consider whether it could implement a mandate, the United States senate abandoned the League of Nations.<sup>38</sup> The

34 Selahattin Tansel, *Mondoros'tan Mudanya'ya kadar* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1973), vol. II, pp. 57–8; Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 696–7.

35 Hendrich, *Milla–Millet–Nation*, p. 86.

36 Tansel, *Mondoros'tan Mudanya'ya Kadar*, vol. II, pp. 105–6.

37 Enclosure no. 3 in Vice Admiral Sir J. de Robeck to Earl Curzon, 18 October 1919 (Foreign Office 406/41, pp. 292–3, No. 139/2), reproduced in Bilal N. Şimşir, *İngiliz belgelerinde Atatürk (1919–1938)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973), vol. I, p. 168.

38 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 248.



notion of an American mandate became moot, though the Wilsonian imprimatur for an eventual 'Turkish' sovereignty in a unitary state was etched in the fertile imagination of the Anatolian leadership. The Harbord report further recommended economic independence for Turkey and an abrogation of commercial privileges to foreigners, two principal aims of the emerging nationalist leadership. The goal of an economically independent and self-contained collectivity in the rump Ottoman territories was articulated simultaneously in the resolutions of the Sivas Congress and the aborted Harbord proposal.

The Damad Ferid Paşa government tried to quell the organisational activity in Anatolia with threats, and even contemplated the dispatch of Kurdish tribal units to overrun the Sivas meeting.<sup>39</sup> After the Sivas resolutions were drafted and circulated, however, the sultan attempted to appease the resistance. He appointed a new grand vezir, Ali Rıza Paşa, who opened a dialogue with the leaders of the Anatolian movement, imparting implicit recognition to the decisions of the congresses. The new government agreed to hold elections and reconvene the chamber of deputies.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that parliamentary elections were held as late as the end of 1919 highlights the differences between the post-war experience of the Ottoman state and other defeated powers. One year after the armistice, there had been no decision from the peace conference on the future of the Ottoman state. As the course and outcome of the elections were to reveal, much had changed on the ground as a result of the war, but neither the war nor the peace settlement process had relegated the Ottoman state to history. The renewal of elections served as a testament to the persistence of the Ottoman political institutions and processes.

The sultan saw the elections as a way of co-opting the resistance. Elected deputies would convene in Istanbul under the watchful eyes of the security forces. Defence of rights groups and sympathisers sought to influence the outcome, at times resorting to intimidation and force. Their sway in the countryside was not uncontested. Local uprisings, led by pro-Istanbul officials and conservative communal leaders, contravened such efforts. The Liberty and Entente Party declared a boycott of the elections in protest over the preponderance of Unionists in the defence of rights organisation. Nevertheless, the last two months of 1919 witnessed a heated election campaign in which the press played a prominent role. Some 140 seats were contested, but by the time the parliament opened on 12 January 1920, only 72 representatives were present,

39 Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 703–4; Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 157.

40 Tahsin N. Karaca, *Son Osmanlı Meclis-i Mebusan seçimleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2004).

though deputies who trickled to Istanbul gradually filled some 100 seats.<sup>41</sup> Under the turbulent circumstances of occupation, incipient armed resistance and revolt, elections could not be completed in all districts.

The parliament was greeted with a huge popular rally in Sultanahmet the day after its opening.<sup>42</sup> The deputies endorsed the Anatolian movement and confirmed the set of political goals first articulated at the conclusion of the Sivas Congress as the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*), a document that has come to be viewed as the blueprint of the resistance's territorial objectives and a nationalist manifesto.<sup>43</sup> The pact sought to reclaim and preserve the state against the contingencies that war had engendered. Embroiled in diplomatic wrangling, the fate of the occupied Arab provinces was quite uncertain at the beginning of 1920. Defence of rights organisations had been created in some Arab provinces, but had not been represented in the congresses. The pact left the settlement of the status of the Arab provinces to the free vote of their population. A plebiscitary settlement was recommended also for the three north-eastern *sancaks* that had been returned to the Ottoman government at Brest-Litovsk – Kars, Ardahan, and Batum – as well as for western Thrace. The scope of the territory claimed in the pact was defined as areas 'inhabited by an Ottoman-Muslim majority', the precise limits of which remained vague and contingent on the plebiscitary outcomes.

The Arab provinces would be formally partitioned between Britain and France at San Remo in Italy in April 1920, amidst Arab bitterness and tensions between the two allies. Kars and Ardahan, but not Batum, would stay in the Ottoman rump after a military campaign against Armenia the following year and as a result of a diplomatic understanding with Russia. The National Pact, motivated by the need to stem the tide of encroachments into Ottoman territory in the aftermath of the Mudros agreement, adapted itself to unfolding military exigencies and diplomatic bargaining before it took its place in Turkish history as a manifesto affirming a nation-state for Turks within specific borders. Even today, perceived and imagined threats to the territorial integrity of the country are depicted as violations of the sacred 'National Pact boundaries'. The subsequent appropriation of the National Pact as the founding document of modern Turkey has obscured its pragmatic intent.

In the new chamber of deputies, the deputies sympathetic to the defence of rights movement constituted themselves as the 'Salvation of the Homeland' (*Felah-ı Vatan*) group and brought the majority of the deputies into their

41 Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, p. 799; Criss, *Istanbul*, p. 12; Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 266.

42 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 266; Criss, *Istanbul*, p. 9.

43 See Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, p. 803 for the translation of the text.

ranks.<sup>44</sup> Such unanimity alarmed the Allies, particularly because by the spring of 1920 the motley resistance forces, some directed by officers in conjunction with defence of rights groups, had scored successes in the south-east and the west, though they still lacked unity of command. Locally organised resistance in the south was forcing the French forces (who had replaced the British in Maraş, Urfa and Ayntab<sup>45</sup>) to withdraw from Maraş. In the west, bands in the countryside formed a patchy resistance against the Greek army, which had fanned out from Izmir into the surrounding areas by transgressing the limits of advance that the British authorities had set in the autumn of 1919 (the Milne Line). Under these conditions, the Allies perceived a representative body that defended the integrity of the state and sought its deliverance from foreign occupation as a formidable threat.

On 16 March, the British authorities tightened their grip on the capital by assuming police functions and declaring martial law. The Allies had thus far justified their presence in the capital and areas to the north of the armistice lines (e.g. Mosul, Cilicia) with the provisions of the Mudros agreement pertaining to security interests or protection of Christian minorities. With Russia's claims on Istanbul moot, the British and French imposed a tight grip on the capital, where anti-imperialist opposition was becoming more assertive. They deported many Unionists suspected of sympathy with the resistance, including intellectuals, governors, ministers and deputies. The deportees included those imprisoned in Istanbul since 1918, as well as others who opposed the punitive settlement taking shape at the peace conference. Some 150 individuals were exiled to the island of Malta starting in March 1920. Grand Vezir Ali Rıza was forced to resign and, soon after, an Allied raid and arrest of some deputies forced the parliament to prorogue itself.<sup>46</sup> The deputies had asserted their political will only to confront harsher measures and the reimposition of a collaborationist regime, led once again by Damad Ferid. The parliament's closure and accompanying measures strengthened the Anatolian resistance movement and the claims of the representative committee to be the exclusive legitimate political authority.

Mustafa Kemal had been elected as a deputy to the new parliament, but chose to stay in Anatolia for fear of the heavy hand of the sultan and the Allies, a fear justified by the subsequent crackdown in March. Instead, he took up residence in the central Anatolian town of Ankara, buffered from coastal

44 *Ibid.*, p. 802.

45 In September 1919, per revision of the wartime territorial claims by the two powers: *ibid.*, p. 864.

46 Bernard Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 251.

occupation forces yet provided with good communications, and maintained contact with the deputies in Istanbul as well as the provincial resistance. He published the propaganda organ of the defence of rights organisation, the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (Popular Sovereignty). Upon the closure of the chamber of deputies, he led an effort to resuscitate an assembly of representatives in Ankara outside the reach of the sultan's police and Allied forces.

On 23 April 1920, close to one hundred members of the Ottoman chamber of deputies escaped to Ankara to join twice as many delegates sent by provincial defence of rights groups, and formed the Grand National Assembly (GNA). Eschewing the dynastic designation, the founders referred to the new body as the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi), formally appropriating the geo-political term 'Turkey' that had long been used in Europe, but also increasingly among the Ottomans, to refer to the Ottoman state in general and Anatolia in particular. Mustafa Kemal was elected president of the new body, which also internally elected ministers to constitute an executive organ. He immediately castigated the Istanbul government, carefully disassociating it from the sultan. Both governments vied to establish moral, political and military authority to undermine the other. Armed with a decree from Şeyhülislam Dürrizade Abdullah, Damad Ferid had denounced the deputies supporting the resistance as rebels.<sup>47</sup> Mustafa Kemal countered this decree with one issued by the *müftü* of Ankara, Rifat Efendi (Börekeçioğlu), which repudiated the charges of rebellion and discredited Dürrizade as a hostage of foreign occupiers. Rifat Efendi's decree called on Muslims to save the caliph from bondage.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, religious arguments for the resistance carried much weight among the leadership. Rifat was not merely a holder of provincial religious office, but the leader of the Ankara Defence of Rights Society. His role in the resistance movement is indicative of the deep involvement of religious figures and *ulema* in the struggle for independence.<sup>49</sup>

Achievements in military organisation came more slowly than Mustafa Kemal's successes in the political arena. Undisciplined forces coalesced around kinship and patronage relations, and bands marauding in the countryside defied authority. Even when these forces fought occupation or loyalist forces, their leaders remained independent, and some rebelled when their autonomy was threatened by Mustafa Kemal's attempts to coordinate the disparate forces in the west under Ankara's authority. In order to legitimise the authority that

47 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 275.

48 Kâzım Özalp, *Milli mücadele, 1919–1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), vol. I, pp. 121–2.

49 Bayram Sakallı, *Milli mücadele'nin sosyal tarihi* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1997), pp. 102–40.

the GNA had arrogated to itself, the assembly government would first and foremost have to fight occupation armies and stem the Greek tide.

The organisation of the military struggle proceeded against the background of diplomatic developments. With the disappearance of the restraining influence of the United States, Britain and France had acquired a free hand to realise the terms of the wartime secret treaties. The Allies met at San Remo the day after the GNA opened in Ankara. Britain and France negotiated their territorial claims, first articulated in the Sykes–Picot Agreements, and divided the Syrian and Mesopotamian territories of the Ottoman Empire into mandates. Ottoman delegates were invited to Sèvres (near Paris) in August to sign a partition plan that included the dismemberments stipulated in San Remo, but also carved up the remainder of the empire.

The Sèvres document proposed dividing eastern Anatolia between an independent Armenia and an autonomous Kurdistan, while it gave to Greece the Aegean islands and Eastern Thrace up to the outskirts of Istanbul. Izmir and its hinterland were also placed under Greek administration as a prelude to formal annexation, to be based on a plebiscite, within five years. Simultaneously, Britain, France and Italy signed a tripartite agreement confirming the Italian sphere of influence in south-western Anatolia and a French zone conforming to wartime agreements in the Eastern Mediterranean and to the north of the new Syria mandate. The terms of the Sèvres Treaty were not limited to these onerous territorial clauses. The Ottoman government would also agree to the international control and demilitarisation of the Straits; to limiting the size of its army and navy and putting both under Allied control; to submitting all financial matters, including the budget, customs, loans and the public debt, to another Allied commission; and to reinstating the capitulations.<sup>50</sup>

The treaties signed by the Ottoman government in previous decades, including Berlin (1878) and those that concluded the Balkan Wars (1913), had deprived the empire of large chunks of territory, but left behind a political space in which the processes and institutions of the state could remain viable despite vast demographic and economic changes. The armistice in 1918 had been no exception, even though the severity of the defeat and post-war concessions had shaken the state to its foundations. Sèvres, however, jeopardised not just the reality of empire but also the state's territorial and economic viability.

The sultan's government accepted Sèvres (10 August 1920) in an attempt to salvage its sinecures of authority and power. Ankara rejected it, as it

50 George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 98–102; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East*, vol. II, pp. 81–9.

contravened the fundamental political and economic objectives of the independence movement. Thus the treaty both galvanised the resistance to occupation and brought the duality of political leadership into sharper relief. Sèvres ultimately proved a dead letter, not only because its backbreaking terms gave a new lease of life to the Anatolian movement, but also because the signatories lacked the will to implement its stipulations.

For an international agreement that was never implemented, Sèvres has had a remarkable legacy in Turkey and retains a daunting place in the collective national memory as the paramount symbol of subjugation and capitulation. Turks warn of the 'Sèvres mentality' to denounce every perceived capitulation to a threat from the outside – military, economic or political. They invoke it when a main actor in the political field is viewed as too subservient to foreign demands and pressures. By formalising European occupation and stipulating an Armenian state, Sèvres not only energised the Anatolian military struggle as an anti-imperialist movement but also instilled further suspicion of Christians in Anatolia, augmenting the anti-Christian élan of the Anatolian movement.

The rejection of the Sèvres, followed by successful military exploits on the eastern front, enhanced Ankara's moral authority and political legitimacy and further distanced it from Istanbul. The resignation of Damad Ferid Paşa, who had accepted the Sèvres Treaty, imparted additional political strength to the GNA government. The first systematic military challenge of the Sèvres scheme occurred in the east against the Armenian Republic. Under the command of Kazım Karabekir, and with Soviet acquiescence, remnants of the Ottoman regular army moved into Sarıkamış and Kars, territories that Russia had relinquished to the Ottoman Empire at Brest-Litovsk but which were now claimed by the new Armenian Republic. By the end of 1920, Ankara had recovered Kars and solidified its gains with the first international treaty it signed with a foreign country: Armenia, which was soon annexed by the Bolsheviks.

Reorganising the regular army in the west proved to be a greater challenge, and the effort became closely intertwined with the political process. Mustafa Kemal's ability to prevail over the popular forces and reorganise them into regular units depended on his ability to assert his authority in Ankara. A new Law on Fugitives was conceived to help corral the popular forces into the army. The law also stipulated the setting up of 'independence tribunals' in Ankara and several provinces under the direct jurisdiction of the assembly and conducted by its members. The authority of these courts was broadened to include treason cases, and they were summoned periodically to neutralise the opponents of the Ankara regime and, increasingly, the critics and potential rivals of Mustafa Kemal. Some deputies, such as Reşid Bey, a Circassian deputy

representing Saruhan (Manisa), had family and ethnic ties to local resistance forces and were jealous of their independence, not least as a safeguard against the aggrandisement of Mustafa Kemal's authority.<sup>51</sup>

Reşid's brother, Çerkes Ethem, had the widest following among the popular forces and posed the greatest challenge to the project of bringing the military resistance under central command. He had organised his retinues as the 'Mobile Forces' (Kuva-yı Seyyare), a militia that had not only carried out the most effective resistance against the Greek occupying forces, but also fought rebel formations such as those of Ahmed Anzavur, a provincial governor of İzmit and Balıkesir and early militia leader against Greek occupation, whom subsequently the sultan and the Allies incited to action against the popular forces.<sup>52</sup> Ethem also was involved in the Green Army (Yeşil Ordu) movement, a political group sympathetic to an Islamist-socialist agenda, which Mustafa Kemal viewed with increasing suspicion.<sup>53</sup> The closure of the Green Army in September 1920 was followed by the appointment of the chief of the general staff İsmet (İnönü) as the commander of the western front with the charge of organising the regular army. Ethem withdrew his support from Ankara by first withholding assistance in a skirmish with the Greek army, and then rejecting the incorporation of his forces into the regular army.<sup>54</sup>

Laws ratified in the GNA and deployed against the dissidents, such as those pertaining to fugitives and the independence tribunals, had to be grounded in a clearer definition of the assembly's powers. Mustafa Kemal supported a bill to lay down a fundamental law validating the GNA as a representative body and affirming its prerogatives and objectives, while bringing greater clarity to the nature of the assembly regime. The bill called for the strengthening of the army in order to defend the people against the foreign enemy and to discipline traitorous internal collaborators (Article 3).<sup>55</sup> Kemal believed that the socialist groupings within the assembly, some with paramilitary extensions outside, had to be neutralised. Therefore, Article 3 appropriated anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist objectives for the assembly government, particularly imperative at a time when the quest to recover eastern Anatolian lands required friendly relations with the Soviet government ('The government of the GNA believes that it can render the people, the salvation of whose life and independence it views as its only objective, the true owner of its government and sovereignty,

51 Ergün Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri 1920-1927* (Izmir: İleri Kitabevi, 1995).

52 Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 737-41, 850-1.

53 *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 1092-8.

54 Özalp, *Milli mücadele*, vol. I, pp. 166-8; Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. III/1, pp. 1092-6.

55 Ergun Özbudun, *1921 Anayasası* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1992), pp. 19, 75.

only by delivering it from the tyranny of imperialism and capitalism'). This affirmation of popular sovereignty followed the assertion in Article 1 that the GNA was constituted to liberate the offices of the caliphate and the sultanate, a nod to the more conservative members.

The text of the bill was published and read in the assembly on 18 September.<sup>56</sup> Deliberations did not start until after Ankara had ceased hostilities with Armenia, recovered the eastern territories, including Kars, formed a Turkish Communist Party sanctioned by Mustafa Kemal to supplant the maverick Green Army, and reorganised the western front. A special committee revamped the bill to exclude the easternist/ socialist rhetoric and the references to the liberation of the sultan-caliph and submitted it for discussion in November. The deliberations on the draft Fundamental Law became the occasion for heated arguments. The Fundamental Law, even though it posited the GNA as the ultimate expression of the people's will, ensued from an extended debate in that very body. Many deputies viewed the GNA as neither a constitutive nor a permanent body, only a placeholder acting in the name of the people until the sultan could be liberated. They viewed with increasing suspicion measures that would enhance Mustafa Kemal's powers as the president of an all-powerful assembly and make him the head of an executive organ. Dissent grew in the assembly even as the Ankara government was gaining a modicum of international legitimacy.

### Vying for sovereignty in war, diplomacy and politics (January 1921–September 1922)

The Anatolian movement had consolidated progressively starting with its coordination in the congresses of 1919, which culminated in the reconstitution of the parliament in Ankara and a clear breach from the imperial government. The new government proceeded to revive the regular army by assimilating irregular resistance forces. It succeeded in securing militarily and diplomatically disputed territories in the east. Political and diplomatic contingencies that gave the Anatolian movement the contours of a national movement coalesced starting in 1921. The collective efforts to forestall and reverse occupation were moulding a political community that was poised to imagine itself as a nation with the end of warfare, the determination of boundaries and the erosion of the empire's legitimacy structures. The determinative breakthroughs came early in 1921 and reinforced each other: the suppression of a wave of domestic revolts; an effective

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 21, 78.



military response to a Greek offensive targeting Ankara itself; the GNA's formal appropriation of sovereignty; and de facto diplomatic recognition granted to Ankara by the Allies. Accomplishments in each of these areas were contested, and the national movement remained precarious until more definitive victories occurred on the battlefield.

The gravest endogenous and exogenous threats Ankara had confronted converged at the beginning of 1921. After Ethem defied Ankara's attempts to co-opt him, he urged the popular forces to reject the new regular army. In a showdown between forces dispatched by the Western Army and Ethem's Mobile Forces, some of his officers and forces defected, while others followed him in retreat. Ankara's preoccupation with Ethem in the western front triggered a new Greek attack against the defence lines near Eskişehir. İsmet's forces rebuffed the Greek advance in the district of İnönü. Ethem took refuge in the Greek area of occupation and defected.<sup>57</sup> Ankara was able to halt the Greek tide only temporarily, but the dismantling of Ethem's Mobile Forces halted the domestic revolts in central and western Anatolia that had broken out sporadically since the autumn of 1919.

During the very days of the defensive battles at İnönü and the military effort to break Ethem's revolt in January 1921, the Ankara government came to grips with significant decisions on the political and diplomatic front: the ratification of the Fundamental Law in the assembly and the response to an Allied opening for negotiations with Ankara. What allowed the Fundamental Law to take its final form and be ratified on 20 January 1921 was not the exigency of civil and international war, but the new willingness of the Allies to include the Ankara government in the envisaged revision of the Sèvres Treaty, a factor that contributed to renewed Greek belligerence, lest the Allies' initiative compromise Greek war aims.<sup>58</sup> The military successes of the GNA government in the eastern front, resulting in the signing of an international treaty, had duly impressed the Allies. The tacit agreement between Ankara and Moscow on the fate of eastern Anatolia and the border provinces effectively partitioned Armenia and ignored Kurdish autonomy. Meanwhile, the Fundamental Law was ratified to bolster the legitimacy of the assembly as its leadership postured for recognition and concessions from the Allies.

The Law of Fundamental Organisation (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu*), generally known as the first constitution of Turkey, did not supplant the 1876 Ottoman constitution as amended during the Young Turk period. It affirmed

57 Özalp, *Milli mücadele*, vol. I, p. 170.

58 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 306.

the principle of the sovereignty of the people (Article 1: 'Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the *millet*'), a notion that had been enunciated since the congresses and the early days of the GNA. It also affirmed the concentration of all powers in the assembly. Article 2 stated: "The executive and legislative functions are combined in the Grand National Assembly as the true and sole representative of the *millet*.' Mustafa Kemal, accordingly, proceeded to demand that only delegates from the GNA should participate in the negotiations with foreign governments.

Both the Istanbul and Ankara delegations took part in the negotiations in London, but with the consent of Tevfik Paşa, the GNA government's foreign minister, Bekir Sami (Kunduh), led the talks. Almost three weeks of discussions failed to result in any concrete modification of the Sèvres Treaty. Bekir Sami refused to entertain any concessions to the Greeks, while the Greek delegation rejected Allied proposals for scaling back Greek gains in the occupied territories. Despite the stalemate it became apparent during the negotiations that both France and Italy were anxious to reach a settlement, even if it meant renouncing their territorial claims in southern Anatolia in return for economic influence.<sup>59</sup> Italy was particularly forthcoming in striking such an agreement because of its mistrust of Greek expansionism in the Italian sphere. The continuing delays in the determination of the status of the rump empire had helped expose the cracks among the Allies. Bekir Sami returned having negotiated separate agreements with the French, Italian and British delegates: both France and Italy agreed to cease hostilities and end the occupation of southern provinces in return for concessions in mining and trade. Italy also extended support to Ankara against Greek territorial claims in Anatolia and Thrace. An understanding was reached with Britain for the exchange of prisoners, including more than half of the political prisoners held by Britain in Malta.<sup>60</sup>

The same week that the agreements with the Allied powers were signed, another Ottoman delegation in Moscow finalised and signed a friendship treaty with Soviet Russia, which established the eastern borders to the north of Iran.<sup>61</sup> Ankara's first diplomatic treaty had been signed with a small country, Armenia, which had been defeated in war. The Moscow Treaty, on the other hand, signified the imprimatur of a major power for the Ankara government. The Bolshevik regime had assisted the anti-imperialist movement in Anatolia from the outset, but having installed Soviet governments in the Caucasus, it sought to maximise their territorial gains. Ankara was forced to relinquish Batum to

59 Ibid., p. 309; Tansel, *Mondoros'tan Mudanya'ya kadar*, vol. IV, p. 56.

60 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Cumhuriyete doğru, 1921-1922* (Ankara: Goloğlu Yayınları, 1971), p. 163.

61 Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East*, vol. II, pp. 95-7.

the Georgian Socialist Republic, but retained Artvin, Kars and Ardahan and received pledges for monetary and military aid from Moscow.

These bilateral agreements and treaties should be viewed as diplomatic coups, concluded at a time when military success against the occupation was uncertain and the existing international accords imposed by the Allies were especially onerous. Yet the deputies in the GNA were not impressed with the results of diplomatic negotiations and agreements. The concession of Batum to Russia and agreements with the French and the Italians, which provided these two powers with economic and strategic concessions, were criticised as violations of the Misak-ı Milli. Bekir Sami's agreements were never ratified (though similar terms were to be accepted in future accords), and it was only in July 1921 that the GNA ratified the Russian–Turkish Friendship Treaty.

Greece had renewed its offensive in March in an attempt to push through the front lines into Ankara. The Greek drive was checked within a matter of a few days, once again in İnönü, under the command of İsmet Paşa. The size of the 'national army' had reached 35,000, but casualties and desertion led to constant losses.<sup>62</sup> Nor could all forces be amassed on the western front. On the occasion of the second battle at İnönü in March, disgruntled Kurdish tribes of the eastern town of Dersim (near Sivas) rose in rebellion.

The revolts had first broken out in November 1920, but were mitigated by the onset of the winter and successful Kemalist co-optation of some of the rebel leadership.<sup>63</sup> The ostensible purpose of the rebellion, known as the Koçgiri rebellion after the name of a main tribal group, was to force the concessions towards Kurdish autonomy stipulated in Sèvres. The rebels had established contacts with Kurdish nationalist associations and leaders in Istanbul, hitherto largely cut off from the Kurdish provinces. Yet Kurdish nationalist demands were tempered by tribal rivalries, potent loyalty to the Kemalists' anti-foreign struggle among many Kurds, Kurdish participation in the regular army, differences of opinion about political objectives (autonomy for Anatolian Kurds, as put forth in the Sèvres Treaty, as opposed to independence for all Kurdish regions) and ambivalent British support. In the later deliberations of a parliamentary commission charged with addressing Kurdish discontent, the Koçgiri revolt was described as a reaction to the implications of the Kemalist stance *vis à vis* the sultan–caliph.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, secular reforms played a paramount role in the outbreak of the most significant Kurdish uprising four years later in

<sup>62</sup> Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 310.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1880–1925)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), pp. 28–40.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

1925, the Şeyh Said revolt. In 1921, however, the revolt was not led by religious authorities, who had the ability to appeal across tribal groupings, which possibly accounts for the lesser success of the Koçgiri revolt compared with Şeyh Said's. Ankara diverted forces from the western campaign, suppressed the rebellion in the east and instituted martial law in three provinces.

The Fundamental Law, whose Article 2 posited the GNA as the true and only representative of the *millet*, a claim that had received a modicum of international recognition at the London conference, brought forth again the question of the sultan–caliph's status and prerogatives. The deputies in the first assembly had been united around the goal of territorial defence within a representative parliamentary structure. The GNA was the embodiment of the local and regional defence of rights organisations, where differences were muted under the exigencies of warfare. To be sure, the representatives had disparate ideological leanings. There were conservative and modernist Islamists, Bolshevik sympathisers and ethnic nationalists in the ranks. Yet the early tensions were not primarily focused on ideological commitments, past political allegiances, socio-economic agendas or the courses of action to be taken in the defence of a territory that was still only vaguely defined. The sensitive and controversial issue of how much to concede to Mustafa Kemal's demands without compromising the principles of assembly government embodied in the Fundamental Law was at the heart of the controversy. In the spring of 1921, even as the military and diplomatic fortunes of the GNA government were rising, the leadership met with vigorous questioning from the assembly on two interrelated concerns, one about the implications of popular sovereignty on the status of the sultan–caliph and the other about Mustafa Kemal's apparent quest for greater power and authority.

Frayed by dissident voices, political divisions and the potential for fragmentation, Mustafa Kemal decided to confront these differences and impose stricter control over the assembly. The conclusion of the agreement with the Soviet Union allowed a crackdown on the extraparliamentary left and its proponents in the GNA.<sup>65</sup> The leaders of the banned Green Army were convicted. Mustafa Kemal reconstituted the cabinet and identified a majority of stable supporters as the defence of rights group within the assembly. This self-righteous designation was intended to stigmatise the rest, who cast themselves as the 'other' defence of rights group, or the Second Group.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. III/1, p. 1098.

<sup>66</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Second Group, see Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te muhalefet* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1994); also Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 306–23.

In Ankara, there was a feeling that politics had sapped the energy of the assembly and its president. The Greeks undertook further attacks into the summer, forcing retreats in Ankara's lines of defence, and bombed Black Sea ports. The government felt besieged and set in motion contingency plans to evacuate the capital in the event of a Greek attack. Mustafa Kemal was charged by the assembly with leading the army as commander-in-chief, which placed the responsibility of defending the land squarely on his shoulders. The assembly thus granted him prerogatives that traditionally belonged to the sultan and rested now diffusely within the assembly. This allowed Mustafa Kemal to seek and obtain for his person the powers of the GNA, at first for a three-month period. He immediately implemented extraordinary war emergency measures mandating war taxes and requisitions.

The armies of the Ankara government battled advancing Greek forces along a wide stretch of the Sakarya River for two consecutive weeks in September 1921. Both sides suffered heavy losses, and the Greek army was forced to pull back to the west of Sakarya. A Turkish observer later commented that at Sakarya 'the retreat that started in Vienna on 13 September 1683 stopped 238 years later'.<sup>67</sup> It would take another year for the nationalist forces to expel the Greek army from Anatolia. The GNA bestowed upon Mustafa Kemal the military rank of field marshal and the title 'gazi', an Ottoman honorific accorded to warriors for the faith.

The victory in Sakarya proved advantageous to Mustafa Kemal's quest to expand his powers. His political fortunes hinged on success in his capacity as commander-in-chief. He sought an extension of his extraordinary powers, which he secured three consecutive times in three-month intervals, until they were granted to him without a specific time limit in July 1922. As former Unionists were liberated from Malta and joined the GNA government, they criticised Mustafa Kemal, exacerbating his mistrust of Unionists. He declared full mobilisation and reactivated the independence tribunals, apparently to try deserters and traitors, but also to cow and prosecute opponents.<sup>68</sup> The army took a respite over the course of the next year, while Mustafa Kemal focused on political and diplomatic matters. Indeed, following the losses in men and *matériel* at Sakarya, the army's ability to undertake an offensive against the Greek occupation forces was suspect, as Mustafa Kemal was reminded on the floor of the assembly.

67 Şerafettin Turan, *Türk devrim tarihi* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992), vol. II, p. 252.

68 A reincarnation of the independence tribunals in 1926 served the exclusive purpose of neutralising Unionist rivals and opponents.

## The struggle for independence

The Second Group sought to curb Mustafa Kemal's quest to arrogate the assembly's powers. In May 1922, this group coalesced to deny him a fourth term of emergency powers. When Mustafa Kemal declared he would not abide by this decision for the sake of the army, a re-vote in the intimidated assembly obtained him approval. The reversal in the vote also convinced the opponents to establish the Second Group as a formal association with a political programme. The first article of the programme called for the abolition of 'all privileges, prerogatives, organizations, and implementations contrary to the fundamental provisions of public law'.<sup>69</sup>

Even though opposition grew progressively, Mustafa Kemal gained a reprieve via the Allies' growing willingness to come to a settlement. The Italians evacuated their forces in the Antalya region as early as July 1921, and the French were forced to leave Urfa and Ayntab in the south-east, restricting their occupation to Cilicia. The powers that Mustafa Kemal arrogated to himself allowed him the latitude to respond favourably to peace initiatives. His biographer, Andrew Mango, notes Kemal's deliberate emphasis on a commonality with Western civilisation in his 'victory speech' upon his return from Sakarya, a cause for which he was prepared to make concessions. According to Mango:

If the Allies accepted Turkey's independent existence, there would no longer be any cause for conflict with them, as there was no longer any cause for conflict between Turkey and Russia. This claim to a common civilization was at the heart of Mustafa Kemal's thinking. It rebutted Western prejudice which took him for a champion of a hostile Asian, Islamic world or for an ally of destructive Bolshevik onslaught on civilized values.<sup>70</sup>

In October 1921, the Ankara (or Franklin-Bouillon, after the name of the diplomat with whom it was negotiated) accord with France established the frontier with the French mandate of Syria, leaving the stretch of the Baghdad railway up to Nusseibin to Turkey (to be operated by a French concessionary) and following the paved road beyond Nusseibin up to the Syrian-Iraqi border. The French evacuated Cilicia, releasing much-needed troops for the western front. The accord left Alexandretta to Syria, stipulating cultural rights for its Turkish inhabitants.<sup>71</sup> Alexandretta's exclusion met with strong protest in the

69 Demirel, *Birinci Meclis*, pp. 281–302, 395–6.

70 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 322. Mango cites *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri* (Speeches and Statements by Atatürk) (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1989), vol. I, p. 200.

71 Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East*, vol. II, pp. 97–9.

assembly. It was the price to be paid for French friendship, just as Batum had been the price for Russian friendship.

By the end of 1921, all eastern boundaries of the state were established, with the thorny exception of the short frontier with Iraq, because of the conflict over Mosul that would not be resolved until 1926. Ankara was eager for a peace treaty that would sanction the status quo in the eastern half of Anatolia and also revise the Sèvres Treaty to secure the independence of western territories. In February 1922, Foreign Minister Yusuf Kemal (Tengirşenk) went to Europe for contacts with Allied representatives. Seeking increased bargaining power, he stopped in Istanbul for an audience with the sultan, where he asked for an endorsement of Ankara's political objectives, but failed to secure a unified front. The Allied proposals for an armistice that followed his contacts in Europe were vague and open-ended, though significant, because Britain – the underwriter of the Greek occupation – was now an interested party. The proposals left the occupation intact, but stipulated that Greeks relinquish Izmir in the future, while making concessions to Greece in eastern Thrace. Minority issues, including concessions to the Armenians, would be left to the League of Nations. The Allied note also asked for strategic concessions in the Straits after the evacuation of Istanbul and affirmed Turkey's continued obligation to the Public Debt Administration. But the Ankara government's insistence that its agreement on a ceasefire would be contingent upon Greek evacuation aborted the initiatives. The government resolved to create these conditions on the battlefield instead.

On 26 July 1922, Mustafa Kemal led the armies in an attack on Greek positions near the town of Afyon. Three days of fighting between the two armies culminated in a fierce battle on 30 August, in which the Turkish forces prevailed and pursued the Greek army in its retreat, recovering one town after the other in the midst of violent destruction, and reached Izmir on 9 September. As the city burned, for which each side blames the other to this day, the Greeks evacuated in panic, and the Turkish forces turned north to attack Greek positions in the Marmara region. The effort to end Greek occupation in Eastern Thrace necessitated the transport of troops through demilitarised zones under Allied occupation across the Dardanelles in Çanakkale. This nearly pitted the Anatolian army against the British forces in an episode referred to as the Chanak crisis, better known for the domestic and colonial policy ramifications in Britain, arising from the non-compliance of some Commonwealth countries with London's request to send military support. The sides agreed to discuss the impasse in an international conference, which met in the town of Mudanya in South Marmara.

## The struggle for independence

The Great Victory, as the August offensive is known and celebrated in Turkey, put Ankara in a position of strength to renegotiate the terms of an armistice with the Allies in Mudanya (11 September 1922). The agreement ceased the hostilities between Turkish and Greek forces and stipulated Greek withdrawal to the east of the Maritsa River in Thrace, abandoning Edirne in return for Ankara's agreement not to send forces to demilitarised areas and to consent to the continued Allied presence in Istanbul until a comprehensive peace treaty could be concluded. In Mudanya, the contours of the new state of Turkey took shape. It was to receive international recognition at Lausanne eight months later.

### Foundations of a nation-state (September 1922–April 1924)

The ceasefire had been signed by the delegates of the Ankara government, whose forces had won the wars against the Greek occupation. When the Allies invited both the Istanbul and the Ankara governments to the peace talks in Lausanne in the fall of 1922, the Kemalists resolved to eliminate dual authority once and for all. After listening to a discourse by Mustafa Kemal on the theory and practice of the caliphate in Islamic history, the GNA voted on a motion providing for the separation of the office of the sultanate from the caliphate, and the abolition of the former. The stratagem of separating the two offices ensured the abolition of the monarchy with remarkably little dissent. There was little doubt about the momentous nature of the decision, however. The GNA formally consigned the empire to history, retroactively declaring the Ottoman state as defunct from 20 January 1921, the day of the issuance of the Fundamental Law asserting the sovereignty of the people. The last Ottoman cabinet resigned on 4 November. Sultan Vahdeddin left Istanbul for Malta on a British warship (16 November); his cousin, Abdülmecid, was appointed caliph the next day.

Ankara sent its delegation to Lausanne under the leadership of İsmet (İnönü). The conference started its meetings on 20 November. Negotiations took place around issues pertaining to the status of non-Muslims, economic privileges of foreign merchants and governments, the reassignment of the Ottoman debt and, most significantly, the determination of the boundaries of the new state. When an impasse on capitulations broke off negotiations in February, İsmet returned home for consultations. He found that proposed territorial clauses leaving northern Iraq, the Aegean islands and western Thrace



outside the boundaries of the new state met with sharp criticism in the assembly.

The Second Group's insistence on preserving the assembly's collective prerogative to determine boundaries and preserving territories interpreted to be within the Misak-ı Milli were consistent with the very fundamentals of the liberation struggle. Mustafa Kemal was only able to circumvent the objections by reconstituting the assembly. In the spring of 1923, he engineered closely controlled new elections. When the new assembly reconvened, none of the Second Group deputies had attained seats. The shake-up was sufficient to obtain the GNA's sanction to bring the negotiations at Lausanne to a conclusion. Yet a high degree of group discipline would be necessary to develop new agendas and forge loyalty. Kemal achieved this aim with the formation of a political party, the People's Party (Halk Fırkası), in the spring of 1923.

At Lausanne, Turkey recognised those borders in Europe that the Ottoman government had accepted at the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913, with slight modifications already agreed upon in Mudanya. It ceded the Dodacene islands in the southern Aegean to Italy and the islands girdling the western Anatolian coast, with the exception of Imbros (Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada) in the north, to Greece. The eastern border with Iran remained stable, as it had throughout the entire late Ottoman period. Treaties signed with neighbours and foreign powers during the independence struggle constituted the basis of the north-eastern and southern borders. In the north-east, Batum remained in Russian hands while Turkey retained Kars and Ardahan. In the south, the border demarcation agreed upon in the 1921 treaty with France prevailed. Mosul remained a contested area; the determination of its fate was left in abeyance at Lausanne.<sup>72</sup>

As the international treaty that ultimately resolved the boundaries of the Ottoman successor state based in Anatolia and Thrace, Lausanne established Turkey as a sovereign geo-political entity. The new Turkey was more than twice the size of the territory that the European signatories had been prepared to concede at Sèvres three years earlier. It affirmed the achievements of the armed resistance. Against the immediate background of the wartime military defeats, post-war occupation and the crippling terms of Sèvres, Lausanne has been inscribed in the annals of the Turkish nation as a masterstroke. Against the broader canvas of history, a less charitable reading would see the treaty as the affirmation of the demise of a world power and the seal of its disintegration and truncation.

72 Lenczowski, *The Middle East*, p. 106.

The Lausanne Treaty denied complete sovereignty to the new state. Turkey assumed the bulk of the Ottoman debt to European states. Payments were deferred until 1929 in return for Turkey's consent to fixed customs tariffs. Just as full sovereignty had been compromised in economic relations, Turkey also agreed to demilitarise the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits and allow international supervision. The treaty abolished the capitulations but placed the status of non-Muslims under the protection of the League of Nations.<sup>73</sup>

Lausanne accommodated the premise of the independence movement as an armed struggle of the Muslims for the Muslims. Specific clauses protected the rights of foreign and non-Muslim minorities. An agreement between Greece and Turkey, negotiated at the early stages of the talks and affirmed in the treaty, completed this transformation by stipulating the relocation of the Orthodox Greeks of Anatolia to Greece and the Muslims of Greece to Anatolia. The Turkish–Greek population exchange, as it is euphemistically called, started in 1923.<sup>74</sup> It was the final enactment of the massive demographic transformations of the empire-to-nation transition. The exchange, deemed necessary because of the ethno-religious animus that warfare had exacerbated, was a pre-emptive measure that inflicted immense human suffering on hundreds of thousands of people, who experienced severe hardship and casualties during the relocation and often a subsequent deterioration in quality of life in the 'host' country. By the end of the decade, the out-migration of about one million Orthodox Greeks and the transfer of some 400,000 Muslims from Greece had all but completed the Islamisation of Anatolia.<sup>75</sup> Two historic populations of Anatolia and Thrace, Armenians and Greeks, thus perished or left as a result of the momentous demographic transformations and bitter conflicts of the long war.

The structures of empire (administrative organisation, electoral mechanisms, a constitution and leadership cadres) had upheld the popular resistance movement in Anatolia and Thrace, modulated by the exigencies and contingencies of warfare, which ultimately nourished new visions. The assembly government formalised in 1920 had followed from the logic of the organisations for defence that had developed in the localities. After Lausanne provided the geo-political and international legal framework for the new state, Mustafa Kemal and his associates proceeded to name it a republic. The assembly's declaration of a republic on 29 October 1923 can be viewed as the officialisation of a process that had started long ago. The GNA had arrogated to itself

73 Ibid.; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East*, vol. II, p. 123.

74 René Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003).

75 Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 171.

sovereign rights the moment it convened in 1920, and formally declared them with the Fundamental Law as early as 1921. The abolition of the sultanate in November 1922 obviated the rationalisation of a temporary transfer of sovereignty from the monarch to the people's representatives. However, Mustafa Kemal perceived the greater legitimacy that the GNA acquired as a threat, and reconstituted it in his own image. But even a screened parliament became the scene of intensive debate when Mustafa Kemal and close associates manoeuvred to declare the Republic. Ironically, Turkey was named a republic only after the more genuine republican impulses of the struggle for independence were tamed.

The preservation of the caliphate had dulled the opposition to Mustafa Kemal's political reforms. But the vigorous criticism of the Republic brought home the risk involved in preserving the caliphate with an incumbent from the Ottoman house as its figurehead, a potential rallying point for the disaffected. Within several weeks of the declaration of the Republic, Kemal moved to eliminate this potent vestige of the empire from the political structure. At the end of November 1923, two prominent Indian Muslims, the Ismaili leader Aga Khan and an associate, wrote a letter to Prime Minister İsmet Paşa urging the retention of the office. Istanbul papers loyal to the constitutional monarchy and sceptical of Mustafa Kemal's pursuit of power obtained and published these letters. The concern of Indian Muslims about the destiny of the caliphate was a product of the hopes that Muslims living under colonial rule had pinned on the caliph. The government acted quickly to discredit the letter-writers as Shiites who could not possibly have genuine interest in the fate of the Sunni caliphate. Kemal adroitly manipulated representations from Muslims abroad as encroachments on the sovereignty of Turkey. On 1 March 1924, the assembly abolished the caliphate once and for all.<sup>76</sup> Minister of Justice Seyit Bey, with proven credentials in religious scholarship, argued the inherent illegitimacy of the presumptions of a modern caliphate (an argument vindicated by subsequent futile attempts in the Muslim world to revive the office).<sup>77</sup> The caliphate had been revived and appropriated by the Ottoman house at the end of the nineteenth century as a locus of solidarity and resistance against New Imperialism. It evanesced in the wake of the most definitive victory against imperialism in the territories of the tottering empire.

76 Arnold J. Toynbee, 'The Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Progress of the Secularization Movement in the Islamic World', in *Survey of International Affairs, 1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), vol. I, pp. 57–62.

77 Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 405.

Coupled with the bill that abrogated the caliphate were legislative provisions complementing the disestablishment of religion from the political structure of the state and thus launching the new regime's secularist agenda. In one fell swoop, the caliphate, the highest executive posts responsible for the administration of religious law and administration (the Ministry of Religious Foundations and the office of the *şeyhülislâm*) and all religious schools were abolished (3 March 1924).

The identity that the Kemalists sought to impart to the new Turkey found expression in the formulation of an educational programme. The Law for the Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) was emblematic of the spirit of Kemalist reforms. Since the beginnings of the Tanzimat, new institutions had continued to exist side by side with traditional ones, even as the former circumscribed the reach and scope of the older institutions. Western legal systems, secular schools and dress had not entirely replaced existing ones. Mustafa Kemal's brief experiment with separating the office of the caliphate from the sultanate was consistent with such 'bifurcation'.<sup>78</sup> When the caliphate was abolished and the Ottoman house once and for all dislodged, Mustafa Kemal turned to the task of unification. The Law for the Unification of Education became the linchpin of the cultural programme of the new Turkey.

These fundamental reforms prepared the ground for the creation of a constitution for the new state.<sup>79</sup> The drafting commission looked at the charters of diverse contemporary European and non-European states. The new constitution, however, built primarily upon the document that it was supplanting, the 1876 Ottoman constitution, even as it posited the form of government of the new Turkey as a republic and invested the assembly with sovereignty. There was heated discussion about the draft constitution's clauses specifying the president's prerogatives. The assembly struck down the stipulation about the presidential power to disband the assembly, shortened the length of his mandate from the proposed seven-year to the four-year parliamentary term, all but eliminated his veto powers, and insisted on the submission of the government programme to a parliamentary vote. It provided for a modicum of separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches.<sup>80</sup>

78 Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), pp. 106–10.

79 For the 1924 constitution in English translation, see Edward Meade Earl, 'The New Constitution of Turkey', *Political Science Quarterly* 40 (1925).

80 The ratification proceedings of the constitution in the assembly are reproduced in Şeref Gözübüyük and Zekai Sezgin (eds.), *1924 Anayasası hakkındaki meclis görüşmeleri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi İdari İlimler Enstitüsü, 1957).

The new constitution grappled with the issue of citizenship and posited that ‘the name Turk . . . shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to, race or religion’ (Article 88). Some deputies proposed making Turkish culture and the Turkish language criteria for citizenship. The motion was defeated, but the ambiguities about the definition of Turkish citizenship came to the fore in the debates.<sup>81</sup> The constitution, ratified on 24 April 1924, made Islam the religion of state, thus preserving one of the fundamental, though ambiguous, clauses of its precursor.

By the end of 1924, the political structures of the new state were in place. Turkey had internationally recognised boundaries. Mosul and Alexandretta remained contested areas in the south, along the longest and most arbitrary of the boundaries of the new state. The inclusion or exclusion of these areas was debated with arguments about their ethnic composition, but their economic importance was at the crux of the dispute. Alexandretta, with its favourable port, was left to French Syria in 1925 with some autonomy. The fate of oil-rich Mosul was resolved with the mediation of the League of Nations in 1926, which granted it to the British mandate of Iraq.

The new Turkey revamped the political institutions of its Ottoman precursor, but continued its centralising policies. The Republic had a constitutional parliamentary government that became increasingly interlocked with the organisation of the People’s Party. Unification through Islam within new boundaries and opposition to imperialist West had been at the core of formation of the Turkish nation-state. Both of these fundamentals were to be turned on their head after independence, in favour of a self-consciously secular nationalism and modernisation on the pattern of the West. The secularising legal reforms that accompanied the abrogation of the office of the caliphate were furthered with the creation of a committee to eliminate the vestiges of the *şeriat* from civil law, the last bastion of Islamic legal tradition. The reform thrust was to receive renewed urgency and vigour in the coming years with the systematic suppression of nodes of opposition that, unsurprisingly, appealed to religious tradition and sentiment.

81 Ibid., pp. 437–9.

## Atatürk

ANDREW MANGO

The history of modern Turkey falls naturally into two periods: those of Ottoman Turkey and Kemalist Turkey. The foundations of Ottoman Turkey were laid, at least symbolically, by Osman, the eponymous founder of the dynasty in the closing years of the thirteenth century. Likewise, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk personifies the republic that he founded and shaped in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> He is the Republic's symbol, pictured on stamps, coins and banknotes, portrayed on the walls of offices and homes, quoted in and out of season to buttress arguments, presented as a guiding star, an ideal to inspire and follow. But while we can only guess at Osman's political choices and their influence on the state he is deemed to have founded, the influence of Mustafa Kemal's policies on the development of modern Turkey is patent and his imprint on his people's history is clear.

Many Turks, and some outsiders, would go further and argue that Atatürk changed the course not only of Turkish, but also of world history. One may dispute the wider claim, while conceding that he was both the founding father of a modern state and a harbinger of things to come – that Atatürk, the child of an empire, who thwarted the policies of other empires, was one of the first leaders to establish the limits of imperial power in the modern age, and that his demonstration of these limits at the end of the First World War acquired universal validity at the end of the Second. Seen in this light, Atatürk joins the pantheon of world historical figures – Peter the Great of Russia, George Washington, Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle. That their national hero is also a world figure is a source of pride to most Turks.

The historian writing seventy years after Atatürk's death cannot be deaf to these claims or blind to the importance of symbols. But the task at hand is one of discrimination: to relate the life and work of Atatürk with as much accuracy

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Caroline Finkel, *Osman's dream* (London: John Murray, 2005), pp. 554, for this parallel between Osman and Mustafa Kemal.

as he can achieve, but also to express a view on Atatürk's personal contribution to history, and produce evidence for the claim. A child of his time, his country and his specific community, Atatürk was naturally subject to influences felt by his contemporaries, hearing their voices and joining them in collaboration or rivalry. But to what extent was he an innovator? Would Turkey's destiny have been totally, or even largely, different had he not been there to guide it? It is these and similar questions that a historian must address. In order to do so successfully, he must combine the qualities of a historian of modern times with those of a specialist in a remoter past. For the Turkey into which Atatürk was born no longer exists. The Turkish past of a century ago is unfamiliar territory today, its unfamiliarity concealed by the physical continuity of monuments at the core of Istanbul, still the country's metropolis, even if no longer its political capital. Elsewhere it is the newness of the country's panorama that strikes the eye. The historian who enters this faintly remembered penumbral landscape must use the imagination to guide the search for facts.

### The making of a moderniser

Atatürk was born in Ottoman Salonica (in Turkish, Selânik, today Thessaloniki) in 1881.<sup>2</sup> His given name was Mustafa. In the absence of family names among Muslims, he was registered as Mustafa, son of Ali Rıza and Zübeyde. Later, as a schoolboy in a military school, he chose the second name Kemal, probably because he admired the Ottoman 'poet of liberty' Namık Kemal. In War College records he is named Mustafa Kemal, Selânik (Mustafa Kemal of Salonica). Atatürk's father Ali Rıza was a junior customs officer, and, almost certainly at the same time, a timber merchant and an unsuccessful salt merchant, in both cases trading in goods acquired from the state. Ali Rıza died at the early age of forty-seven, when Mustafa was seven years old, and the boy was brought up by his mother Zübeyde, a traditional Muslim. Mustafa Kemal's family was Turkish speaking, which suggests, but does not prove, that some at least of their ancestors were ethnic Turks. But ethnic Turks who had settled in the Balkans intermarried for generations with local converts to Islam who were largely of Slav and Albanian origin, and whom Mustafa Kemal resembled in looks. His father's family included men with some religious learning; his mother's was closer to the soil – it was a family of smallholders and farm

2 Except where other sources are indicated, the factual material in this chapter is taken from Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999).

managers. Much of the land in the Balkans, particularly in the plains, was owned by Muslims.

Salonica was a cosmopolitan city of some 100,000 inhabitants, roughly half of whom were Sephardic Jews whose ancestors had sought refuge in the Ottoman state after their expulsion from Spain, and who continued to speak Spanish (Judæo-Spanish or Ladino) as their mother tongue.<sup>3</sup> Muslims, mainly Turkish speaking, who included descendants of converts from Judaism (known as *dönme*), were the second-largest community. As in other port cities with mixed populations, Muslim neighbourhoods, such as that in which Mustafa Kemal lived as a child, were clustered round the citadel, while Greeks, who formed the third largest community in Salonica, and foreigners had their houses on the shore, outside the walls. There were some 10,000 'foreigners' in Salonica, largely native-born holders of the passports of foreign countries (including Greece). Salonica was a gateway to south-eastern Europe, handling imports to and exports from the Balkans, with which it was linked by rail. In the second half of the nineteenth century the city gradually became part of the European world: French, taught in Catholic mission schools, the schools of the French-based Alliance Israélite Universelle, and, with less success, in Ottoman state schools, was widely used; there were Freemasons and freethinkers, newspapers in several languages, cafes, restaurants, hotels and taverns, modern shops, electricity and other comforts. The equation of civilised modernity with Europe was shared by educated Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Atatürk's family, briefly well-to-do when Ali Rıza started trading in timber, was impoverished after his death. Education at state expense offered an escape route leading to a career in the civil service or the armed forces. Education was the main determinant of social mobility in the Ottoman state, where security of personal property was of recent origin and far from guaranteed, and which consequently had few aristocratic families with inherited wealth. Muslim parents could choose between civil-service schools and military schools for their sons, while non-Muslims trained their children for trade or the professions in their communal or in foreign schools. With no father to guide him, young Mustafa followed many of his Muslim contemporaries in opting for a military career, which offered greater scope for ambition, and was particularly relevant to a Muslim community beset by enemies on all sides and at risk of losing control of its state.

Young Mustafa was proud, ambitious, hardworking and intelligent. He was also good-looking: in later years people would speak of his piercing blue eyes

<sup>3</sup> *Chamber's Encyclopaedia* (New York: Collier, 1904), vol. IX, p. 119.



and his impressive presence. He fell in with the culture of the brightest of his contemporaries in the military preparatory school in Salonica, the military high school in Manastır (now Bitola in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia), the War College and then the Staff College in Istanbul. There were no non-Muslims in these military schools, for although the Tanzimat reforms, introduced from 1839 onwards, proclaimed the equality of all Ottoman subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the latter preferred to pay an exemption tax (*bedel-i askerî*) rather than serve in the armed forces. Members of non-Christian communities, which were known as *millet* ('nations' in the embryonic sense of the word) did occupy senior positions in the civil service right up to the dissolution of the Ottoman state, but the armed forces safeguarded the status of the Muslim community as the 'dominant nation' (*millet-i hâkime*) in the political sphere. Islam was the official religion of the state, which was ruled by a Muslim dynasty, but the Ottoman constitution of 1876 provided that other faiths would be protected.<sup>4</sup> Under the traditional division of labour in the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Ottoman society, the crafts, trade and the professions were largely in the hands of non-Muslims. As in some developing countries today, the juxtaposition of a politically dominant majority and economically dominant minorities fed a domestic conflict that figured in the calculations of foreign powers.

The Ottoman Empire had been in retreat since 1699. The external threat posed by its two neighbours, the Habsburg and Tsarist empires, was augmented by internal disaffection. Unruly local governors, seditious preachers and rebellious tribes had been a constant problem since the inception of the state. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this familiar danger was aggravated by the gradual spread of the ideology of nationalism among the sultan's Christian subjects. The intervention of the Christian Great Powers in favour of Greek rebels led to the creation of a small Greek nation-state under European protection in 1830. This interference set a precedent that was followed when Montenegro, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria broke away from the Ottoman dominions. In every case, local rebellion was followed by European intervention. When the Greek nation-state gained its independence it expelled all Muslims from its territory, while elsewhere the loss of Ottoman control was accompanied by mass killings of Muslims and followed by the departure of many of the survivors of the erstwhile 'dominant nation'. These people sought refuge in remaining Ottoman territories, where they were joined by Muslim refugees fleeing before the inexorable southerly advance of the Tsarist empire.

4 Rona Aybay, *Karşılaştırmalı 1961 Anayasası* (Istanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, 1963), p. 36.

In order to counter the external and internal threats, the Muslim rulers of the Ottoman state supplemented their traditional skill at playing off their enemies one against the other with efforts to master the techniques of their Christian antagonists. The Ottomans had always enlisted European military expertise and imported European military technology. In the nineteenth century, they began to import European administrative practice as well. The Ottoman state into which Mustafa Kemal was born was trying – with some success – to model itself on the modernised empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia. Abdülhamid II, the last sultan to exercise effective power, attributed the loss of a large part of his dominions in the Balkans and Transcaucasia at the beginning of his reign to the mistakes of ministers and politicians who had advocated and then profited from the institution of a constitutional monarchy in 1876. Proroguing parliament and suspending the constitution in the middle of the disastrous war with Russia in 1878, he used his mastery of the political process to make peace on the best possible terms and then keep it as long as possible. As he modernised the physical and social infrastructure of the state – increasing the provision of railway, telegraph, postal and quarantine services, and building schools, barracks and government offices – he tried to secure the support of his Muslim subjects by imbuing them with a spirit of loyalty to the Padishah (sultan) and caliph of all Muslims, the Ottoman equivalent of ‘God, King and Country’ invoked by his fellow-monarchs in Europe.

Abdülhamid’s prudent, modernising conservatism, supported by a large network of spies, kept the state more or less at peace and more or less intact for some twenty years. But it did so at the cost of stifling the initiative of the young Muslims whom his schools were training. Frustrated by the constraints of a conservative bureaucracy, and thinking more about the running sore of nationalist disaffection and insurrections and of the European interference which these occasioned than about their sultan’s skill in managing the crisis, they sought a permanent remedy in the constitutional arrangements that, they believed, had allowed the West to progress and prosper.

The Greeks, with their trading colonies in Europe, were the first Ottoman *millet* to learn the lessons of the European Enlightenment and of the French Revolution. A century or so later, by the time young Mustafa Kemal started his military education, the young generation of Muslims trained to take its place in the Ottoman ruling class – aptly referred to in Europe first as Young Ottomans and then as Young Turks – drank from the same fountain. Where Sultan Abdülhamid had seen the first Ottoman constitution of 1876 as an obstacle to his efforts to preserve the state, the Young Turks were convinced that its suspension threatened the survival of the empire. They believed that

constitutional rule by elected representatives of the people would solve all problems at one stroke: the various ethnic communities would come together in shared freedom, foreigners would no longer find an excuse to interfere, privileges would be abolished, expenditure would be diverted from the palace and its placemen to the needs of the people, including that of a strong army and navy to safeguard the interests and independence of a rejuvenated Ottoman state. In the words of the poet Namik Kemal, who inspired Mustafa Kemal's generation, 'the lightning of truth' would emerge from the clash of freely expressed opinions.<sup>5</sup>

This was the political ideology that young Mustafa Kemal acquired from his contemporaries in Manastır and Istanbul. Like them, he was convinced that something had to be done quickly to avoid the disintegration of the Ottoman state. Macedonia appeared to be particularly at risk. In 1885 Bulgaria had annexed Eastern Rumelia, a province which had been granted autonomous status at the congress of Berlin in 1878, and which was home to a numerous Muslim community. The Ottoman victory over the Greeks in the war of 1897 did not prevent the Great Powers from appointing Prince George of Greece as their commissioner in Crete, which was then lost to the Ottoman state. The precedent of Eastern Rumelia and of Crete, whose Muslim inhabitants had become a beleaguered minority, also threatened Macedonia in 1902, when a European was appointed commander of the gendarmerie, and individual Great Powers were given special responsibility for separate areas. In the same year, Ottoman political exiles met in Paris to concert their revolutionary activity. Two tendencies emerged from the meeting. Some delegates, among whom were nationalists from Ottoman Christian communities, favoured a decentralised Ottoman state and did not object to foreign help in order to achieve it. They were opposed by Muslim patriots, who wished to avoid foreign involvement in the creation of a strong, centralised constitutional Ottoman state. Military revolutionaries inside the empire favoured this second group, which became organised as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), a name inspired by the positivist motto 'order and progress'.

In May 1908, the British government, which had gradually moved away from its traditional policy of supporting the Ottoman state against the Russians, joined the latter and the French in an agreement under which they would appoint the governor of Ottoman Macedonia. Their united intervention was pre-empted in July when military members of the CUP led a mutiny among

5 The words occur in the headline of an article by Namik Kemal in *İbret*, 98, 9 Kanun-i Sani 1289. I owe this reference to Dr Bengisu Rona.

Ottoman troops in Macedonia and forced Abdülhamid II to proclaim a return to constitutional rule.

### The Young Turks in power

Mustafa Kemal was a schoolboy when he first found inspiration in liberal writers. Wishing to gain direct access to European civilisation, he supplemented the French language lessons in the military high school by enrolling in French language classes organised in the summer by French missionaries in Salonica. Although he later made efforts to learn German as well, French was the only foreign language in which he became proficient: he learnt to read it with ease, wrote it reasonably well, and used it for social and political purposes. As a young man, he spoke and corresponded in French with a young Italian woman, the widow of an Ottoman officer, who played an important part in forming his mature personality. However, it is unlikely that as a schoolboy Mustafa Kemal read the writers of the French Enlightenment in the original, whose works were available in Ottoman Turkish translations, at least in summary.

Mustafa Kemal became involved in military conspiracies as a cadet in the War College in Istanbul, where he began his studies in 1899. He carried on plotting after he had gained entry to the Staff College. He was briefly arrested when the authorities raided a classroom in which the students were poring over seditious literature. He was nevertheless allowed to complete his course, and after being commissioned staff captain in 1905, he began his practical training, not in his native Macedonia, as he had hoped, but in Syria, where his friend and classmate Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) had family links with the army commander. In his first posting, Mustafa Kemal was employed mainly in anti-insurgency operations against Druze tribesmen.

At the same time he was engaged in conspiratorial work, forming in Damascus a small secret society that he named Motherland and Liberty, the two concepts associated with his favourite poet, Namık Kemal. He made a secret trip to Salonica where he established a branch of his society. After he returned to Syria, his Salonica friends transferred to the larger and better-organised CUP. Mustafa Kemal himself became a Unionist (*İttihatçı*, as CUP members were known) when he secured a posting to his native city early in 1908. But by that time others had come to the forefront of the revolutionary movement. Its dominant figures were Majors Enver and Cemal, and a civilian, Talât, who was employed in the post office. With the reintroduction of the constitution in July 1908, the CUP became the power behind the throne, and Mustafa Kemal was given the task of establishing the new regime in Ottoman Libya (Tripolitania

and Cyrenaica). His success in winning over traditional local leaders, added to his earlier experience in Syria and Palestine, allowed the CUP leadership to think of this ambitious young officer as an Arab expert better employed away from the centre of political power.

Soon after his return from Libya, Mustafa Kemal served in the strike force (*Hareket Ordusu*) that the CUP had assembled in Macedonia to crush a counter-revolutionary movement in Istanbul. But he was eclipsed by Enver, who led the assault on the mutineers. When Enver, Cemal and Talât strengthened their position after the deposition of Abdülhamid in 1909, Mustafa Kemal allied himself with another revolutionary officer, his school friend Major Fethi (later Okyar), and became an internal critic of the CUP leadership. The main point at issue was whether serving officers should be allowed to engage in active politics. Mustafa Kemal argued that the army should stay out of politics. This policy was accepted in principle, but ignored in practice, by Mustafa Kemal no less than by Enver, Cemal and the others.

In 1910, Mustafa Kemal made his first trip to Western Europe when he was invited to observe French army manoeuvres. On his return he saw service with the Ottoman forces sent to suppress an Albanian revolt. Then in 1911 Mustafa Kemal followed Enver to Cyrenaica to organise resistance against the Italian invasion. He helped stop the Italian advance into the interior, but this local success had no practical value, as the Ottomans were forced to cede Libya when they were attacked by a coalition of Balkan states in 1912. Mustafa Kemal's return to the new front was delayed, as he travelled by way of Vienna in order to seek treatment for an eye infection that he had caught in the desert. When he took up his posting as chief of staff of the division holding the neck of the Gallipoli peninsula, the Bulgarians were at the gates of Istanbul, and the Ottoman forces had lost Salonica together with almost all their possessions in Europe. In 1913, the CUP staged a coup and seized direct political control. Although it was unable to prevent the cession of Edirne (Adrianople) to the Bulgarians, it succeeded in regaining the city when the Balkan allies fought among themselves. Enver, who took the credit for the reconquest of Edirne, now became the leading triumvir, defeating the faction led by Major Fethi. Fethi was sent off as ambassador to Sofia, with Mustafa Kemal as his military attaché. The rapid transformation of Sofia from a provincial Ottoman town to a capital with European airs and graces made a deep impression on Mustafa Kemal. He enjoyed his brief spell as a diplomat and fitted easily into the city's modern fashionable social life.

In October 1914, a few months after the outbreak of the Great War, Enver colluded with the Germans in a Pearl Harbor-style attack on the Russian fleet

and naval installations in the Black Sea, and the Ottoman Empire was propelled into the war on the side of the Central Powers. Mustafa Kemal shared with his friends his doubts about the wisdom of Enver's policy. Nevertheless, he pressed for a transfer to active service from his diplomatic (and intelligence) duties in Sofia. He secured it while Enver was away executing an ill-planned attack on Russian forces on the Caucasian front, and was posted commander of a division hastily assembled in order to resist an imminent Allied landing at Gallipoli.

The Gallipoli campaign made Mustafa Kemal's military reputation. He was decisive, moving his troops quickly forward from their reserve positions to contain the Allied landings in April 1915. He was personally brave and, unlike Enver, proved himself to be a highly competent field commander. Following his success in resisting the first Allied thrust, he was put in charge of a larger force brought together to contain a second Allied landing. He was successful once again and pinned down British troops near their second beachhead at Suvla Bay after a number of engagements known in Turkish history as the battle of Anafatarlar. Mustafa Kemal was critical of his superiors, in particular of Marshal Liman von Sanders, the German commander of the Ottoman Fifth Army which defended the Straits. He resented the presence of German officers in command of Ottoman troops. Shortly before the Allied withdrawal from Gallipoli, Mustafa Kemal resigned his command. Enver retaliated by denying him publicity for his admittedly subordinate, but nonetheless important, role in the defence of the Straits. As a result, Mustafa Kemal was much better known to his fellow-commanders than to the country at large.

Rejecting Enver's offer of a command of Arab irregulars in Libya, Mustafa Kemal secured a posting to the eastern (Caucasian) front as commander of a corps which was despatched to counter-attack the advancing Russian army. Promoted brigadier (the top rank he achieved in the Great War), he acquitted himself well, recapturing the towns of Muş and Bitlis in eastern Turkey, before being forced back by a new Russian thrust. The following year (1917) he was appointed in quick succession to command first the Second Army against the Russians, then the Seventh in Syria against the British. Becoming increasingly critical of the German alliance, he refused to work to the German commander of the Syrian front, General von Falkenhayn, and returned to Istanbul. Enver removed him from the scene by despatching him to the Western Front in the suite of the heir apparent, Vahdeddin, who succeeded to the Ottoman throne a few months later. The new sultan appointed Mustafa Kemal to the command of the Seventh Army, under the overall authority of Liman von Sanders, and Mustafa Kemal returned to his old command. Soon afterwards the Ottoman

front collapsed before the British advance. Evading capture, Mustafa Kemal made his way to Aleppo and succeeded in establishing a new line north of that city with the remnants of the Ottoman forces. As the war ended and German officers were withdrawn, Mustafa Kemal found himself in command of the Syrian front as a whole.

### The War of Independence

Soon after the signature of the armistice in November 1918, Mustafa Kemal went to Istanbul. The flight of the CUP leadership had opened up new prospects for him, and he tried hard to gain the post of minister of war in the new administration. He was passed over, but his closeness to Sultan Vahdeddin and his known antipathy to the ousted CUP leadership secured him an appointment as inspector of Ottoman troops in eastern and central Turkey. His official task was to oversee the disarmament of these forces in accordance with the terms of the armistice and, in the meantime, to maintain order. He intended to do the opposite: to preserve these troops together with their arms and use them to defend the territory that remained under Ottoman control when the armistice was signed.

In Istanbul the Ottoman war ministry served as the nerve centre of Turkish resistance. Before leaving the capital, Mustafa Kemal cooperated with like-minded commanders in drawing up plans to thwart Allied designs. In the provinces, they worked with nuclei of resistance led by local CUP militants, who called them defence of rights organisations (the rights of nations recognised by President Woodrow Wilson). Many of these local militants had enriched themselves at the expense of despoiled Christian neighbours, and had good reason to fear their return under the wing of the Allies.

Immediately after landing in Samsun on Turkey's Black Sea coast on 19 May 1919, Mustafa Kemal secured the backing of the commanders of Ottoman troops in central and eastern Anatolia. He then set about linking local defence of rights organisations in a national network. His official title as military inspector and royal ADC helped him enlist local support. Alerted to the true nature of Mustafa Kemal's work, the Allies put pressure on the sultan to recall him. He refused to return to the capital and negotiated successfully the brief interval between his dismissal and his election as country-wide president of the defence of rights organisations, whose representatives met in congress first in Erzurum and then in Sivas. Throughout, he maintained the fiction that, far from being rebels, he and his supporters were intent on freeing the sultan from Allied captivity. Unable to control the nationalists, who quickly became

masters of most of unoccupied Anatolia, the sultan's government negotiated with them, and acceded to their demand that fresh elections should precede the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Allies.

The elections, which were boycotted by the Greeks, the largest Christian community surviving in Turkey, gave Turkish nationalists control of the Ottoman chamber of deputies in Istanbul. In order to direct this majority from a safe distance, Mustafa Kemal moved his headquarters to Ankara, which was connected by rail to Istanbul, but remained safely in Turkish hands. He was elected to the new chamber, but did not take his seat. The newly elected parliament met in Istanbul and approved a statement of the Turkish position, known as the National Pact, on the basis of a text worked out at the congress of Erzurum and further refined in Sivas. The Pact demanded that the territory bounded by the armistice lines of November 1918 should enjoy full and unconditional independence as an undivided state.

Faced with the prospect of Turkish nationalists winning control of the sultan's government and defying their wishes, the British, acting with the lukewarm support of the other Allies, occupied Istanbul, where they had already sent troops after the conclusion of the armistice. The last Ottoman parliament prorogued its session, just as British patrols began to arrest and deport leading nationalists. However, many of the deputies succeeded in making their way to Ankara, where Mustafa Kemal summoned them to sit in a new Grand National Assembly (GNA). The GNA was declared to be the sole repository of sovereignty, but theoretically the sultan remained the constitutional head of state.

The GNA convened in Ankara on 23 April 1920 and elected Mustafa Kemal president both of the legislature and of an executive made up of commissioners (whose title was inspired by that of Soviet executive commissars). The new assembly's assurance of loyalty to the sultan was a flimsy cover for its revolutionary fervour. The French Revolution (known in Turkish as the Great Revolution – *İhtilâl-i Kebir*) had long been a source of inspiration for Turkish modernisers. Mustafa Kemal helped to contain the rival charms of the Bolshevik revolution, while doing his best to secure Bolshevik support for his movement.

The sultan's government tried to crush the rival government of the GNA in Ankara by fomenting risings by social groups whose specificity was challenged by the tide of modernising Turkish nationalism. Supporters of the old order were numerous among Circassian immigrants, local notables, conservative clerics and Kurdish tribes, but they could not win total control of these groups. As a result, Mustafa Kemal's government could use Circassian irregulars to



defeat Circassians loyal to the sultan, notables against their local rivals, clerics who feared foreign rule against those who feared Turkish nationalists, and Kurdish tribal leaders against each other. Having seen off its domestic enemies, the GNA government proceeded to its main task of dealing with its foreign adversaries.

By the time he had assumed the leadership of the Turkish national resistance movement, Mustafa Kemal had learnt the trade of a professional military commander and also of a resourceful domestic politician. Now he showed himself to be a master of diplomatic skills. He enlisted the help of the Bolsheviks, while keeping them out of the country. He exploited the conflicts of interest that emerged among the Allies. He befriended the Italians in opposition to the French and the British. He used guerrilla bands against the French troops that had occupied parts of south-eastern Turkey, while making it known to the French government that if it renounced claims to Ottoman territory within the 1918 armistice lines, the Turks would accept French control of Syria. Paris agreed to the deal. Bereft of French support, the British government distanced itself from the Greeks who had landed in Izmir (Smyrna) with the blessing of London in 1919. In the peace treaty of Sèvres, which the Allies imposed on the sultan's government the following year, Greece was promised Turkish (Eastern) Thrace immediately, and the area round Izmir after a decent delay. But before the treaty could be ratified, London sought to amend it in order to avoid a confrontation with Turkish nationalists.

Thanks to Mustafa Kemal's diplomatic tactics, the nationalist army's military target was narrowed down to the forces deployed by the Armenians and the Greeks. The Armenians were defeated easily in 1920, and Turkey regained the territory that Armenian nationalists had claimed (and in which they were numerically a minority), up to the 1878 frontier with Tsarist Russia. The Greeks were a more formidable enemy. When their advance threatened Ankara, the GNA endowed Mustafa Kemal with emergency powers as commander-in-chief. He proved himself by fighting the Greek army to a standstill in the battle of Sakarya in August–September 1921 and then defeating them and driving them out of western Anatolia a year later. A grateful assembly bestowed on him the traditional title of Gazi (fighter for the faith) and the rank of marshal. A conflict with the British was avoided, and an armistice signed at Mudanya in October 1922 allowed Turkish troops to re-enter Eastern Thrace without firing a shot. The victory of the army of the GNA, led by Mustafa Kemal, was recognised in the peace treaty signed in Lausanne in July 1923, a treaty that conceded almost all the demands made in the Turkish National Pact. The main exception was the Turkish claim to the province of Mosul, which was

left for further negotiations, and which Turkey finally renounced in 1926 in favour of the newly created state of Iraq, at that time under British mandate. Under its earlier separate agreement with the French, Ankara had already given up, for the time being, the district of İskenderun (Alexandretta), which had been occupied by the Allies after the signature of the armistice in 1918 and was consequently part of the territory claimed for Turkey in the National Pact. Three months after the signature of the peace treaty in Lausanne, the GNA voted to establish the Turkish Republic, with Ankara as its capital and Mustafa Kemal as its first president.

### Fashioning a new nation-state

The casualties suffered by the nationalist army in the course of what became known as the Turkish War of Independence (*İstiklâl Harbi/Bağımsızlık Savaşı*) or National Struggle (*Millî Mücadele*), or the Liberation War (*Kurtuluş Savaşı*), were light: 13,000 killed and 35,000 wounded – a small fraction of the Ottoman casualties in the Great War. But outside Istanbul, the country was devastated, its population reduced and the fabric of its multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society destroyed. The Armenians, who had accounted for most of the craftsmen of Ottoman Anatolia and a large proportion of professionals throughout the Ottoman state, had been killed, deported or had fled in 1915 and subsequent years, leaving behind only a small community in Istanbul. Those Greeks who did not escape with the Greek army in 1922 were forcibly removed under the terms of the exchange of populations agreed in Lausanne, except for people who had been resident in Istanbul and the islands off the mouth of the Dardanelles when the Great War broke out. With their departure, Turkey lost the bulk of its commercial class, as well as some of its best farmers. The Jewish community, concentrated largely in Istanbul, stayed on, but was too small to make good the acute skills shortage that faced the new Turkish state. The Muslim refugees from the Balkans who replaced the Christians were fewer in number; most were peasants deficient in modern skills.

The population of Turkey, within the boundaries recognised in Lausanne, is estimated to have fallen by nearly 3 million to 13 million between 1914 and 1923:<sup>6</sup> 92% were illiterate;<sup>7</sup> 86% of the population spoke Turkish and 9% Kurdish,

6 Cem Behar, *The Population of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey* (Ankara: State Institute of Statistics, 1996), vol. II, p. 65.

7 See 1935 census results, General Directorate of Statistics, *Small Statistical Abstract of Turkey*, (Ankara: n. p., 1948), pp. 84–5.

and 98% were Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Mustafa Kemal had appealed to Muslim religious solidarity to mobilise support in the War of Independence. He attended prayers; a religious ceremony was arranged when the GNA first met; a canonical judgment (*fetva*) was obtained from the muftis of Anatolia who declared that all good Muslims should join in the struggle to free the caliph from foreign captivity and disregard the judgment issued by *şeyhülislâm*, the head of the official religious establishment in Istanbul, outlawing Mustafa Kemal and his companions.<sup>9</sup> Seven years later Mustafa Kemal described the institution of the caliphate as ‘ridiculous in the world of true civilisation which is suffused with the light of knowledge and science’. But, as he said in the same speech, it was important to avoid scandalising people ‘who would be frightened by changes contrary to their traditions, their intellectual capacity and their mentality’. It was, therefore, necessary to guard his true intentions as ‘a national secret’, and to implement them step by step when conditions were propitious.<sup>10</sup>

The peasant population of the new Turkish state was ruled by a comparatively small class of officers and civil servants, who had been trained in Western-style schools before entering the service of the Ottoman state. They knew how to command fighting men, how to maintain law and order and how to administer the subjects of the empire. Like servants of other empires, they also had a feeling of responsibility towards their charges, and believed, not without justification, that their service tended to the welfare of society. Many of these men, who transferred from the service of the Ottoman Empire to that of the new Turkish national state, knew each other. The trouble was that they were too often jealous of each other, forming cliques and networks that opposed other similar coteries. There was not one but several competing old-boy networks, each loyal to its own leader who preserved his position by promoting only trusted personal supporters. Describing his experiences during the Gallipoli campaign, Marshal Liman von Sanders complained of the difficulty of reconciling the clashing personalities of his Ottoman commanders.

The civil and military officers of the state often had personal links with, but, as a caste, stood apart from, the local notables – landowners and tribal leaders – over whom they exercised power. In any case, family fortunes had been eroded by war, and land, which was plentiful, yielded little revenue in a poor and backward country. Those few families that had estates in former

8 Ibid.

9 Selahattin Tansel, *Mondros'tan Mudanya'ya kadar* 4 vols. (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1991), vol. III, pp. 105–6.

10 Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Istanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938 [1927], repr. Istanbul: Yeditepe Üniversitesi, 2002), vol. I, pp. 15–16.

Ottoman territories ruled by Britain and France – Egypt, Iraq, Cyprus, Syria – were markedly better off than the owners of property within the new Turkish Republic. The impoverished descendants of Ottoman grandees became a feature of the Istanbul social scene. But their eclipse was often temporary. Where they could scrape together the money to give their children a good education, usually in foreign schools, they could make their mark in the new Republic. As ever, education was the key to upward social mobility.

During the course of the War of Independence and in the following years, Mustafa Kemal was often challenged in and out of the assembly, sometimes by some of his closest military companions. In a famous passage of his 1927 speech, he declared: ‘Some of the travellers who set out together on the path of the National Struggle, moved over to resistance and opposition when the developments in the national life which led to today’s republic and its laws exceeded the limits of their mental and emotional capacity.’<sup>11</sup> The first GNA was jealous of its prerogatives, and set exact limits on the powers that it conferred on its president and sometime commander-in-chief. The difficulties that Mustafa Kemal experienced in overcoming opposition in the assembly and in maintaining the support of his original companions did not stem exclusively, or even principally, from differences in policy or ideology. The president’s authoritarian character and his utter confidence in his own judgement were known and feared. Some of Mustafa Kemal’s companions may have been more conservative than he, others more liberal, but what they had in common was not an attachment to old institutions – the sultanate, the caliphate, the status of Islam as the official religion – or to abstract democratic ideals, but a desire for a collegiate style of leadership. They wanted a greater part in decision making, and political power in their own right.

In the West, the Ottoman state had long been known as Turkey, and its Muslim subjects as Turks. Likewise, Mustafa Kemal’s supporters were generally referred to as Turkish nationalists. But inside the country, the official use of the name Turkey developed slowly and almost imperceptibly, starting with the text of the National Pact approved by the Ottoman parliament in 1920. The following year, the provisional constitution passed by the GNA declared that it ruled the ‘Turkish’ state. It was later claimed that Mustafa Kemal had always aimed at the creation of a Turkish national state. However, his actions and statements show that, like his companions, he had striven to keep the Arab provinces within the Ottoman state until the end of the Great War, when it became clear that Turks and Arabs would part company. Thereafter, Mustafa

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 16.

Kemal, his companions and supporters were determined to prevent any division along ethnic lines of the Muslim inhabitants in the territory that they had claimed. They had thought of themselves as Ottomans and Turks; now, as most of the Christians, and then Muslim Albanians and Arabs acquired separate national homes, they settled for the single Turkish identity. An ideology of Turkish nationalism, based on language, shared experience, genuine common interests and presumed common culture, had been taking shape on the cusp of the twentieth century under the influence of West European thought and East European exemplars. It received its finishing touches from Ziya Gökalp, a native of Diyarbekir (now Diyarbakır), the chief city of the predominantly Kurdish area in south-eastern Turkey. Gökalp became a member of the central committee of the CUP, which, when in power, espoused both a modernising Muslim nationalism and a Pan-Turkish nationalism in varying doses according to circumstances. It sought to stir up Muslim subjects of Western empires in general, and ethnic Turks in the Russian empire in particular. At home it tried to foster a Turkish national spirit, and pursued the goal of a 'National Economy', a euphemism for discrimination not just against foreigners, but against native non-Muslims also. The alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary notwithstanding, the CUP leadership was anti-Western and anti-Christian, again in varying proportions.

These ideas were dominant among Mustafa Kemal's supporters. Mustafa Kemal differed from them in drawing the logical consequences of their common attachment to the project of modernisation. He saw that modernisation implied Westernisation, and that it would therefore progress more smoothly in cooperation with the West. His aim of disarming Western hostility was part of a wider policy of supporting the status quo established by the post-war treaties in order to give the new Turkish state the chance to develop in peace. Xenophobia, fed by long exposure to anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish prejudice in the world of Christian tradition, could not be banished quickly, and it was rife among the rulers of the new state led by Mustafa Kemal. Often they liked Westerners but disliked local Christians, or disliked Western Great Powers but admired Western science. It was said of Mustafa Kemal's prime minister, İsmet (İnönü) that he did not mind foreigners making money, provided they did it in their own countries. Probably because he had proved himself equal to Western and other non-Muslim adversaries in battle and in diplomacy, Mustafa Kemal feared them less than did many of his companions, and therefore had no particular reason to dislike them. He owed his success to his own efforts and self-confidence, and he wanted his people to show the same spirit. Mustafa Kemal's rhetoric, particularly after he had achieved unchallenged power, did

not seek foreign scapegoats for domestic failure. He believed that it was up to his people to win acceptance as equal members of the family of civilised nations. The same applied to Muslims outside the boundaries of the new Turkish Republic: if they were under foreign rule, it was because they had not received a proper national education.

The idea of a single unifying human civilisation, the fruit of the progress of mankind, to which Mustafa Kemal subscribed, was not, of course, his own invention. It was part of the common discourse of his contemporaries throughout the world. By adopting this discourse, Mustafa Kemal directed the energy of the Turkish nationalism that he fostered away from external enemies and towards the domestic tasks of fighting backwardness and ignorance, and building up the prosperity of a ruined land. The fact that the Turkish nationalists had achieved most of their territorial claims helped Mustafa Kemal to concentrate on the country's development. He was convinced that Turks were as capable of civilisation as anyone else; what they lacked was material resources and knowledge of 'positive science'. It was the task of the government to develop the resources of the country and to disseminate secular knowledge just as, in traditional Muslim societies, the duty of the government was to foster religious knowledge. Economic, social and cultural development were inseparable in Mustafa Kemal's vision.

What distinguished Mustafa Kemal from other leading members of the ruling class of the new Turkish state was the radical consistency of his vision and his readiness to use Western knowledge and practice without reservations. As far as religion was concerned, Mustafa Kemal was not the only agnostic (or perhaps non-doctrinaire deist) in the Turkish ruling class, but there were few who matched his purely instrumental attitude to religion. Again, his preference for a Western way of life was shared by many, if not most, members of the ruling class, but where many of his contemporaries continued to admire the picturesque and, as some would have it, spiritual qualities of the Orient, he saw only backwardness, shoddiness and dirt.

Mustafa Kemal made skilful use of events in implementing his reform programme. The prorogation of the Ottoman parliament as a result of the British occupation of Istanbul allowed him to summon the GNA to Ankara on 23 April 1920. When the GNA, under Mustafa Kemal's chairmanship, proclaimed that it exercised sovereign powers on behalf of the nation, it abolished the sultanate in all but name, for all its claims to defend it. A British observer, Colonel Rawlinson, was in no doubt that he was witnessing the birth of a 'Muslim republic' in Anatolia. The flight from Istanbul of Sultan Vahdeddin led naturally to the proclamation of the Republic by the GNA on 29 October

1923. As the president of the GNA and, before that, of the national network of defence of rights organisations, Mustafa Kemal was the obvious choice for the presidency of the Republic. Ankara, Mustafa Kemal's headquarters since 1920, became the capital of the Republic. Its choice symbolised the break with the old regime, and the shift of attention to the development of Anatolia, where it occupied a central position. The occupation of Istanbul by the Allies had, in any case, demonstrated the advantages of a capital less vulnerable to enemy attack. Furthermore, Mustafa Kemal's star shone brightly in Ankara, while in Istanbul he could be seen as a parvenu.

The abolition of the caliphate the following year, accompanied by the expulsion of the Ottoman dynasty, was the logical, but more difficult, next step. It led in turn to the ending of such limited autonomy as the Islamic establishment had enjoyed in the Ottoman state. Mustafa Kemal could now push through the GNA laws abolishing religious schools and tribunals. The Kurdish revolt led by Şeyh (Shaykh) Said, of the (Naqshbandi) Nakşibendî religious brotherhood, provided a pretext for the banning of all dervish orders, together with their lodges, shrines and titles.

The revolt served also as a pretext for suppressing the opposition within the ruling class – the only opposition that counted. With the peasantry, Mustafa Kemal could use his prestige as Gazi the Liberator (*Halâskâr Gazi*), who had expelled the infidels, to reinforce the tradition of obedience to authority. His words 'The peasant is the true master of the country' sounded good, but meant little in practice. However, unlike the Bolsheviks, who ground down the peasantry in their drive to build heavy industry, Mustafa Kemal lightened the tax burden on the countryside by abolishing tithes paid on farm produce. In time, the peasants were subjected to various taxes for services, which they had difficulty in paying, but they did not become the object of ruthless exploitation by the state.

Other reforms, such as the adoption of European civil, commercial and criminal codes of law, of the Latin alphabet and universally used numerals, of the originally Christian (but by then universal) calendar and working week, and finally the imposition of European dress (which the Ottoman elite had long ago made its own), went with the grain of Turks educated in Western-type schools, through whom Mustafa Kemal ruled the country. Like him, they admired the part played by women in 'civilised' Western society. But here again, while Mustafa Kemal was by no means alone in holding progressive views, his insistence in applying them set him apart. True, the veiling of women was never formally banned by law. But regulations imposing 'civilised attire' amounted to an administrative ban. The belief that an educated nation needed

educated mothers and that polygamy was a social evil was a commonplace among Ottoman and Turkish modernisers. It was widely accepted that women teachers should be used to teach girls. But the employment of women to teach boys and co-education were more controversial. Both became accepted practice under Mustafa Kemal's rule. In late Ottoman times, educated Muslim men had enjoyed the company of emancipated Western and local Christian women, but were usually unwilling to allow their own womenfolk to appear in mixed company. Mustafa Kemal had no such reservations. On the contrary, he encouraged Muslim Turkish women to dance with men and take a full part in social life. The balls marking the anniversary of the Republic live on in Turkish folk memory as an icon of Mustafa Kemal's reforms. It was, of course, easy to give women the vote and allow them to stand for election (first for local councils in 1930 and then for parliament in 1934), and to decide how many women should exercise elected office, when all candidates had to be approved by the Republican People's Party (RPP), which had a monopoly of power. Similarly, the regime could insist that women should be admitted to all the professions and have senior positions in them. But the fact that women's rights came as a gift from above did not diminish their value.

True, the regime was paternalistic. When in 1934 a law was passed compelling all citizens of the Republic to adopt surnames, the GNA chose (obviously with Mustafa Kemal's blessing) the name Atatürk, meaning Father (of the) Turk(s) for him and him alone. Mustafa Kemal thought of himself as *pater patriae*, and also as a teacher: the teaching was new, but the teacher's authority was traditional. What was new was the cult of Atatürk's personality, and there is little doubt he encouraged it himself. The cult of the leader was widespread in the twentieth century. But the form it took in Turkey, with statues and busts of Atatürk proliferating from 1926 onwards, was bound to cause particular offence to a Muslim population brought up in the belief that statues were idols. Atatürk declared that his compatriots could be relied upon not to worship stones. No doubt he believed that the glorification of his person held the country together, and that, in any case, he deserved it. His estranged companions whispered that it was proof of his megalomania.

The thoroughgoing secularisation of the state disturbed older members of the educated ruling class. But provided they were content to grumble in private, Mustafa Kemal gave them no cause for fear. His regime was authoritarian, not totalitarian. The trial and execution of a handful of prominent members of the CUP, and the warning given to Mustafa Kemal's military critics who were also tried, but acquitted, after the failed attempt on his life in 1926, ended ruling-class opposition to the president. In March 1927 the regime felt strong enough



to abolish the independence tribunals, which had tried political opponents. A few months later Mustafa Kemal visited Istanbul for the first time since 1919: the old capital had accepted its diminished status. The same year, Mustafa Kemal formally retired from the army.

The People's Party, which had been formed in September 1923 from the membership of the defence of rights organisations, dominated politics. Renamed the Republican People's Party the following year, it became the single permitted political party in the country after the closure of the opposition Progressive Republican Party. Except for the Free Party's brief emergence for a few months in 1930, the RPP kept the field to itself until after the Second World War. Mustafa Kemal used it as an instrument of popular mobilisation for his reforms. When in the 1930s totalitarianism became widespread in Europe, the secretary general of the RPP, Recep Peker, proposed that the party should control the machinery of the state. Mustafa Kemal took the contrary view, and subordinated the party to the state. The minister of the interior controlled the national organisation of the party; provincial governors did so locally.

The armed forces retained their corporate status under the chief of the general staff, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, a Prussian-style disciplinarian. He never swerved from his allegiance to the Mustafa Kemal, whom the sultan's government had originally ordered him to undermine, but whom he decided to serve in the first months of the War of Independence. After the purge of Mustafa Kemal's military rivals in 1926, the armed forces became a pillar of the Kemalist regime, a function that they have retained to this day. The military and civil arms of the government enjoyed equality of respect as they discharged their separate functions: on Republic Day, 29 October, the local military commander would pay his respects to the local civil governor; the latter reciprocated on Victory Day, 30 August. The two institutions were joined at the apex by the president elected by the GNA, which in its corporate capacity exercised the powers of commander-in-chief.

Taken together, Mustafa Kemal's reforms amounted to a cultural revolution. But in society at large, the biggest change came not from the reforms but from the departure of all but a handful of non-Muslims. As the Muslims learnt the trades and professions which non-Muslims used to practise, a new Muslim middle and lower-middle class emerged and grew in numbers. This class lost touch with much of its Muslim Ottoman legacy. Young people who went to school after 1929 could not read books printed in the Arabic alphabet before that date; after the mid- and late 1930s they could no longer understand these books even if they were reprinted in the Latin alphabet, for much of the old

Arabic and Persian vocabulary had been banished from the Turkish language. The practice of the Muslim religion was free, but schools were not allowed to teach religion, and the one existing university faculty of theology closed for lack of students. Among the new bourgeoisie, religion was for the elderly and for the servants. True, some middle-class families (including the prime minister's) made private arrangements to teach their children the rudiments of the Muslim faith, and rites of passage – circumcision for boys, religious funerals and memorial services – survived. Nor did official secularisation affect standards of behaviour, which remained conservative and prescribed deference to authority and compassion for the weak and needy. In the countryside, banditry was eliminated and the gendarme was feared by all. Social control by the authorities and self-control by individuals were accepted norms. Foreigners described the Kemalist republic as 'grey', but many Turks, looking back, associate it with youthful idealism.

The greyness was accentuated and the idealism tested when the shock waves of the 1929 Wall Street crash hit Turkey. The country's foreign earnings, which derived almost entirely from the export of farm produce, collapsed; so too did farm incomes. Domestic private capital was scarce; foreign capital was not available; commercial and technical skills were inadequate. In these conditions of scarcity and hardship, the government had little choice but to take direct responsibility for keeping the country fed and supplied with essential manufactures. Mustafa Kemal had earlier continued with the policy of the CUP of fostering a Muslim entrepreneurial middle class. But it was accepted wisdom that the state should make good the deficiencies of private enterprise. Now the extent of state intervention in the economy increased dramatically. An ideological justification was found in the elastic doctrine of statism (*étatisme/ devletçilik*), which the RPP adopted as one of its six principles and which was eventually included in the constitution, alongside other key principles of Kemalism, such as republicanism, secularism and nationalism. However, while the state was the only actor capable of meeting urgent economic needs, it was inefficient and restrictive. Mustafa Kemal was made aware of these drawbacks by more liberal members of his entourage. As ever, his attitude was pragmatic: he dealt with problems as they arose, and in the last year of his life he changed prime ministers, replacing İsmet İnönü, a stalwart defender of centralised administration, with Celal Bayar, who gave more freedom to public corporations. But there was one principle to which Mustafa Kemal held fast: the state budget was always balanced. In the years of crisis taxes increased and expenses were cut. In 1930, seeking a safe channel for the discontent of the public, Mustafa Kemal encouraged his friend Fethi (Okyar) to

found an opposition party. But it soon became clear that the party attracted not only economic and political liberals, but also religious fanatics. Seeing that the experiment was about to end in tears, Fethi dissolved the party, and resumed his career as Turkish ambassador – exchanging London for his previous post in Paris.

Mustafa Kemal's reforms were virtually all in place by the time he gave his famous address marking the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Republic in 1933, when he proclaimed his confidence that, guided by 'positive science', his people would achieve and then surpass the level of contemporary civilisation. Only the imposition of surnames, women's suffrage and the inscription of the party's principles in the constitution in 1937 remained to complete the edifice. After 1933, Mustafa Kemal devoted much of his time to the rewriting of Turkish history and the 'purification' of the Turkish language. The fancy theories on which this work was based have long since been abandoned (suffering the fate of other delusions, current in other countries at the time, concerning race and class, phrenology, the dependence of language on the economic production process and so forth), but not without leaving their mark. They filled out the concept of citizenship with a partly invented but nonetheless functional national identity, and helped the development of a Turkish national idiom capable of serving modern needs.

However, there were more pressing needs to which Atatürk had to attend in the last five years of his presidency. Failing health resulting from his irregular lifestyle and excessive consumption of alcohol did not cloud his judgement as he sought to minimise the dangers and maximise the benefits inherent in the breakdown of the settlement that had been put in place after the Great War. Mustafa Kemal defined his policy objective as 'peace at home and peace in the world'. In practice this meant maintaining law and order in the country and friendly relations with neighbours on the basis of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. The fruitful working relationship established with the Bolsheviks during the Turkish War of Independence was preserved to the end of Atatürk's life. Elsewhere, it took time to resolve the problems that the post-war settlement had left in abeyance. Relations with Britain were put on a sound footing after the Mosul dispute was resolved in 1926. Outstanding problems with Greece were settled when Eleftherios Venizelos, the Greek prime minister who had launched the invasion of Anatolia in 1919, returned to power in Athens and visited Ankara in 1930. Faced with the economic crisis that had convulsed the world the previous year, the two countries agreed sensibly to avoid spending their scarce resources on an arms race in the Aegean. As Turkey's exports collapsed, Atatürk's government secured essential imports

through bilateral trading agreements. Germany was the main beneficiary, but Soviet Russia was the main source of the foreign credits that allowed Turkey to establish a textile industry and clothe its population. Later, Britain and Germany competed in offering loans to Turkey.

Italy, which had been the first friend of Turkey's nationalists at the beginning of the War of Independence, now became the main danger to peace in the region. To contain Mussolini's ambitions, Turkey drew closer to Britain and France. This disturbed the Soviet Union, but did not alienate it. To strengthen regional stability, Turkey signed the Balkan Pact with Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania, and the Saadabad Pact with Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Atatürk profited from the disturbed international situation and the credit he earned with defenders of an increasingly fragile peace by winning control of the Straits. The Treaty of Montreux, signed in 1936, allowed Turkey to introduce its troops and to fortify the straits, which had been demilitarised at Lausanne, and to become the power regulating navigation through them. The Western democracies needed Turkey's help to guard Eastern Europe and the Middle East first against Mussolini's and then against Hitler's ambitions. Towards the end of his life, Atatürk promised that help, and secured in exchange a territorial concession from France. This concerned the district of İskenderun (Alexandretta), which Turkish nationalists had claimed in the National Pact, but which had been left in French control as a special administrative district within Syria under the French mandate. Using stick-and-carrot tactics, Atatürk persuaded France to allow elections that would result in the cession of the district to Turkey, which occurred soon after his death. Thus when Atatürk died on 10 November 1938, the Republic he had founded had a good working relationship with all its neighbours, including the empires of Soviet Russia, Britain and France, and had won back some of the concessions it had made in Lausanne in 1923.

### The Kemalist legacy

Atatürk died on 10 November 1938. He had been president of the Republic for fifteen years, national leader for eighteen. He had not unleashed the forces that broke up the Ottoman empire and its society; but, having led his community in its struggle for ownership of its own, independent country, he became its uncontested leader. He did not institute a social revolution in the new national Turkish state, whose class structure continued to evolve organically in response to changing conditions, nor did he alone invent the social and cultural reforms that shaped the Republic; but he had turned thought and talk

into action. His tactics served his strategic objective of ensuring that Turkey should become a member of the family of civilised nations. His genius lay in his clear understanding of the context within which he had to act, and his unerring grasp of the correlation of political forces that determined that context. Trained as an officer of an empire and shaped in its service, he was committed to the concept of law and order as the precondition of progress. The fact that the order he introduced was new, or at least had new features, made it all the more necessary to defend it. Mustafa Kemal was a revolutionary, with a conservative's instinct for order, discipline and self-reliance.

As in all revolutions, when the new order settles down, its links with the past begin to emerge. But one should not exaggerate the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Kemalist Republic. The solidly Muslim predominantly peasant society that Atatürk shaped was qualitatively different from cosmopolitan Ottoman society. Atatürk recognised that it was also different from the societies of the advanced Western countries that he wanted to emulate. He was clear in his mind where that difference lay – in lack of material means and of modern knowledge and skills. Once backwardness in knowledge was overcome through modern education in 'positive sciences', Turkey would come to resemble the West, and advance with it. He was not an anti-imperialist, but he was anti-racist: the Turkish nation – and by extension any nation – was as capable of modern civilisation as any other. But first a Turkish nation had to be created out of a religious community with disparate ethnic origins, and taught where its common national interest lay. National interest transcended class interests; in any case, classes in Turkey were not clearly delineated. Educational attainment rather than class was the main criterion of differentiation. Bolshevism was nonsense, Mustafa Kemal told journalists when he briefed them immediately after winning the War of Independence. Mustafa Kemal laid the foundations for progress, but when he died Turkey was still a poor and backward country.

Since then, Atatürk's vision has to a large extent been realised. Illiteracy has been practically banished, at least among men, and has been greatly reduced among women. Today Turkey sends professionals, along with industrial products, to the West. Most Turks live in towns, and Turkish urban society mirrors the society of poorer European countries, its people living in apartment houses, subject to the same media diet, and with similar aspirations for employment, welfare and entertainment. The middle class of educated Turks resembles its counterparts in Europe and elsewhere. But Atatürk had not foreseen the population explosion that followed the establishment and preservation of a safe country for his people, nor did he envision that the population would increase

fastest in the most backward areas, inhabited mainly by people of Kurdish origin. The modernisation of Turkey thus became a task of Sisyphus, and the country's economic and cultural homogenisation an elusive ideal. In years of weakness before the War of Independence had been won, Mustafa Kemal had promised the Kurds rights and privileges that would safeguard their specific customs.<sup>12</sup> But after the proclamation of the Republic and particularly after the suppression of the revolt of Şeyh Said he tried to turn them into Turkish citizens, indistinguishable from other citizens of the republic, and sharing a Turkish culture which was itself part of a universal civilisation. The policy worked with many Kurds, as it did with most Muslim Turkish citizens of other ethnic origins. But the number of Kurds was too large, and their proportion in the population was increasing. In time, the concept of a civic, territorial Turkish nationalism, which Atatürk, like other Turkish modernisers, had learnt from the French, had to face the competition of a separate Kurdish nationalism. The Turkish Republic has still to devise ways of accommodating two different nationalist ideologies.

Examples from other countries suggest that economic development does not counteract separatist nationalism. The impact of what Atatürk would call 'modern civilisation' on religious fervour is even more difficult to estimate. But just as Kurdish nationalism seems to develop in tandem with the organic assimilation of the Kurds into Turkish society, so too has political Islam, which emerged when freedom of choice was widened after the Second World War, failed to prevent the organic secularisation of society. Often criticised in the liberal West as an outdated authoritarian creed, Kemalism retains the affection of most Turks. While Atatürk's legacy is subject to many diverse interpretations, its basic principle – that Turkey's interest lies in drawing ever closer to the developed countries of the world – commands quasi-universal support. The fact that at the start of the new millennium the 70 million inhabitants of Turkey enjoy a vastly higher standard of living than did the 12 million original citizens of the Republic is at least partly due to the spirit of self-reliance that Atatürk sought to substitute for a mentality of aggrieved and resigned victimhood, and to his pursuit of peace at home and abroad. Unlike many of the dysfunctional states that have emerged from the break-up of empires, the Turkish Republic has been strong from the start. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, it has enjoyed almost unbroken peace. The speed of its material progress has varied, but its progress has not halted. Atatürk did not institute democratic government, although he created the institutions necessary for it. But he insisted on rational

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Mango, 'Atatürk and the Kurds', *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, 3 (July 1999), p. 1.

government, and this precept has by and large been observed by his successors. As the Republic matures, one can expect the cult of Atatürk to give way to a more reasoned appreciation of his legacy. Like the Westernising reforms of Peter the Great in Russia or the French Revolution, Atatürk's policy choices will always attract controversy. But their imprint on the country cannot be erased.

PART II

\*

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY





# Migration and Turkey: the dynamics of state, society and politics<sup>1</sup>

KEMAL KİRİŞÇİ

## Introduction: from the late Ottoman period to the Turkish Republic

The Turkish Republic and its predecessor state, the Ottoman Empire, have been deeply shaped by migration in its many variations. The end of the Ottoman Empire was particularly marked by the forced displacement of people. As nationalism set out to establish homogenous national identities, the multi-ethnic and multicultural order of the Ottoman Empire was undermined.<sup>2</sup> The collapse of the empire and the rise of nationalism, especially in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, were characterised by the ‘un-mixing’ of peoples<sup>3</sup> and the dislocation of large numbers of Christians, Jews and Muslims.<sup>4</sup> These displaced people came from a great variety of ethnic groups, including Armenians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Circassians, Greeks, Kurds, Pomaks, Tatars and Turks. The population shifts of the Balkan and First World Wars were followed by a compulsory exchange of population between Greece and

1 I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Esin Saraç, research assistant at Boğaziçi University, as well as to express my gratitude to my colleagues Sema Erder from Marmara University, Ahmet İçduygu from Koç University and Turgay Ünalın from Hacettepe University, who responded to an earlier version of this chapter and guided me through a maze of literature, especially on internal migration.

2 J. McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp. 47–62.

3 M. R. Marcus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). For the notion of state formation provoking forced migrations see A. Zolberg, ‘The Formation of New States as a Refugee-Generating Process’, *ANNALS, AAPSS* 467 (May 1983).

4 For details of the context and size of these forced migrations see K. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University Press of Wisconsin, 1985); P. Loizos, ‘Ottoman Half-Lives: Long-Term Perspectives on Particular Forced Migrations’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12, 3 (1999); J. McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995); McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples*; A. Pallis, ‘Racial Migrations in the Balkans during the Years 1912–1924’, *Geographical Journal* 66, 4 (October 1925); and S. J. Shaw, ‘Resettlement of Refugees in Anatolia, 1918–1923’, *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 22 (Spring 1998).

the new Turkish Republic, which saw the arrival of almost half a million Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Economic circumstances and state pressure both compelled Christian minorities living in an ever-contracting Ottoman Empire to emigrate. Some had already started to immigrate to the United States from the late nineteenth century onwards. Greeks and Armenians constituted almost half of the emigration from the Ottoman Empire to the United States, and this emigration intensified during 1900–1913 with the rise in Turkish nationalism.<sup>6</sup> The massive forced migration of Christians, however, occurred mostly during the First World War and in its immediate aftermath. Armenians and Greeks were particularly affected. The Armenian community in the geography corresponding to today's Turkey had shrunk, from about 1.5 million to approximately 140,000 by 1927, when the first census in Turkey was taken.<sup>7</sup>

The near-complete uprooting of the Greek community came after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Turkish Republic. As Turkish nationalist forces repelled the Greek army's occupation of Anatolia in 1922, Greeks from the Aegean region and Eastern Thrace fled to Greece. The Greeks of the Black Sea region followed suit. The population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey, reached as part of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, only formalised the Greek exodus of the preceding year-and-a-half. By 1924, 1.2 million Greeks had left the new Republic's territory, and only those Greeks living in Istanbul and two small islands in the northern Aegean Sea

5 For the details of the exchange of populations see K. Arı, *Büyük mübadele: Türkiye'ye zorunlu göç (1923–1925)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995) and S. Ladas, *The Balkan Exchanges of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Macmillan, 1932).

6 R. Bali, *Anadolu'dan yeni dünya'ya: Amerika'ya ilk göç eden Türklerin yaşam öyküleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004), pp. 49–55. See also K. Karpas, 'The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860–1914', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, 2 (May 1985).

7 J. McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 121–30. The number of Armenians that suffered the consequences of forced migration is highly contested. McCarthy estimates that almost 600,000 Armenians died during the First World War and the 1915 deportations while more than 880,000 fled from Turkey as refugees. Armenian as well as some Turkish scholars call the consequences of the 1915 Ottoman deportations of most members of the Ottoman Armenian community a 'genocide'. See for example V. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford Bergham Books, 2003); and T. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004). There are also scholars who contest that a 'genocide' occurred and attribute the fate of the Armenians to the politics of the First World War. See for example K. Gürün, *Ermeni dosyası* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2005); K. Gürün, *The Armenian File: Myth of Innocence Exposed* (Mersin: Rüstem, 2001); and G. Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

were exempted from the compulsory exchange. According to the 1927 census, there were about 120,000 Greek speakers left in Turkey.<sup>8</sup>

The loss of the Armenian and Greek communities, accompanied by the deaths of an estimated 2.5 million Muslims in the wars, left the new Turkish Republic considerably depopulated in comparison to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>9</sup> Istanbul, once the administrative, commercial and cultural capital of the Ottoman Empire, saw its population shrink from 1.2 million just before the First World War to just under 700,000 at the time of the first national census in 1927.<sup>10</sup> The demographic composition of the population of the Republic was substantially different from that of the empire it replaced. As Keyder notes: 'Before the war, one out of every five persons living in present-day Turkey was non-Muslim, after the war, only one out of forty persons was non-Muslim.'<sup>11</sup> This outcome had massive consequences for the course of economic development in the following decades. Turkey suffered a severe shortage of capital and labour, especially due to the loss of populations with professional and entrepreneurial skills. This lack played an important role in the emergence of state policies emphasising a state-driven economy and the creation of a Turkish national capitalist class.

This historical background had a profound effect on the new Turkish state and its policies towards migration. Most significantly, the elite of the new regime had been deeply marked by these population movements. Many among the new elite were actually victims of the forced migrations that marked the end of the Ottoman Empire. They were either among those who had been forced to migrate from the remaining Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the Balkan Wars during 1912–13 or they were descendants of people who were displaced to the territory of what became modern Turkey from the Caucasus, Crimea and the Danube region as a result of Russian expansion. They felt a profound attachment to their fellow migrants and to those who had been left behind. Another sector of the new elite had considerable continuity between the last days of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic. Many of these leaders had attempted to stop the collapse of

8 F. Dündar, *Türkiye nüfus sayımlarında azınlıklar* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1999), pp. 124–5. Dündar notes some of these Greek speakers would inevitably have been among the almost half a million Muslims who had been resettled from Greece to Turkey as part of the population exchange.

9 Estimated by McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities*, pp. 133–4.

10 Gülten Kazgan, 'Millî Türk devletinin kuruluşu ve göçler', in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VI: *Nüfus* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), p. 1557.

11 Ç. Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), p. 79.

the Ottoman Empire and failed. This first-hand experience of territorial loss and mass migration shaped the new leadership's belief that migration policies could be a useful tool for constructing a 'homogeneous' Turkish national identity that defined Turks according to both religion and language or culture. The new Republican regime encouraged the immigration of members of the old Ottoman Muslim communities left behind in the Balkans, while denying entry to non-Muslims, including ethnically Turkish Christians such as the Gagauz Turks. At the same time they forcefully resettled members of various non-Turkish-speaking ethnic communities, such as the Kurds, in order to make them assimilate to a Turkish identity. The state also continued to encourage the emigration of the remaining members of non-Muslim communities of Turkey.

The end of the Second World War brought about completely new circumstances. Turkey's gradual democratisation process, along with demographic and economic developments, changed the nature of migration in the country. State resettlement policies gave way to a massive process of migration to urban centres. When the first population census was taken in 1927, almost 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, and this balance prevailed until the 1950s. From then onwards, the ratio gradually changed, until the 2000 census showed that almost 65 per cent of the population in Turkey was urbanised.<sup>12</sup> This transformation was accompanied by Turkish labour migration to West European countries from the 1960s onward, making Turkey the largest supplier of workers to Western Europe after Yugoslavia, and reshaping the economics and politics of both Turkey and the destination countries, especially Germany.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and growing globalisation in the 1990s changed further the nature of immigration into Turkey. The number of economic migrants from the former Soviet world increased, as did the number of asylum seekers from developing countries. Policies that were a function of the early Republican period and its 'nation-building' efforts encountered new challenges. Turkey experienced previously unknown migration phenomena, such as trafficking in human beings. This period culminated in major changes of state policy on issues ranging from visa regulations to labour laws, creating a considerable impact on Turkish society as well. Turkey was becoming a part of a growing network of commercial, cultural and social interactions with a world that until the end of the Cold War had remained closed.

<sup>12</sup> 1923–2002 *Statistical Indicators* (Ankara: State Institute of Statistics, December 2003), pp. 3 and 7.

At the same time, internal forced migration in Kurdish areas continued, especially from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. The conflict forced hundreds of thousands of Kurds to move from the rural areas of the south-east to the towns and cities or to western Anatolia in search of security. Simultaneously, a growing number of Turkish nationals, many of Kurdish background, sought asylum in Western European countries. The nature of this wave of forced migration was very different from that in the early decades of the Republic. In the past, the state had relied upon laws adopted with nation-building concerns that did actually sanction resettlement. However, the process of democratisation, combined with international concern, in recent times created increasing pressure on the Turkish state to deal with the consequences of forced migration in accordance with the principles of human rights and democracy.

### Migration and minorities in the context of the nation-building project

The founding fathers of the Turkish Republic initially espoused a civic definition of citizenship and national identity. This vision was conspicuously reflected in the 1924 constitution. According to Article 88, all citizens of Turkey irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliations were defined as 'Turks'. However, state practice deviated considerably from this definition, especially from the late 1920s onwards. Concerns about the territorial and political unity of the country in the face of Kurdish rebellion and an Islamic uprising against secularism led the state to downplay this civic understanding of national identity and instead to emphasise homogeneity and 'Turkishness'.

The Turkish state elite made conscious efforts to develop this identity, and adopted policies aimed at constructing the 'new Turk'.<sup>13</sup> The identifying features of 'Turkishness' as defined by state practice were the use of the Turkish language (or the willingness to adopt it) and membership in one of the Muslim Sunni ethnic groups closely associated with past Ottoman rule. Hence, Bosnians, Circassians, Pomaks and Tatars were very much included into this definition, while the Christian Gagauz Turks, members of other Christian minorities, Alevi and unassimilated Kurds were excluded from the national community. The emphasis on national homogeneity and unity that was a

<sup>13</sup> For the notion of the 'new Turk' replacing the 'Ottoman Turk' identity see E. Brisbee, *The New Turks: Pioneers of the Republic, 1920-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951).

feature of so many East European and Balkan nationalisms in the same period influenced the Turkish elite as well.<sup>14</sup>

Migration policy became an important tool for constructing a Turkish national identity. The government decided that members of ethnic or religious groups resisting 'assimilation' into the state-sponsored national identity would be relocated or resettled. Simultaneously, groups and individuals that the state considered suitable for assimilation would be encouraged to immigrate to Turkey. The practice of government-sponsored relocation of people was carried over from Ottoman times to the newly established Turkish Republic.<sup>15</sup> The Kurdish rebellion led by Şeyh Said in 1925 also played an important role in the Turkish government's decision to develop a policy of forced resettlement. This rebellion occurred right after the establishment of the new Republic and the introduction of major political and social reforms intended to create a modern, centralised, homogeneous and secular Turkish state and society. The Şeyh Said rebellion was partly driven by a religious reaction against secularisation policies and partly by opposition to rising Turkish nationalism. After most of the Kurdish rebellions that occurred between 1924 and 1938, the state forcibly resettled the tribes involved and their leaders in western parts of Turkey.<sup>16</sup>

The Republican regime adopted numerous laws and regulations to implement its migration policy. The most famous of these was the Settlement Law (*İskan Kanunu*) of June 1934. At the time, the government was concerned because ten years after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, many non-Muslim minorities were still not speaking the Turkish language, which was considered a fundamental aspect of national identity.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, there were large pockets of the country where languages other than Turkish were still dominant. These areas included not only the Kurdish-populated regions, but also those parts of the country settled by non-Turkish speaking immigrants,

14 S. Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2005).

15 F. Dündar, 'The settlement policy of the Committee of Union and Progress (1913–18)', in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Turkey: Nationalism, Post-Nationalism and the European Community* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

16 For details on efforts to assimilate Kurds through resettlement see D. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 184–211. For an official account of all rebellions that took place after the establishment of the Turkish Republic up to the Second World War see *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde ayaklanmalar (1924–1938)* (Ankara: Gnkur. Basımevi, 1972). During this period eighteen rebellions occurred and sixteen of them involved Kurds in eastern Anatolia.

17 For an analysis of efforts of 'Turkification', especially based on promoting broader use of the Turkish language, see A. Aktar, 'Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarında uygulanan Türkleştirme politikaları', *Tarih ve Toplum* 156 (December 1996); A. Yıldız, 'Ne mutlu Türküm diyebilene: Türk ulusal kimliğinin etno-seküler sınırları (1919–1938)' (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001).

including Muslim refugees from the North Caucasus, Crimea and the Balkans. Many deputies raised this concern over the language issue during the parliamentary debate that preceded the adoption of the legislation.<sup>18</sup>

The Settlement Law divided the people of the Republic into three groups and its territory into three zones. The three groups were those who spoke Turkish and were of Turkish ethnicity; those who did not speak Turkish but were considered to be of Turkish culture; and, finally, those who neither spoke Turkish nor belonged to the Turkish culture. The second group included past immigrants from the Caucasus and the Balkans, whom the state considered Turkish even if they were of Albanian, Bosnian, Circassian, Pomak, Roma or Tatar background. Many in this category did not or could not speak Turkish for a variety of reasons. The third group consisted primarily of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Kurds and Arabs. The first of the three geographic zones was composed of areas mostly inhabited by Turkish speakers who were considered to be of Turkish culture and ethnicity. This zone could receive immigrants from any part of the country and from abroad. The second zone included people whose Turkishness, the state had decided, needed enhancement in terms of culture and language, which could be brought about by resettlement policies. The last zone consisted of areas closed for security reasons to any form of civilian settlement. These were primarily in eastern Turkey, where violent Kurdish rebellions had taken place. The law also restricted immigration into Turkey, permitting only people of 'Turkish descent and culture' to enter.

The Settlement Law formed the legal basis of a massive social engineering project aimed at constructing a homogeneous Turkish national identity. The text of the law and some of the parliamentary debates about its passage revealed the government's image of the ideal Turkish citizen. In the words of one deputy, the law aimed at creating 'a country which would speak one single language, think and feel alike'.<sup>19</sup> The drafters of the law put it even more bluntly. They argued that with the implementation of this law, 'the Turkish state would not need to suspect the Turkishness of any Turk [Turkish citizen]'.<sup>20</sup> Under the

18 On these debates and the development of resettlement policies see K. Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices', *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, 3 (July 2000), pp. 4–6. For the Turkish state's settlement policies see also E. Ülker, 'Homogenizing a Nation: Turkish National Identity and Migration-Settlement Policies of the Turkish Republic (1923–1938)', Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University (2003); S. Çağaptay, 'Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, 3 (May 2004); and Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism*.

19 TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi Devre IV, İctima 3, 14 June 1934, vol. XXIII (Ankara: TBMM, 1934), p. 141.

20 '1/335 numaralı İskan kanunu layihası ve İskan murakkat encümeni mazbatası', in TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, vol. XXIII, p. 8.



Settlement Law, the regime forcibly moved thousands of individuals within Turkey. However, after the birth of democracy in post-Second World War Turkey, the government rescinded the articles allowing forced resettlement of people, and permitted some resettled people to return to their original homes. Turkey was entering a new era, in which migration policies that had been possible in a one-party authoritarian state were no longer viable.

Non-Muslim communities also suffered from forced internal migration during the early decades of the Turkish Republic. The first case was the displacement of the small Jewish community of Thrace to Istanbul. In June 1934, roughly around the time the Settlement Law was adopted, local bands of youths committed acts of violence against Jewish individuals and properties. The roots of what has come to be known as the ‘Thrace incidents (*Trakya olayları*)’ remain contested. Some accounts say that renegade groups outside the control of the central government instigated the attacks, while others say they were a state response to national security considerations about an aggressive, expansionist Italy. These latter accounts argue that the state authorities wanted to make sure that a militarily vulnerable area did not hold a minority population that they suspected might collaborate with the enemy. Some sources have also claimed that the incidents were very much part of the government’s efforts in the 1930s to create a homogeneous Turkish nation. As a result of this violence, the Jewish population in Thrace felt increasingly insecure, and the majority precipitately sold their properties and moved to Istanbul.

Another important development that provoked the displacement of non-Muslims, in particular the Jewish community, was the November 1942 Law on the Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi Kanunu*). This law claimed to combat all war profiteering by businesses in Turkey. But in its application it differentiated between Muslim and non-Muslim taxpayers, and levied far heavier taxes on non-Muslims, leading to the destruction of the remaining non-Muslim merchant class in Turkey. Those who failed to pay their taxes by the February 1943 deadline were sent to labour camps in eastern Anatolia. All but a few of the 6,000–8,000 people who were sent to labour camps were non-Muslims, especially Jews. Muslim taxpayers who failed to pay in full received lighter sentences.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence of *Varlık Vergisi* and the labour camps, the lives and finances of many non-Muslim families were ruined. Faik Ökte, who was the bureaucrat responsible for the tax collection, himself called the tax law and

21 See R. Akar, *Aşkale yolcuları* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1999), p. 109 and F. Ökte, *Varlık vergisi faciası* (Istanbul: Nebioğlu Yayınları, 1951), p. 157, who gives the much lower figure of 1,400.

its implementation a complete disaster, and later assumed a very apologetic stance towards the issue. This experience of discrimination and internment was an important factor in the exodus of much of the Jewish population to Israel during 1948 and 1949.<sup>22</sup>

The infamous September 1955 events engendered the flight of many of the remaining Greeks in Istanbul. Against a background of deteriorating Greek–Turkish relations, on 6–7 September 1955 mobs rampaged through the streets of Istanbul, wrecking Greek businesses and homes, as well as those of Armenians, Jews and other non-Muslims. The initial reason for this outbreak of violence was the news of a bomb that had exploded at the Atatürk museum in Thessaloniki, Greece. Subsequently, it was discovered that the bomb had actually been planted by a Turkish agent. The Turkish government failed to prevent and quell the mob violence, and as a result large numbers of Greeks left Istanbul over the next decade, their number declining from about 100,000 in 1960 to about 7,000 in 1978.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in retribution for the repression of Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus and the Greek government support for it, the Turkish government abrogated a 1930 agreement allowing residence rights for Greek nationals in Turkey. This event precipitated the departure of more of the Greeks of Istanbul, as many of them had previously continued to hold Greek citizenship while residing there. In the following decades, problematic Greek–Turkish relations and the attraction of EU citizenship would lead to further emigration, reducing the Greek community in Turkey to about 1,500 in recent times.<sup>24</sup>

There was another wave of primarily Jewish emigration during the 1970s and 1980s, driven more by economic and social factors than state oppression. Today, there is a large community of Turkish Jews in Israel. Many of them have maintained Turkish citizenship. Although there is extensive travel between Israel and Turkey and some members of the Turkish Jewish community maintain homes in both countries simultaneously, the size of the Jewish community in Turkey today is estimated at a mere 25,000. At the time of the 1927 census, there had been more than 80,000 Jews, and in 1945 their number

22 R. Bali, *Cumhuriyet yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Aliya, bir toplu göçün öyküsü (1946–1949)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2003).

23 A. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek–Turkish relations* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983), p. 294. Dündar, *Türkiye nüfus sayımlarında azınlıklar*, p. 124, on the other hand, on the basis of census results, puts the figure for Greek speakers in Turkey in 1960 and 1955 at almost 147,000 and 138,000 respectively.

24 B. Oran, *Türkiye’de azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Lozan, iç mevzuat, içtihat, uygulama* (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2004), p. 39.

was still above 60,000.<sup>25</sup> The Armenian community, too, continued to shrink due to emigration. The Armenian population in Turkey is estimated to be around 55,000–60,000 today.<sup>26</sup>

### Forced migration and internal displacement in the Kurdish conflict

In spite of the transition from an authoritarian one-party political system to a relatively democratic and pluralist one, the Turkish state continued to be intolerant of ethnic and cultural diversity throughout the second half of the twentieth century. State practices of forced migration reminiscent of those in the 1930s returned in a completely different context in the 1980s and 1990s. The nation-building policies of the Turkish state had been relatively successful, at least on the surface, until the beginning of the 1984 separatist uprising led by the Partiyi Karkara Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK) in the Kurdish-populated provinces of the south-east. The reality of a separate Kurdish identity reasserted itself in opposition to the official state position, that Kurds were not an ethnically distinct group of people. The inability of the Turkish state and society to adjust to the challenge posed by the Kurds aggravated the violence between Turkish security forces and the PKK. The logistical and political support that the PKK received from various neighbouring and European governments further complicated the security situation in the south-east of Turkey. As a result of the violence and insecurity, an ever-growing number of Kurds, especially from rural areas, began to migrate to urban centres, both in the south-east and in other parts of Turkey. At first, the displaced people were villagers who were either threatened by the PKK or caught in the crossfire between the PKK and security forces. However, in the mid-1990s the Turkish security forces adopted a policy of forcibly evacuating villages to deny logistical support to the PKK. These evacuations were based on a governmental decree dating from July 1987 that established a state of emergency in thirteen provinces in east and south-east Turkey. According to government sources, 378,000 people had been forced to leave their villages by 1997, but various non-governmental organisations estimate that the number was much higher, between 1 and 4 million.<sup>27</sup>

25 For census results see appendices in Dündar, *Türkiye nüfus sayımlarında azınlıklar*.

26 Oran, *Türkiye'de azınlıklar*, p. 38.

27 For a discussion of the numbers involved see *The Problem of Internal Displacement in Turkey: Assessment and Policy Proposals* (Istanbul: TESEV, 2005), p. 8. This report can be reached at [www.tesev.org.tr/etkinlik/yerinden\\_edilme.php](http://www.tesev.org.tr/etkinlik/yerinden_edilme.php).

This internal displacement and the multitude of problems that it caused provoked bitter criticism of the Turkish government, both in and outside the country. The failure of the government to compensate the victims of forced evacuation led to numerous judgments against Turkey at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).<sup>28</sup> Clearly, the circumstances of the 1990s were very different from those of the 1930s. Human rights and civil liberties had become international norms, and as a result the Turkish state could not ignore the problems caused by its policies. Furthermore, in an environment where competitive elections were regularly held, political parties could not remain aloof from the problem indefinitely. Hence, in the face of growing public disenchantment the Turkish Grand National Assembly formed a special commission in 1997 to investigate the problem of forced migration. The parliament published its report in 1998 and called for arrangements for the villagers to return to their homes and for their compensation.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, in contrast to the situation under the one-party system in the 1930s, by the 1990s there was a growing civil society movement in Turkey that took an interest in the problems associated with forced migration. Numerous Turkish human rights and legal non-governmental organisations became involved, ran campaigns to mobilise public attention and sought solutions to the problem. The Human Rights Association of Turkey (İnsan Hakları Derneği, İHD) has been particularly vocal about this issue. Its annual reports have regularly mentioned the issue of forced migration, and it has attracted considerable international attention to the problem. The İHD was particularly effective in helping and assisting victims in taking their cases to the ECHR. In the context of Turkish aspirations to EU membership, the ECHR's rulings against Turkey have also been a factor in shaping state policies. One of the long series of reform packages introduced by the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP) government in its effort to meet the Copenhagen political criteria included a July 2004 law aiming to compensate victims of terrorism and the struggle against terrorism.<sup>30</sup> The same law was supposed to create the circumstances for the return of the internally displaced

28 For a detailed analysis of the legal aspect of the problem especially from a human rights point of view see A. B. Çelik, 'Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds', *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, 3 (August 2005).

29 'Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da boşaltılan yerleşim birimleri nedeniyle göç eden yurttaşlarımızın sorunları araştırılarak alınması gereken tedbirlerin tespit edilmesi amacıyla kurulan meclis araştırması komisyon raporu (10/25)' in *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Session 20, vol. 53, legislative year 3, 96th meeting, 2 June 1998.

30 Law No. 5233, 'Terör ve terörle mücadelede doğan zararların karşılanması hakkında kanun', 17 July 2004.

to their homes. However, the record of its implementation has been mixed. The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) noted in a recent report that according to government statistics, about 125,000 people have returned to their villages, but many displaced people continue to face numerous obstacles in realising their return.<sup>31</sup>

### Immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in the Turkish Republic

The Turkish state's nation-building project has also deeply marked its immigration and asylum policies. To this day, the legal basis for asylum and immigration remains the Settlement Law of 1934. According to this law, only persons of 'Turkish ethnic descent and Turkish culture' ('Türk soyu ve kültürü') can immigrate, settle in Turkey and eventually receive Turkish citizenship. The law provides no clear criteria for defining Turkish ethnicity and culture. Instead, it empowered the council of ministers to decide which groups abroad qualified as belonging to Turkish ethnicity and culture. According to their decisions, Turkish-speaking communities in the Balkans, and to a lesser extent in the Caucasus and Central Asia, came within the scope of this law. Accordingly, many Albanians, Bosnians, Circassians, Georgians, Pomaks and Tatars benefited from its provisions. So did a small number of immigrants who came from Central Asia. In total, more than 1.6 million immigrants settled in Turkey between the establishment of the Republic and the mid-1990s. The state actively encouraged immigration into Turkey and provided resources for immigrants until the early 1970s. It maintained a specialised institution that was primarily responsible for their settlement and integration.

Immigration flows also included refugees seeking asylum in Turkey before and during the Second World War. The onset of the Nazi regime in Germany in 1933 led to a small influx of German-speaking refugees to Turkey. Among them were university professors, scientists, artists and philosophers, who left a major imprint on Turkish arts and sciences, and especially on Turkish universities. However, this group was not admitted to Turkey on the basis of any legal arrangement, but rather as a result of a deal brokered with the encouragement of Kemal Atatürk. A large number of these intellectuals were Jewish. However, Turkey's policy toward Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany was mixed. On the one hand, Turkey allowed some Jews from German-occupied Europe to pass

<sup>31</sup> *The Problem of Internal Displacement in Turkey.*

through it on the way to Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Yet at the same time, Turkish authorities would not always allow ships carrying Jewish refugees bound for Palestine to berth in Turkish ports. This practice led to the *Struma* incident in February 1942. The *Struma* had arrived in Istanbul with its load of about 770 refugees in December 1941, after breaking down in the Black Sea. When neither the Turkish nor the British government would accept the refugees, the ship was towed back to the Black Sea and left adrift. It was subsequently torpedoed, probably by a Soviet submarine, causing the death of all on board except one person.<sup>33</sup> During the course of the Second World War many people from the German-occupied Balkans also sought refuge in Turkey. They included Bulgarians, Greeks (especially from Greek islands on the Aegean) and Italians from the Dodecanese islands. There are no public records available for their number, but according one source there were approximately 67,000 internees and refugees in Turkey at the end of the war.<sup>34</sup> However, the majority of these people returned to their countries after the war ended, except for those who fulfilled the conditions set by the Settlement Law.

Although Turkey's refugee policy changed significantly after the Second World War, it nevertheless remained state policy to refuse immigrants who were not of 'Turkish descent or culture'. In this period, the Cold War became a determining factor of Turkish policy. Turkey had become firmly embedded in the Western Bloc, so it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of the refugees came from the Soviet Bloc. In close cooperation with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Turkey received refugees from communist countries in Europe, including the Soviet Union. Such refugees, during their stay in Turkey, enjoyed all the rights provided for in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, only a very small number were allowed to stay on in Turkey, often as a result of marriages with Turkish nationals. The others moved on to settle in the United States, Canada and other countries.

Turkey also experienced mass influxes of refugees in 1952, 1988, 1989 and 1991. Those in 1952 and 1989 involved Turks and Pomaks from Bulgaria, who were permitted to stay and settle in Turkey. On both occasions, the

32 S. J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), p. 256, puts the number at around 100,000. R. Bali, *Devlet'in Yahudileri ve 'öteki' Yahudi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004), p. 171 footnote 18, disagrees and argues that the numbers were more like 15,000–17,000.

33 R. Bali, *Cumhuriyet yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme serüveni (1923–1945)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), pp. 342–56.

34 J. Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 244.

government adopted special policies to facilitate their integration into mainstream Turkish society. In contrast, the 1988 and 1991 waves of migration involved Kurdish refugees. The Turkish state viewed these refugees as potential threats to Turkish national security, and, in the latter case, tried either to resettle them or to persuade the international community to create a 'safe haven' in northern Iraq to ensure their speedy return. In the case of the estimated 20,000–25,000 Bosnian Muslim refugees who came to Turkey between 1992 and 1995, the government introduced a generous 'temporary asylum' policy that gave these refugees access to education, employment and health facilities falling just short of proper integration. An overwhelming majority of these refugees subsequently returned home. A similar policy was adopted for the approximately 17,000 Kosovar refugees who fled to Turkey in 1999.

Turkey's policy towards asylum-seekers and refugees coming from countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East has also been determined by the Settlement Law of 1934. The revolution in Iran and the general instability in the Middle East, in parts of Africa and South Asia, led to an increase in the number of asylum-seekers from these regions starting from the early 1980s. For a time, the government allowed the UNHCR considerable leeway in accepting refugees from these regions as long as these asylum-seekers would later be identified and resettled out of Turkey. However, the growth in the number of illegal entries into Turkey and in the number of rejected asylum-seekers stranded there led the government to tighten its policy. In 1994, the government introduced tough new regulations to govern asylum. This step led to an increase in the number of deportations and attracted criticism from refugee advocacy and human rights circles. Subsequently, the UNHCR and Turkey succeeded in developing a new system of asylum that today handles approximately 4,000–4,500 applications a year.<sup>35</sup> Government officials expect that those who are not recognised as refugees will leave the country, and those that are will be resettled out of Turkey. This practice is based on the manner in which Turkey acceded to the central international legal instrument on refugees, the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This 'geographical limitation' has been a central characteristic of Turkey's asylum policies. In practice it has meant that Turkey is under no legal obligation to grant refugee status to asylum-seekers coming from outside of Europe. This policy is very closely associated with the manner in which the Turkish state has defined Turkish national identity.

35 K. Kirişçi, 'Turkey: Political Dimension of Migration', in P. Fargues (ed.), *Mediterranean Migration Report 2005* (Florence: CARIM, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 351.

The authoritarian and repressive policies of the Turkish state have also forced some Turkish nationals, especially Kurds, to seek asylum, mostly in West European countries, at various times. Political disturbances in the 1970s, followed by the military intervention in 1980, led many Kurds and leftist activists to flee Turkey. The adoption of a constitution in 1983 and return to civilian rule did not change this trend. Instead, the growth of ethnic conflict in east and south-east Turkey, coupled with human rights violations by the state, led to an increase in asylum applications by Turkish refugees in Europe. Between 1981 and 2005, approximately 650,000 Turkish nationals sought asylum in West European countries.<sup>36</sup> This number included those who were abusing this channel because other ways of migrating to Europe remained closed. Nevertheless, most of the asylum-seekers were allowed to stay in Europe. In recent years the number of asylum applications from Turkey has fallen, and rejected asylum-seekers have been returning to Turkey. Tighter asylum policies adopted by European governments play a role in this shift, as does the decrease in human rights violations that has resulted from the many reforms that Turkey has adopted.

### Internal economic migration and urbanisation

Economically driven internal migration has had a profound impact on the Turkish state, society and politics. This sort of migration first started in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It coincided with a period when Turkey was transforming itself from a one-party authoritarian political system with a state-controlled economy to a parliamentary democracy with a more liberal market economy. The Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party, DP) broke the hold of the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party, RPP) on politics in 1950. The DP represented the interests of rural Turkey and the provincial elite. The new government softened the control of the 'centre' over the economy and society. The *étatisme* of the RPP era was replaced by an economic policy that encouraged private entrepreneurship and opened up the country to foreign investment. The new government also embarked upon major infrastructural projects, especially the construction of highways and dams.

The annual rate of population growth, which had remained relatively low in the 1930s and 1940s, began to increase significantly in the 1950s. This growth

<sup>36</sup> Compiled from A. İçduygu, 'Turkey: demographic and economic dimension of migration', in *ibid.*, p. 330; and UNHCR *The State of the World's Refugees: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Annex 10, p. 325.



started at a time when Turkey's population was still overwhelmingly rural. The demographic transition was critical for Turkey's transformation and for emerging migration patterns.<sup>37</sup> Initially, internal migration typically involved a move from rural areas towards urban centres. This trend continued until the late 1960s, when the first signs of a growth in migration from smaller provincial towns to larger cities began to appear.<sup>38</sup> By the 1980–5 period more than half of internal migration in Turkey took place between urban centres, and during the 1985–90 period this proportion had increased to more than 60 per cent.<sup>39</sup> The population of Turkey had become increasingly urbanised over the decades, and internal migration played an important role in this process.

The mechanisation of the agricultural sector, especially the introduction of tractors and fertilisers, is cited as a major factor driving a growing number of people off the land.<sup>40</sup> The extensive construction of road networks and improvements in land transportation and the growth of the construction and manufacturing activities in large cities were the other factors that pulled people into urban centres. One important consequence of internal migration was the differentiation that it engendered in levels of development across the country.<sup>41</sup> Today, this effect is reflected in the uneven distribution of income between regions that have traditionally received migration, by and large the western parts of the country, and migrant-sending regions such as the eastern Black Sea coast and south-east Turkey.

Internal migration has contributed to a profound transformation of Turkey in every sense of the word. The physical appearances of many urban centres have changed with the impact of migration. Starting from the early 1950s, illegal squatter housing (*gecekondu*) became a feature of major Turkish urban centres.<sup>42</sup> *Gecekondu*s affected the physical appearances of cities and the

37 C. Behar et al., *Turkey's Window of Opportunity: Demographic Transition Process and its Consequences* (Istanbul: Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, 1999).

38 E. Tümertekin, *Türkiye'de iç göçler / Internal Migration in Turkey* (Istanbul: Publications of Istanbul University, No. 1371, 1968); E. Tümertekin, 'Türkiye'de kademeli göçler', *Sosyal Antropoloji ve Etnoloji Bölümü Dergisi* 1 (Istanbul, 1971).

39 A. Gedik, 'Internal Migration in Turkey, 1965–1985: Test of some Conflicting Findings in the Literature', *Working Papers in Demography* 66 (Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Social Sciences, 1996), p. 27; and see table 5 in M. Demirci and B. Sunar, 'Nüfus sayımları ile derlenen iç göç bilgisinin değerlendirilmesi', in A. İçduygu, İ. Sirkeci and İ. Aydıngün (eds.), *Türkiye'de iç göç* (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, January 1998), p. 138.

40 İ. Tekeli, *Kırda ve kentte dönüşüm süreci: bağımlı kentleşme* (Ankara: Mimarlar Odası, 1997).

41 R. Keleş, 'The effects of external migration on regional development in Turkey', in R. Hudson and J. Lewis (eds.), *Uneven Development in Southern Europe* (New York: Methuens Co., 1985).

42 *Gecekondu* literally means 'constructed overnight' before authorities became aware of the building in time to be able prevent its completion.

cultural, economic and social lives of urban centres. The emergence of *gecekondu* neighbourhoods of migrants influenced political party behaviour and shaped the outcome of elections. The RPP was initially successful in mobilising these neighbourhoods in the 1970s, but this situation began to change in the 1980s with the rise of Islam-identified parties such as Refah (Welfare), Saadet (Felicity) and Adalet ve Kalkınma (Justice and Development), which benefited from the political preferences of voters in these migrant-dominated neighbourhoods.

The city of Istanbul stands as a monument to the manner in which migration has shaped the cultural, economic, social and political appearance of an urban centre.<sup>43</sup> Its official population grew from about 860,500 in 1945 to almost 10 million in 2000. An important proportion of this growth is attributed to migration. During the period between 1975 and 1990 the city's population grew by more than 1.2 million as a result of the influx of new migrants.<sup>44</sup> The city has physically expanded to a hinterland that until the 1970s had remained empty countryside. Whole neighbourhoods sprang up to accommodate the waves of new arrivals and their offspring. The municipality had to be reorganised, while the centre of gravity in local government shifted from the social democratic RPP to the conservative Islamist Refah and its milder successor, the AKP. Migration also played an important role in the rise of a number of other Turkish cities as new centres of industry and commerce in Anatolia.

### Labour migration to Europe

Demographic factors linked to Turkey's transformation played a significant role in yet another form of migration: labour migration to Western Europe starting in the early 1960s. This movement was followed by further waves of migration to the Middle East and eventually to the Russian Federation and Central Asian Turkic republics, such as Azerbaijan. According to Turkish government statistics, in 2003 there were over 3.5 million Turkish citizens living abroad. A million or so Turkish immigrants have become naturalised in their respective countries of residence. Of the Turks living abroad, almost 85 per cent, or 3 million, reside in European countries, and 53 per cent of these, almost 2 million people, live in Germany. The remaining 15 per cent are spread

43 See for example S. Erder, *İstanbul'a bir kent kondu: Ümraniye* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996); Ç. Keyder (ed.), *Istanbul between the Global and the Local* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); and F. Özbay, 'Migration and Intra-provincial Movements in Istanbul between 1985–1990', *Boğaziçi Journal – Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies* 11, 1–2 (1997).

44 Calculated from table 4 in Demirci and Sunar, 'Nüfus sayımları ile derlenen iç göç bilgisinin değerlendirilmesi', p. 136.

throughout numerous countries within the Russian Federation and Middle East, with about 8 per cent of them, just over 300,000, living in Australia, Canada and the United States.<sup>45</sup>

A number of factors influenced the emigration of Turkish nationals to Europe. First, the introduction of a liberal constitution in 1960 brought the freedom to travel. Previously, travel abroad had been a complicated and strictly regulated process. Second, after the experience of the market economy in the 1950s, there was an effort to bring the state back into the economy. In that context, the Turkish government adopted its First Five Year-Development Plan in 1962. The plan actually envisaged the 'export of labour' as a goal. The idea was to relieve the pressure on employment at home and also to use the 'export of labour' as a means for the acquisition of technical skills that could subsequently be used for Turkey's industrialisation. The remittances that workers would send from abroad were also envisaged as a source of foreign currency, of which the country suffered a shortage. A third factor was the economic boom and the shortage of low-skilled labour in West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe.

These factors led to the signing of bilateral agreements with West Germany in September 1961, Austria in May 1964, Belgium in July 1964, The Netherlands in August 1964, France in April 1965 and Sweden in March 1967. These agreements institutionalised and expanded the extent of the movement of labour from Turkey. They incorporated the notion that this movement would be of a temporary nature, leading to the notion of the *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers). However, in reality, the *Gastarbeiter* failed to return to Turkey.

Furthermore, the economic downturn in Western Europe following the oil crisis of 1973 culminated in the decision by European governments to stop importing labour from Turkey and other countries. The Turkish 'guest workers' were increasingly becoming immigrants as they brought their families to their host countries, or married individuals brought out from Turkey. The economic downturn in Europe led to growing unemployment among immigrants in general and Turks in particular. Unemployment, the burden created by migration on social security, and growing cultural clashes engendered the rise of anti-immigrant feelings in many European host societies. What had started as a policy to support Western Europe's economic growth and prosperity was increasingly perceived as a policy that threatened societal cohesion, especially in Western European countries. Government policies and politics

45 For the complete figures see table 1 in İçduygu, 'Turkey', p. 359.

within host countries felt the influence of these reactions to immigrants and immigration.

In West Germany, for example, the Social Democrats tried to develop multicultural policies advocating toleration towards immigrants as early as the late 1970s, but they were overwhelmed by Christian Democrat Party's rhetoric, which demanded the expulsion of immigrants. In June 1981, fifteen German professors published the 'Heidelberg Manifesto' warning that the goal of achieving a multicultural society was causing the 'mongrelisation' of the German language and culture.<sup>46</sup> The declaration lent greater legitimacy to anti-immigrant politics. Such sentiments played an important role in the Christian Democrats' rise to power and their adoption of policies encouraging the return of 'guest workers'. The German government's adoption of such incentives in 1983 led a quarter of a million of Turkish migrants to return to Turkey.<sup>47</sup> Since then, although its annual numbers have fallen, return migration has continued and an increasing number of migrants have moved back and forth. The growth in xenophobia and racism against Turks was an additional incentive for return, especially when Turks actually began to experience racist violence in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the size of the Turkish community in Western Europe continued to grow.

The presence of more than 3.5 million Turks has deeply marked European politics and social life. Many in Europe have highlighted the failure of Turkish immigrants to integrate into their host societies. It is true that Turkish immigrants experience high levels of unemployment and many Turkish immigrant youth perform poorly at school. Arranged marriages affect public perception of Turkish immigrants, as does the arrival of 'imported' brides and grooms and their offspring into host communities. In parallel to the developments in Turkey, religion came to play an increasingly prominent role in the associational lives of many Turkish migrants. The Diyanet (Directorate of Religious Affairs), the Turkish national bureaucracy of religious affairs, which had previously dominated the religious lives of immigrant communities, was increasingly challenged by Milli Görüş (National View), an immigrant organisation with very close ties to political Islam in Turkey. For a long time Turkish immigrant civil society was organised very much around events and politics in Turkey rather than those of host communities. This situation is changing, as Turkish immigrants are becoming increasingly involved in local and national

46 P. O'Brien, *Beyond the Swastika* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 78.

47 N. Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen göç: konuk işçilikten ulus-ötesi yurttaşlığa* (Istanbul: Publications of Istanbul Bilgi University, 2002), p. 59.

politics in the countries where they live. However, political and cultural barriers continue to limit their access to elected office.

The problems of integration that Turkish immigrants face are complicated and diverse.<sup>48</sup> First, while there are many unemployed and poorly integrated Turkish immigrants in Europe, there are also Turkish immigrants who have fared well in their host countries, including Turkish businessmen who actually employ locals and other immigrants in their businesses.<sup>49</sup> Some of these immigrants have actually become major public figures and politicians at the local and national as well as at the European Parliament level. Furthermore, integration is a two-way process. The absence of an environment that can be of assistance to addressing the challenges that immigrants face aggravates the problem of integration. Many European governments until recently failed to acknowledge that they had become immigration countries. Many also shied from adopting active policies to support the integration of immigrants. Anti-immigrant politics and racism remain major challenges. Additionally, the now decades-old presence of immigrants is impacting on the culture of immigrants themselves as well as their host societies. A certain degree of cultural blending and interaction in the positive sense of the word does occur.

In the mean time, the presence of a large Turkish immigrant community in Europe affects relations between the EU and Turkey. This dynamic has become increasingly conspicuous over the last few years. A critical turning point was the decision of the European Council's Copenhagen summit in December 2002 to review Turkey's progress in meeting the Copenhagen political criteria and accordingly start accession negotiations 'without delay'. Subsequently, opponents of Turkish membership in Europe steadily increased their objections to the prospects of Turkish membership. The pitch of these objections reached an especially high level during the run-up to the European Council summit in December 2004 and the Council of General Affairs and External Relations meeting in October 2005, when the decision to start accession negotiations with Turkey was finally taken.

Opponents of Turkish membership allege that as membership will allow Turkish nationals to enjoy the right to 'free movement of labour and persons', millions of Turks will migrate to EU countries in search of jobs. They argue that

48 See R. Erzan and K. Kirişçi (eds.), 'Determinants of Immigration and Integration of Turkish Immigrants in the European Union', *Turkish Studies*, Special Issue, 7, 1 (March 2006).

49 Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen göç*; Ayhan Kaya and Ferhat Kentel, *Euro Turks: A Bridge or a Breach between Turkey and the European Union?* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005).

this influx will increase unemployment and worsen the cultural clash between Turks and local Europeans. They attribute the integration problems that many Turkish immigrants experience to fundamental cultural and religious differences, and charge that these differences reinforce their broader argument that Turkey is not fundamentally 'European' and should not become a member of the EU. Instead, they have argued that Turkey should be extended an undefined 'privileged relationship' with the EU. These arguments have resonated with public opinion in Europe. Yet, regardless of the course of the relations between Turkey and the EU, it is quite likely that Turkish migration to Europe and elsewhere will continue.<sup>50</sup> Some of that migration will be similar to the previous waves of economic migrants seeking unskilled jobs. It is also likely that there will be a growing number of professionals who will move abroad for short- or long-term purposes. Many European politicians also recognise that European demographic trends point to falling populations in most EU member countries, and that Europe will need Turkish immigrants in order to prosper.

### Migration and pluralism in Turkey today

One overlooked aspect of Turkey's journey towards the EU is that Turkey itself is becoming a country of immigration. The economic and political transformation in Turkey and in the region has profoundly altered the nature of immigration into Turkey during the last two decades. The number of migrants from traditional sources such as the Balkans has dropped to a trickle. Their places are taken by an increasing number of Chechens, Azeris, Turkmens and other 'Turkic' peoples, as well as the nationals of Armenia, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Iran.<sup>51</sup> While some of these groups would have enjoyed automatic immigrant status in the past, they now remain in a grey zone between legality and illegality. After entering Turkey as tourists or illegally, they engage in economic activities ranging from petty trade to household work and prostitution, and often overstay their visas.<sup>52</sup> Among

50 For an analysis of future immigration scenarios from Turkey towards the EU see R. Erzan, U. Kuzubaş and N. Yıldız, 'Immigration Scenarios: Turkey-EU', *Turkish Studies*, Special Issue, 7, 1 (March 2006).

51 For an assessment of the trends in movements of people into Turkey see K. Kirişçi, 'A Friendlier Schengen Visa System as a Tool of "Soft Power": The Experience of Turkey', *European Journal of Migration and Law* 7, 4 (2005).

52 For studies of illegal migration and trafficking into Turkey see Ahmet İçduygu, *Irregular Migration in Turkey* (Geneva: IOM, 2003) and S. Erder and S. Kaska, *Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Women: The Case of Turkey* (Geneva: IOM, 2003).

these groups, the case of the Christian Gagauz Turks from Moldavia is particularly interesting. They were denied entry to Turkey as immigrants in the 1930s because of their religion. Today large numbers of Moldavian women work as maids in middle-class homes in Istanbul and other cities. The Turkish state, partly to regularise their status and partly in the context of EU reforms, has adopted new legislation that allows such people to obtain proper work and residence permits. Turkey also sees a growing number of students coming from various countries, especially from the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. Furthermore, an increasing number of European Union citizens engaged in professional activities are settling in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul, and European retirees are living in some of the Mediterranean resorts. This movement constitutes a relatively new phenomenon in terms of immigration into Turkey. The number of such European migrants is estimated to be around 100,000–120,000.<sup>53</sup>

In recent years Turkey has also seen a form of irregular transit migration involving nationals of neighbouring countries such as Iraq and Iran as well as nationals from more distant countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. These migrants pay large fees to smugglers who transport them into Western European countries. It is very difficult to estimate the numbers of such irregular transit migrants in Turkey, and figures that are cited are invariably speculative. However, according to government statistics more than 477,000 such persons were apprehended between 1995 and 2004 (June) for violating Turkish regulations on visas and immigration.<sup>54</sup>

As a result of these waves of migration Turks have been getting accustomed to living with foreigners, and accepting as Turkish citizens people who would not easily fit the older, narrower definition of a 'Turk'. Sport is an area where this phenomenon manifests itself most conspicuously. Currently there are a large number of foreigners active and visible in various branches of sport in Turkey. Among them are naturalised Turks of foreign descent. Turkish society is becoming accustomed to seeing non-Turkish-sounding names on the rosters of Turkish national teams. For example, of these athletes, Elvan Abeylegesse, who holds the world record in the 5,000-metre race, was born in Ethiopia and represented Turkey at the Olympic Games in Athens. The Turkish national volleyball team, which had a very successful European championship competition in 2004, included a Russian immigrant, Nathalie Hanikoğlu. The

53 B. Kaiser and A. İçduygu, 'Türkiye'deki Avrupa Birliği Vatandaşları', in A. Kaya and T. Tarhanlı (eds.), *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları* (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2005).

54 For these figures see Kirişçi, 'Turkey'.

presence of such migration is slowly expanding the definition of the Turkish national community.

### Conclusion

Migration has played a centrally important role in shaping both Turkish society and the policies of the Turkish state. In the decades after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the state employed migration policies for nation-building purposes, often committing considerable human rights violations in the process. After the Second World War, the situation began to change. Demographic factors, democratisation and economic development brought about massive internal migration from rural to urban centres. The state itself changed, losing its ability to control and manipulate migration. In the early 1960s, it attempted to regain control by incorporating labour migration into its economic development plans. In the mean time, internal migration transformed society and politics in Turkey. It made Turkey's politics more pluralist and diverse, putting an end to the domination of the state by the Republican elite of the 1930s. The strict secularism of the state was significantly diluted with the emergence of a new bureaucratic, economic and political elite. In the 1980s and 1990s, national security policies caused the internal displacement of many Kurds. Although this forced migration bore some resemblance to the resettlement policies of the 1930s, this time the circumstances were very different. In the ensuing years, the transformations of civil society, democratic pressure and external factors forced the state to address the problems of the internally displaced. The politics of human rights has also led the state to cooperate with civil society and international organisations in addressing the issue of asylum as well as the problems of trafficking and human smuggling.

In recent years, asylum-seekers and migrant workers from neighbouring countries began to enter Turkey in greater numbers. The sheer volume of immigration into Turkey, coupled with the challenges and problems that this immigration is creating, have put pressure on current reformist policies. Furthermore, Turkey's aspirations to EU membership have also affected immigration policies. Turkey is expected to harmonise its policies in the area of immigration with those of the EU. In March 2005 the Turkish government took a major step in that direction when it adopted the Action Plan on Asylum and Migration. This plan envisages major reforms that will replace the current legislation, which is a function of Turkey's nation-building era. The emphasis on 'Turkish descent and culture' in immigration law will be replaced



with policies that are more reflective of contemporary Turkey's pluralism and its relationship with the EU. Some of these policies have already started to change. In September 2006 the government adopted a new Settlement Law replacing that of 1934. This reflects the transformation that the Turkish state and society have experienced since the reform process associated with the EU began. In symbolic terms the new law may be considered an important step in terms of Turkey distancing itself from the excesses of 'nation building'. Yet the fact that formal immigration into Turkey remains restricted to people of 'Turkish descent' suggests that further transformation will be needed before Turkey indeed becomes a 'post-national' state and society. In the mean time, migration is likely to continue to play a significant role in that transformation.<sup>55</sup>

55 The law was published in the *Official Gazette*, no. 26301, 26 September 2006, as Law No. 5543.

## The migration story of Turks in Germany: from the beginning to the end

LEVENT SOYSAL

### The beginning

Like every story, the history of Turkish migration to Germany has a beginning and an end. 1963 marked the beginning as the first Turkish workers left their country for Germany, expecting to work hard, earn money, and then return home to build a good life. The end comes some forty years later, after the turn of the millennium, at a time when Europe is in the process of building a Union and Turkey is negotiating the terms of membership in that Union. This chapter retells that short history, which saw the establishment of Turkish populations in Germany, as well as in the larger geography of Europe, amid much heated debate on migration and culture and integration within and without Europe.

In the official version of migration history, Turkish migration to Europe begins in 1963, with the signing of bilateral agreements with Germany (and various European states), creating what are called the guestworker programmes. The official story is an exercise in statistics, registering who entered and left and keeping account of the difference: the net migration. Across Europe, the protagonist in this migration history is the categorical international migrant worker, primarily taking part in an institutionalised worker exchange. Labour migration occurred between countries at the industrialised centre of Europe (Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland) and the countries at Europe's southern periphery (not only Turkey, but also Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, the former Yugoslavia, Algeria and Morocco), with the movement of workers from the latter to the former, from periphery to the centre. At the same time, moving towards the centre (Britain, France, the Netherlands) were migrants from (former) colonies (India, Pakistan, the Caribbean, Algeria, Suriname, Indonesia).

A photograph published in a newspaper in 1972 provides us with a name and a face, an instance of the personal story of migration. The by-line of the picture identifies the worker as Necati Güven, the 500,000th worker on his

way to his new home and workplace, Germany. In the photograph, we see him walking on the apron between two government officials in dark suits, the Turkish minister of foreign affairs and the German ambassador to Turkey – in his hands, two neatly wrapped gift boxes, given to him for this occasion. Later, the one-millionth worker arriving in Germany would receive a hero's welcome at the airport there, with gifts marking the celebratory tenor of the occasion, and a photo on the cover of the influential German weekly *Der Spiegel*, which over the course of years would publish many panic-ridden stories of social, economic and cultural misfortune concerning migration and migrants.

Necati Güven's passage to Germany is narrated in the news item as a journey in which the migrant leaves his home place (village) and tradition and settles in a foreign place (urban and modern Germany). He is a peasant on the way to becoming a worker, a family man entering the lonely state of singleness, and a rural native on the way to facing a new urban life. In this story, Necati Güven is also on a journey to separation, leaving his home to enter foreignness. A pair of poetic signifiers, *gurbet* and *sıla*, from the customary vocabulary of folk songs and laments of the longing for home, underscores the emotional burden of separation. In the songs and laments, one moves into the vast unknown of the *gurbet* as soon as one leaves the known limits of the *sıla*, usually the village where home is located. This poetic convention also re-maps the worker's home as his country of origin and names his destination as foreignness. Hence, in the persona of Necati Güven, a labour migration story is set to motion, a story with a binary itinerary, between home (Turkey) and foreignness (Germany).

Fictional works from the early period of migration present similar elaborations on separation and exploitation. Bekir Yıldız, an author who himself went to Germany as a worker, wrote *Türkler Almanya'da* (Turks in Germany), a first in the genre, which set the tone for more stories of lost hopes and dire straits to come. In the first academic book on migration, *İşçi Göçü* (Worker Migration), then a highly popular book, Ahmet Aker, an economist at a prominent university, laid out the scientific terms of exploitation. In the film *Bus*, the director Tunç Okan took his migrants on a long journey, only to meet their end – and death – in a nondescript and hostile urban square in the West. More fiction, with such titles as *Abschied vom falschen Paradies* (Farewell to the False Paradise), *Almanya Acı Vatan* (Germany, the Bitter County), *Journey to Hope*, *Yara* (Wound) followed this lead and provided the conventions for understanding the 'human' cost of immigration.

The formal policies of labour recruitment in Europe ended in the mid-1970s (in Germany in 1973). By this time, the foreign-born populations in Europe

had risen substantially.<sup>1</sup> In 1976, there were about 12 million foreigners in the above-mentioned European countries, whereas in 1960 this number had been only 5 million. Germany's share of the number of foreigners in 1976 was close to 4 million, about 6.4 per cent of the total population of the then-Federal Republic.<sup>2</sup>

The end of formal recruitment did not mean the end of migration. Through family reunification programmes and political asylum laws, the influx of foreign populations, including Turks, continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s, although there were occasional drops fuelled by restrictive legislation and promotion of return migration. By 1990, the foreign population in Europe had reached 14.5 million.<sup>3</sup> In Germany in 1994, the number of foreigners amounted to 7 million, 2 million of whom were from Turkey.<sup>4</sup> Since then, the number of foreigners in Germany has remained stable at around 7.3 million.<sup>5</sup>

Today, according to the latest statistics published by the Turkish Ministry of Labour, about 3.5 million Turkish citizens live and work abroad (about 3 million in Europe, the largest contingent in Germany with 1.9 million; 220,000 in the US; 100,000 in Saudi Arabia; and last but not least, 2,424 in Japan).<sup>6</sup>

### Stories of labour, culture and transnationalism

In the annals of scholarly writing, public policy and popular culture, the migration story unfolds in three distinct stages: labour, culture and transnationalism. In the first stage, the categorical migrant is a worker and is male. Like Necati Güven, the 500,000th worker, he is a breadwinner. Having left behind a family, homeland and roots, he is condemned to silence and exploitation, living in *Heims* (homes) in the *Heimats* (homelands) of Others. He is the villager in *Die Bauern von Subay*, a hypothetical town in Anatolia, in Werner Schiffauer's

1 The term 'foreigner' refers to persons belonging to a wide array of differentially organised membership categories, including third-country (non-EU) citizens, European citizens (holding citizenship in a country other than their host country), asylum-seekers, dual citizens, holders of various temporary and permanent residency permits, and illegal aliens. In other words, not all foreigners are equal.

2 Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 22.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

4 Rainer Muenz and Ralf Ulrich, 'Changing patterns of immigration to Germany, 1945–1995,' in Rainer Muenz and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Migrants, Refugees, and Foreign Policy: US and German Policies toward Countries of Origin* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), p. 84, 93.

5 Barbara Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004: German Report on International Migrations,' paper presented at the thirteenth OSCE Economic Forum, Prague, 23–27 May 2005.

6 See the official website of Turkish Ministry of Labour at [www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal\\_bilgiler.htm](http://www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal_bilgiler.htm).

sensitive ethnographic account of migration,<sup>7</sup> and the struggling worker cited in the classics of immigration literature, such as *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*.<sup>8</sup>

In Günter Wallraff's best-selling story of exploitation and survival, *Ganz unten* (in its English reincarnation, *Lowest of the Low*),<sup>9</sup> the immigrant takes the persona of Ali, a labourer at the bottom of the German social ladder. In the story, Ali frequently changes jobs, one day a construction worker, the next a part-time cleaner at McDonald's, and, unsurprisingly, gets exploited. He lives in dire conditions, experiences oppression, and feels discrimination in the lowest, and segregated, echelons of Germany. On the cover of the book, Ali stares at the reader from *Ganz unten*:

[In] torn clothing and a construction hat from Thyssen, the figure of the Turk presents his familiar face: the hair, the eyes, that moustache. Over his shoulder in the not-too-distant background the fumes from an industrial smokestack form a huge cloud that hangs in the air. [The] gaze into the camera lens, at us, is posed, deliberate, accusatory.<sup>10</sup>

Ali's picture and story convey a starkly different impression from the solemn images of absence inscribed into the migrant photos on the artful pages of *A Seventh Man*.<sup>11</sup> There, John Berger's lyrical gaze marks the migrant in disturbing absences of speech and gesture. The migrant is not heard and seen, remaining invisible beyond walls that separate him from European imagination. In Wallraff's story, the migrant enters the world of German economy and imagination. The Turkish *Gastarbeiter* now has a face, dark hair, dark eyes, moustache, as well as a place, at the bottom, and he speaks as a member of the dispossessed and underprivileged. The story of Ali identifies a presence, reconfigures statistical evidence as experiential narrative, and accords a blueprint for the habitual stories of Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, *ganz unten* and with nowhere to go.<sup>12</sup>

7 Werner Schiffauer, *Die Bauern von Subay: das Leben in einem türkischen Dorf* (Stuttgart: Kleff-Cotta, 1987); Werner Schiffauer, *Die Migranten aus Subay: Türken in Deutschland, eine Ethnographie* (Stuttgart: Kleff-Cotta, 1991).

8 Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

9 Günter Wallraff, *Ganz unten* (Cologne: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1985).

10 Arlene Akiko Teraoka, 'Talking "Turk": On Narrative Strategies and Cultural Stereotypes', *New German Critique* 46 (1989).

11 John Berger, *A Seventh Man: A Book of Images and Words about the Experience of Migrant Workers in Europe* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1975).

12 Wallraff's book was not a first in its genre, nor is Wallraff the most prolific writer of this genre. For a critical analysis of the realist ethnographies of Turkish workers in Germany, see Arlene Akiko Teraoka, 'Turks as subjects: the ethnographic novels of Paul

In the two decades following the end of labour recruitment, the foreigners in Europe have been solidly ‘incorporated’ into the available legal, political, economic and social structures and institutions in their countries of residence.<sup>13</sup> They have become part of the labour and investment markets, education and welfare systems, and policy discourses and regimes. They have attained and exercised as foreigners rights and privileges that are conventionally reserved to national citizens. They have been extensively involved in public life through associational activity, union membership, party politics, electoral practices, and arts and literary production. They also have been part of existing regimes of income inequity, social differentiation, and ethnic and racial discrimination. In short, the foreigners have become subjects in a complex terrain of exclusions and inclusions, contention and accommodation, and disenfranchisement and membership.

As the mid-1980s approached, Europe entered the world of ‘multiculturalism’ and the predominant mode of thinking about migration became centred on culture and identity. Max Frisch’s legendary expression best summed up the turn of thought: ‘Man hat Arbeitskraefte gerufen und es kommen Menschen’ (We called for labour and human beings came). With cultural change, the *Gastarbeiter* was re-signified as a *person*, a total being with feelings and culture – not simply a worker and no longer a guest. The protagonist of the story became the Turk (the Other), whose identity was analysed *vis-à-vis* the German (the native) – within the conventions of cultural otherness and difference. Labour statistics no longer dominated the migration texts, but instead attributed credence to identity stories.

In the same period, policy debates moved away from the economics and logistics of labour importation and focused on nebulously defined integration and border controls. While integration involves the ‘adjustment’ of those who are already in the country, border controls regressively focus on limiting further immigration into the nation-states that comprise Europe. The integration policies, if they exist, reify supposed ‘integration problems’, which are never defined but circularly deployed as proof for the need to integrate migrants

Geiersbach’, in E. Valentine Daniel and Jeffrey M. Peck (eds.), *Culture and Contexture: Essays in Anthropology and Literary Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> In *Limits of Citizenship*, Nuhoglu Soysal defines incorporation as ‘a process whereby a guestworker population becomes a part of the polity of the host country’, independently of the degree of the individual migrant’s adaptation ‘to the life patterns of the host society’ (p. 30). In this sense, incorporation is different from integration and assimilation – the other two terms widely used in immigration debates and research. Furthermore, the incorporation of migrants is primarily dependent on host country structures and institutions and world-level universalistic discourses of personhood and human rights – not to ‘home’ country culture and traditions, as commonly asserted.

to their new society – seasoned with occasional statistics about the number of German friends a migrant has, and the obligatory recitation of cultural differences such as being Muslim or Turkish.

As for disciplinary matters, anthropology and literary/cultural studies increasingly became the medium for writing migration, which previously had been subject matter for sociology and economics. Their disciplinary trademark being culture, anthropology and cultural studies emerged as natural candidates for documenting the new migration stories. Relieved from the social analysis of labour markets, sociology revived studies of citizenship, a historical concern of the discipline, which was amplified by massive migrations and foreignness within nation-states.<sup>14</sup>

It is crucial to note that the cultural version of the migration story differentiates its subject, the migrant, along gender lines, and women become legitimate topics of inquiry in their own right. At the earlier stages of migration, the proportion of female to male migrants was significantly low, for migration meant recruitment of male factory workers. Later, however, the numbers of female immigrants came close to parity with those of men, mostly due to women-only recruitment policies and family reunifications. Despite this, immigrant woman remained largely invisible. Migration was perceived as a matter of (temporary) labor importation, and women hardly made it onto the public agenda.

In her introduction to a landmark issue of the *International Migration Review*, the first-ever special volume devoted to the female migrant, Mirjana Morokvasic rightly remarked that

rather than 'discovering' that female migration is an understudied phenomenon, it is more important to stress that the already existing literature has had little impact on policy-making, on mass media presentation of migrant women, but also on the main body of migration literature, where male bias has continued to persist into the late seventies and eighties in spite of growing evidence of women's overwhelming participation in migratory movements.<sup>15</sup>

With the cultural turn in migration – that is, with the increased emphasis on culture in terms of rights, duties and membership of immigrants – women

14 In the last two decades there has been an explosion in migration studies, covering all continents of the world and focusing on numerous ethnic groups, their movements and cultures. Among this corpus, the literature devoted to studying Turks in Europe is rather significant both in terms of its topical and theoretical expanse and representativeness of the field.

15 Mirjana Morokvasic, 'Birds of Passage are also Women . . .', *International Migration Review* 18 (1984), p. 899.

came to the fore of the immigration question. In the cultural story, 'immigrant' no longer meant male alone, and women had a role to play – but not always following the interventions suggested in Morokvasic's piece. As categorical Muslims, immigrant women from diverse places (such as Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco, Suriname) and with different social, educational and cultural backgrounds, have become subjects of *foulard* affairs, or headscarf debates. In media representations, they have been typically portrayed as 'beyond the veil', thus silent. Their presumed invisibility, and patriarchal oppression under Islamic traditions, have led, in the words of Stanley Cohen, to unremitting 'moral panics',<sup>16</sup> especially after the indiscriminate attacks perpetuated by radical Islamist groups and organisations in Europe and elsewhere.

The last episode in the immigration story is that of transnationalism. In the late 1990s, it became obvious that in the face of extensive movement of goods, labour and capital worldwide, not only was the cultural story of migration a limiting one, but the delimitation of migration by 'nation' was increasingly unsustainable. Turks in Germany occupy and traverse spaces that defy conventional distinctions of home- and host-country cultures and economies. A fashion trend in Turkey abruptly travels to Germany. Major Turkish movies have their gala openings simultaneously in Berlin and Istanbul. Staging of a concert, reading, exhibition or play by (famous and not-so-famous) Turkish artists in Germany is only a commonplace act of culture. Many of the most important Turkish rappers in Istanbul were born somewhere in Germany.

Quests for political recognition by minority ethnic and religious groups (i.e. Alevi and Kurds) in Turkey and Germany condition the shape of politics in both countries, by diffusion of organizational know-how, political activism and discursive strategies. Islamic politics in Germany engenders activism in Turkey, and vice versa. The German parliament's decision to condemn the massacre of Armenians in 1915 led to a political rally staged in Berlin by a variety of Turkish political groups and organisations, with left and right leanings, from both Germany and Turkey.

Germany is an attractive market for accomplished Turkish artists, and young German-Turkish professionals seek jobs and fortunes in Turkey. The immigrants who have led the way to Germany now retire in two countries – six months in Turkey, six months in Germany. Return to Turkey is neither the ideal corrective to the disruptive forces of migration (as in a narrative of

<sup>16</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1980 [1972]).



‘going back home’) nor the disruption of a life built in Germany. Return is only temporary in a world that permanently connects Turkey and Germany in ways beyond the linear narrative of leaving home and settling in foreign places.

Last but not least, Turkey’s candidacy to the European Union, and the consequent negotiation process, has reconfigured the political landscapes, cultural debates and economic ventures in both countries. Turkey and Germany are now connected on more levels than simply those of two nation-states with historical ties, cultural links and migration stories.

A term coined and advocated by Nina Glick Schiller and her colleagues, ‘transnational migration’, is the new label given to the story of migration, after the discovery of patterns of manifold border crossing and movement of goods, peoples, information and capital – say, between Turkey and Germany and Europe.<sup>17</sup> The new story is more demanding than the prosaic labour and culture stories of prior years. For we encounter stories of migrancy in unlikely places, the places that we hardly associate with migration – Pakistanis and Turks in Japan, for instance. The new migration numbers overburden international statistical exercises beyond recognition. The extent of contemporary movement confuses migration geographies that are mapped into *nation*-states. Transnationalism promises to capture this emergent new narrative in the stories of migrants who traverse the world in inordinate numbers, as (il)legal aliens, burdened with inequities of travel regulations, market demands, and fortunes and desires. However, a word of caution is necessary: ‘migration studies’, and migration policies, I must add, tend to ‘stay stubbornly loyal to the old dichotomies of homes and host countries, tradition and modernity, Turkey and Germany. The old stories have yet to release their intractable hold on new paradigms.’<sup>18</sup>

### Measuring integration

Integration, also debated as ‘assimilation’, is the most central and contentious theme in the immigration story of Turks in Germany – or foreigners in Europe, for that matter. It is a nebulous concept, a treasured political good and an ostensibly necessary policy dictum. Politicians blame a lack of integration for

<sup>17</sup> See Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon & Breach, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Ayşe S. Çağlar and Levent Soysal, ‘Introduction: Turkish Migration to Germany – Forty Years After’, *New Perspectives on Turkey* 28–9 (Spring–Fall 1993).

social problems afflicting the immigrant communities (such as low educational attainment, high unemployment or large amounts of graffiti in immigrant neighbourhoods, for instance). Immigrant activists invoke the term when they blame the lack of affirmative government policies directed at immigrants (programmes for increasing educational attainment, reducing unemployment and recognising the artistic potential of graffiti, for example).

In short, there is no escape from the 'integration' debate, even when the topic at hand is only remotely related to migrancy. As it is employed in the public discourse, integration identifies a lack – lack in cultural capital, social status and economic well-being – due to migrancy. More often than not, this lack is cast in cultural terms (or in terms of modernity) and understood as arising from innate cultural differences between the hosts and the immigrants (between Germans and Turks and/or Muslims). Thus when talking about unemployment among migrant youths, the issue becomes the supposed cultural deficiencies that prevent them functioning properly in a modern society, rather than the macro-economic problems that hinder the German economy or the failures of German governments in job creation. As such, the discourse of integration often collapses socio-economic issues into cultural disparities, and thus explains them away.

Furthermore, it is often unclear what the end of the road to integration is meant to look like. Integration seemingly aims to achieve social cohesion between the Turks/Muslims (immigrants) and Germans (natives), by bringing the former to the level of the latter (particularly in terms of rights, employment and education) and by fostering intimate relations of marriage and friendship. However, implicit in integration is the comparative modernity deficit of Turkish culture, which in turn transforms the question into one of Turks learning to behave in a modern fashion, and adapting to (in fact, adopting) the modern culture of Germans. This implicit assumption casts the question as one of essential national cultures, and discriminates in favour of one (modern German) over the other (the traditional Turkish). Multiculturalism as a political framework for cohesion only complicates the matter. For multiculturalism privileges the culture – and cultural rights – of the other, and seeks to level the cultural ground by assigning equal normative worth to the cultures of both natives and immigrants. German and Turkish and other cultures are all seen as the sources of richness in the map of Germany and the new Europe, so to speak. In the end, ethnically defined culture of Turks/Muslims appears both as good and as lacking in the landscapes of contemporary migrancy, as well as emerging as a threat and asset for the nationally bounded culture of Germany – and for the emerging conceptions of Europe.

In the sections below, I provide a portrait of migrancy, as well as statistical data, to substantiate the migration story I have begun to narrate. Integration is surely implicit in this exercise. My purpose is neither contentedly to supplement nor simply dispute the attempts to measure integration. In other words, the portrait of migrancy offered here is not meant to give credence to the arguments for a lack or surplus of integration. I do, however, exploit the topics under investigation and the statistics presented to draw a picture of incorporation, countering the conventional depictions of the Turkish migrant as the perpetual guestworker. I explore the following themes: rights and membership; employment and income; youth and the social order (education and employment); and *döner kebab*. In imparting this portrait, I also refer to the seeming cultural controversies and multicultural accomplishments that fall under the rubrics of culture, Islam and women. Each of these subplots is indispensable to understanding the forty-year migration history and experience of Turks in Germany.

Before moving ahead, however, a note on the nature of statistics provided in this section is necessary: comparative studies on migration in Europe and, accordingly, comprehensive sets of statistics are hard to come by. In Germany, especially, because of its federal arrangement, it is rather difficult to compile statistical data on a national level. Furthermore, the statistical surveys that go beyond measuring basic matters such as unemployment and educational attainment are rare if not absent. Moreover, statistical references to integration as such are elusive, to say the least. In short, it is impossible to present a statistical picture that reliably establishes the condition of immigrants in Germany and Europe today. Most of the statistics I provide date to the 1990s, for which quite a substantive set of statistical data can be collated. The trends these statistics highlight continue into the new millennium, without significant variations in direction.

### *Rights and membership*

The rights and privileges of foreigners in Germany vary substantially. Those foreigners who are EU citizens enjoy political rights institutionalised at the European level, such as voting rights in local and European parliament elections, as well as social rights accorded to them at the nation-state level. The rights of non-citizen foreigners are dependent on their residency status, with permanent residents practically indistinguishable from citizens except in terms of voting rights in national and European elections, while illegal migrants lack primary social and political rights.

In Germany in the mid-1990s, one-fourth of all foreigners were EU citizens, while Turks comprised the largest third-country foreign population, 28 per cent of all foreigners.<sup>19</sup> Again in the mid-1990s, among the Turkish population, about one quarter had unrestricted right to residency (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*), and roughly another quarter had the unlimited residency permit (*Aufenthaltsbescheinigung*).<sup>20</sup> In practice, this meant, not counting those who have German citizenship, practically half the Turkish population living in Germany held the same civil, social, economic and political rights as German citizens – with the significant exception of voting rights and restrictions regarding public service employment deemed to be security related, such as police, military and high-level civil servant positions. The rest of the Turkish population (the holders of residency permits of various duration) had differential access to rights, with full civil rights, unrestricted access to health services and education, work eligibility for the duration of their permits, and welfare benefits.

As in most of Europe, the annual rates of naturalisation in Germany have been significantly low, varying between 0.3 and 0.6 per cent in the period from 1974 to 1993, for instance.<sup>21</sup> This low rate has been generally attributed to Germany's descent-based (*jus sanguinis*) citizenship laws, its strenuous requirements for naturalisation and the high cost of the procedure. However, even after substantive changes were made to ease access to naturalisation in 1993, the rate still remained low. Only 74,058 foreigners were naturalised, a mere 1 per cent of the total foreign population, while about 40 per cent of foreigners qualified to apply for citizenship.<sup>22</sup>

The reason for this seeming lack of interest in citizenship lay not simply in the difficulties inherent in the German laws and procedures, but in the migrants' preference for maintaining dual citizenship as opposed to changing

19 Muenz and Ulrich, 'Changing patterns of immigration', p. 93. Note that the proportion has not changed over the years. In 2003, of 7.3 million foreigners, 8.9 per cent of the total population of Germany, about 1.85 million were EU citizens: Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004'.

20 Elçin Kürşat-Ahlers, 'The Turkish minority in German society', in David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky (eds.), *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), p. 120. At the time, a foreigner in Germany qualified for permanent residence after fifteen years in the country, which was later reduced to eight years with the signing of new Citizenship Law on 1 January 2001. The first kind of permanent residence, *Aufenthaltserlaubnis*, was a right and practically non-revocable, while the second, *Aufenthaltsbescheinigung*, had the status of a permit of unlimited duration. These categories are no longer employed in Germany's new migration and citizenship regime. Germany now has a new Immigration Act, which was adopted by the federal cabinet on 7 November 2001 and went into effect in July 2004, after years of legislative battles and negotiations. See Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004', for further details of Germany's new Immigration Act and Citizenship Law.

21 Muenz and Ulrich, 'Changing patterns of immigration', p. 93.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

citizenships. In 1993, 40 per cent of all naturalisations (about 30,000), and 68 per cent of those from Turkey, were dual or multiple citizenships.<sup>23</sup> A survey conducted the same year among foreigners in Germany shows that 95 per cent chose dual citizenship over foreignness. In other words, over the years, migrants strongly manifested a preference for staying 'foreigners' and demanding dual citizenship.

Since the turn of the new century, there has been a hesitant but visible drive among the Turkish immigrants towards taking German citizenship. This trend can be explained by the changes in the citizenship laws both in Turkey and Germany, as well as changes in the attitudes of officials in both countries towards citizenship. Currently, legal arrangements in Turkey allow Turkish citizens to assume the citizenship of another country or forgo Turkish citizenship in order to take citizenship of another country, without losing any of the rights accorded by their prior Turkish citizenship. Under the new German citizenship law, immigrant children born in Germany to parents who are resident aliens will be granted temporary German citizenship. The legislation stipulates that these children must decide by the age of twenty-three whether to retain their German citizenship or relinquish it in favour of that of their parents. The changes in legal framework in Turkey and Germany imply less restricted citizenship regimes and allow for dual citizenship – albeit not formally recognised by the German government. Added to this, the concerted efforts of the Turkish government and the promotional efforts of various (non-) governmental organisations in Germany are likely to facilitate an increased demand for German citizenship. In effect, dual citizenship will become a formal status for many of the Turkish immigrants, and in particular for young people, who already have citizenship of one of the two countries, regardless of Germany's resistance to the idea.

In 2001, the year when the new citizenship law went into effect, the number of naturalisations in Germany was 178, 098, actually 4.6 per cent lower than in 2000. Since then, the numbers have been steadily decreasing. In 2003, the number of naturalisations was around 140,000; and approximately 56,000 of those naturalised were of Turkish origin. Turkish citizens account for the majority of naturalisations.<sup>24</sup> Between 1972 and 2002, about half a million Turkish citizens have applied and got German citizenship.<sup>25</sup>

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 102–3.

24 Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004'.

25 See the official website of the Turkish Ministry of Labour at [www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal.bilgiler.htm](http://www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal.bilgiler.htm). The total number of Turkish citizens who have

*Employment and income*

In the mid-1990s, of the 2,183,579 foreigners in Germany's labour market, about 29 per cent (631,837) were from Turkey, comprising the largest foreign worker group in Germany.<sup>26</sup> Again in the mid-1990s, in terms of the rates of unemployment, workers from Turkey occupied the highest ranks, with a rate of 19.6 per cent, while the rate of unemployment for foreigners in general was 15.9 per cent. During the same period, the overall unemployment rate in Germany varied between 6 and 7 per cent. By 2003, unemployment among the Turks had risen to 25.3 per cent. Other groups of foreigners did not do well in this respect either. Unemployment among Italians was nearly 20 per cent, among Greeks 19 per cent, Portuguese 16 per cent and Spaniards 14 per cent.<sup>27</sup> The same year unemployment among German citizens was 9.3 per cent, more than two points higher than the unemployment figures of the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> As of 2004, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated that the number of Turkish citizens abroad holding 'worker' passports was around 1.19 million. Out of this, approximately 236,000 were unemployed.<sup>29</sup>

As for occupational mobility in the ten-year period between 1984 and 1994, a clear trend emerges among the foreign labour force, indicating a move from unskilled to semi-skilled and skilled work, and from blue-collar to white-collar job categories, while the percentage of unskilled workers stayed low but stagnant for the citizen workforce.<sup>30</sup> For instance, among the Turkish workforce, the percentage of unskilled workers dropped from 36 to 19 per cent, semi-skilled workers remained the same around 40 per cent, and skilled workers increased from 14 to 21 per cent.<sup>31</sup> The percentages of self-employed and higher-level white-collar employees similarly showed an increase, from 2 to 8 per cent for the self-employed and from 2 to 5 per cent for white-collar.<sup>32</sup> From 1996 to 2003, there was not a significant change in the percentages of

obtained the citizenship of the European countries they live in in the post-war period is slightly over a million.

26 Faruk Şen, Andreas Goldberg and Güray Öz, *Almanya'da ayrımcılık: Federal Alman iş piyasasında Türklere yönelik ayrımcılık* (Cologne: Önel-Verlag, 1996), p. 21.

27 Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004'.

28 *Datenreport 2004* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004), p. 108.

29 See the official website of Turkish Ministry of Labour at [www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal\\_bilgiler.htm](http://www.csgb.gov.tr/birimler/yih/istatistik/sayisal_bilgiler.htm).

30 See Eva Kolinsky, 'Non-German minorities in contemporary German society', in Horrocks and Kolinsky (eds.), *Turkish Culture*; Wolfgang Seifert, 'Social and economic integration of foreigners in Germany', in Peter H. Schuck and Rainer Muenz (eds.), *Paths to Inclusion: The Integration of Migrants in the United States and Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998); and Şen et al., *Almanya'da ayrımcılık*.

31 Seifert, 'Social and economic integration', p. 90.

32 *Ibid.*

unskilled workers (around 16 per cent), while there was a drop in the percentages of semi-skilled (from 37 to 34 per cent) and skilled workers (from 23 per cent to 18). One explanation may lie with the increases in unemployment rates. The other is the continuing increase in the percentages of mid- and high-level white-collar employees (from 9 to 14 per cent), self-employed (from 5 to 10 per cent) and *beamte*, or high-level civil servant (from 0 to 1 per cent).<sup>33</sup> Overall, there has been a slow but steady change in the composition of the Turkish workforce in Germany, with a steady increase in high-end positions.

As of 1995, the number of Turkish businesspersons in Germany had reached 40,500, twice the number in 1985.<sup>34</sup> In 1994, the number of Turkish businesspersons was second only to that of Italians (45,000) among the 269,000 foreign businesspersons in Germany.<sup>35</sup> In 1995, Turkish businesses employed 168,000 workers and generated a gross income of DM 34 billion, with a total investment of DM 8.3 billion – again more than twice the figures from 1985.<sup>36</sup> The distribution of businesses among sectors ranged from industry (1.6 per cent) and construction (4.8 per cent) to trade (53.8 per cent) and service industries (38 per cent).<sup>37</sup> In 2003, with a total of 43,000, Turkish businesspersons were a close second behind the Italians (46,000) in a total of 286,000 foreign businesspersons.<sup>38</sup>

While women occupy the lower strata in the labour market, their numbers in the business sector are comparatively high. In the mid-1990s, two-thirds of female foreign workers were employed as unskilled or semi-skilled workers in blue-collar jobs and their share of the middle- and high-level white-collar jobs was 11 per cent, compared to the 41 per cent share of female citizens.<sup>39</sup> A study conducted in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen shows that in the early 1990s, one in every ten foreign businesses was woman-run. By the mid-1990s, there had been considerable rise in the number of female businesspersons. In 1994, out of 67,300 businesspersons in the state, about one in three was female (19,200). Turkish women comprised the largest category among foreign businesswomen and amounted to 13 per cent of Turkish businesspersons.<sup>40</sup>

33 *Datenreport 2004*, p. 581.

34 Gülay Kızıloca, *Dünden Bugüne Almanya'da Türk serbest girişimcileri* (Cologne: Önel-Verlag, 1996), p. 44.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

38 Frölich, 'SOPEMI 2004'.

39 Seifert, 'Social and economic integration', p. 91.

40 Kızıloca, *Dünden bugüne Almanya*, pp. 62–3.

According to studies carried out by the Zentrum für Türkeistudien (Centre for Studies on Turkey, based in Germany), the savings of Turks in German banks amounted to DM 2,986 billion in the mid-1990s. The average household income was DM 3,650, and the average household size 4.1 persons.<sup>41</sup> In 2003, the average household income of a Turkish family was €2,340, compared to the €2,810 earned by a German family. In the same year, average household size was 3.4 for Turks and 2.1 for Germans.<sup>42</sup> In 1988, one in every thirteen Turkish families owned the house they lived in.<sup>43</sup> In 1994, about 11 per cent of Turkish households in Germany (a total of 467, 000) bought a house – and thus were active in the real-estate market.<sup>44</sup> This involvement in the real-estate market is growing steadily.

Although the average monthly wage of a Turkish employee was less than the average wage for foreigners overall in 1984, a decade later the wages of Turkish employees were above the average. In 1994, a Turkish wage earner made DM 3,360 compared to the DM3,330 made by a foreign wage earner and an average of DM 4,160 made by a German wage earner. Between 1996 and 2003, the average wage of a Turkish wage earner showed a substantive increase, from €1,630 to €1,910. In 2003, a German wage earner made €2,530 on average.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, women, regardless of their citizenship status or ethnicity, occupied the lower ranks of wage statistics in Germany, as elsewhere. In 1994, a foreign female employee earned DM 2,570 per month and a German female employee earned DM 2,940.<sup>46</sup> In 2003, Turkish women earned €1,110 on average, compared to the €1,770 earned by German women. In the same year, a second-generation Turkish-German person was earning €2,080, much higher than the earnings of a woman, whether Turkish or German, and significantly closer to wages earned by German men.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Youth and the social order*

When it comes to youth, the two major indices of integration are education and employment. The high rates of school dropouts and unemployed youths are customarily presented as the proofs of lack of integration – and at times, as is

41 Faruk Şen, Güray Öz and Ahmet İyidirli, *Federal Almanya'da Türklerin kültürel sorunları* (Cologne: Önel-Verlag, 1996), p. 27.

42 *Datenreport 2004*, p. 577.

43 Faruk Şen, *Turkish Enterprises in the Federal Republic of Germany, Report* (Bonn: Zentrum für Türkeistudien, 1988).

44 Faruk Şen and Andreas Goldberg, *Türken in Deutschland: Leben zwischen zwei Kulturen* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1994), p. 30.

45 *Datenreport 2004*, p. 581.

46 Seifert, 'Social and economic integration', p. 94.

47 *Datenreport 2004*, p. 581.



the case with religious orientation, a sure sign of an unwillingness to integrate – rather than of social problems located in the institutions of education or the job markets.<sup>48</sup>

If we take the case of Berlin, the city with the highest concentration of Turks in Germany, a total of about 370,000 students are educated in the public school system, and foreigners comprise 15.1 per cent of this total. The proportion of students whose mother tongue is not German is slightly higher, at 19.8 per cent. The majority of foreign youths attend and graduate from *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* (33 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, in the school year 2000–1). In the German school system, although both school types provide high school education, the *Hauptschule* primarily channels its graduates to vocational training and apprenticeship. The graduates of the *Realschule* have equal chances of ending up in apprenticeship or in higher education after they graduate.

In the decade between 1983 and 1993, while the graduation levels for foreigners from the *Hauptschule* showed a decline, the graduation levels from the *Realschule* registered a rise, indicating a definite trend away from vocational education. In the same decade, the rates of matriculation in higher education institutions rose sharply, from 4 per cent in 1983–4 to 13 per cent in 1993–4. These trends continued in the 1990s, with the rate of attendance in higher education remaining steady, at about 12 per cent. Turkish students comprise the largest group among the foreigners attending Berlin's higher education institutions, about 14 per cent. Among the foreign youths, attendance in the *Gymnasium*, or the university-track high schools, in Berlin is considerably lower, but shows a steady increase, from about 7 per cent in the school year 1995–6 to nearly 10 per cent in 2000–1. At the high school level, the percentage of dropouts among migrant youths shows a slow but steady decline, from 35 per cent in the 1983–4 school year to 25.2 per cent in 1993–4, and to 23.8 per cent in 1999–2000.<sup>49</sup>

Although there have been improvements over the last two decades, the educational achievement of migrant youths, in Berlin as well as in Germany

48 Statistics regarding the condition of migrant youths are not readily available and comprehensive. Unless otherwise stated, the statistics given in this section are compiled from the publications of the Berlin senate's Foreigners' Bureau, and particularly from its reports on integration and foreigners' affairs (*Bericht zur Integrations- und Ausländerpolitik*, 1994, 1996/1997), various press releases (*Pressemitteilung*, 1997, 2000, 2002), and other documentation made available to the author.

49 For a detailed description of the German high school system and a detailed analysis of its effects on the educational and vocational prospects of Turkish youths, see Thomas Faist, *Social Citizenship for Whom? Young Turks in Germany and Mexican Americans in the United States* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995).

and in other European countries, is not necessarily a success story. Between 1996 and 2003, while the overall dropout rate for Germans remained at a stable 2 per cent, the rate for Turkish migrants, though declining from 27 to 21 per cent during the same period, was still alarmingly high. The only good news was that the dropout rate for the second-generation migrants dropped from 19 to 3 per cent, closer to the average for Germans.<sup>50</sup>

To place the blame for failure on the cultural propensities of immigrants themselves, as most integration arguments do, is unwarranted. Among Turkish youths, and foreign youths in general, the girls do better in school. In the school year 1999–2000, among the foreigners in Berlin, the percentages of girls who completed their education in *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* were 49 and 52, respectively. The percentage of girls attending higher education was nearly 56. Between 1996 and 2003, the percentage of young Turkish women who opted for an academic career path showed a significant rise, from 2 to 7 per cent, and the percentage of those attending *Gymnasium* increased from 3 to 11.<sup>51</sup> These numbers clearly refute the cultural arguments about the reluctance of Muslim parents to send their female children to school.

More importantly, with the Pisa Study, an OECD learning evaluation that compared thirty-two countries, it became apparent that the German education system was substantively failing on international scale. In reading competence, German pupils ranked twenty-first, and in mathematics and natural sciences, their place was twentieth. Among Germany's states, Berlin did particularly poorly, despite its high spending per pupil. The study also underlined the close correlation between education and social status in Germany and revealed that Germany's foreign pupils were less successful than their counterparts in other European countries with high immigrant populations.<sup>52</sup>

Unemployment rates among migrant youths are disproportionately high. Among foreigners, unemployment is much higher for Turkish youths than for other groups. In the mid-1990s, the unemployment rate among male foreigners under the age of twenty was 4 per cent, whereas among female youths in the same age group, the rate was 7 per cent. During the same time, the rate of unemployment among youths between the ages of twenty and twenty-five was much higher, with 15 per cent of the males and 15.3 per cent of the females unemployed.<sup>53</sup> In Berlin, the unemployment rates among foreigners

<sup>50</sup> *Datenreport 2004*, p. 578.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> For more detailed information on the Pisa Study, see the website of the Max-Planck-Institut at [www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de](http://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de).

<sup>53</sup> Şen et al., *Almanya'da ayrımcılık*.

rose considerably between 1998 and 2000, from 15.6 to 34 per cent. In the same period, unemployment rates for German citizens rose from 10.8 to 17.6 per cent. The unemployment rates for foreigners remained relatively high throughout the first half of the 2000s.

Migrant youths not only suffer from substantially high rates of unemployment; it is also significantly difficult for them to find openings for vocational training. The labour market in Germany requires two to three years of apprenticeship before a vocational career, and apprenticeships have become progressively rare over the years. In Berlin, between 1974 and 1990, the percentages of foreign pupils successful in completing vocational training increased slowly but surely, from 3.4 to 13.3 per cent. In the last decade, however, the percentages dropped significantly (5.4 per cent of an available 62,904 training positions in 1999). Overall, from 1994 to 2002, the percentage of available training places for foreign youths dropped from 8 to 5.3 per cent. Despite the shortage of positions, among the foreigners, Turkish youth had the biggest share of vocational training, with 38.9 per cent.<sup>54</sup>

Over the years there has been a clear shift in the professional aspirations of migrant youths. The high rates of interest in entrepreneurship and the emerging demands for civil service jobs can be read as indicative of a positive outlook and expectations of 'better prospects' in the economic sphere, despite – or perhaps because of – increasing unemployment. When asked about their professional preferences in a 1997 survey, the responses of Turkish youth indicated a strong inclination for self-employment and entrepreneurship (60.9 per cent), rather low interest in being a worker (10.7 per cent) or shop assistant (15.9 per cent), and a new propensity to enter the civil service (12.6 per cent). Comparatively, in 1991, the responses had rated in the order of self-employed (51.4 per cent), shop assistant (28.4 per cent), and worker (20.1 per cent) – the choice to become a civil servant being absent either from the questionnaire or their envisioned set of possibilities at the time.

### *Döner kebab*

Since the arrival of Turkish migrants and the opening of the first Turkish restaurants, *döner kebab*, spit-roasted meat served in bread (a variant of the foodstuff known as *shwarma* in the Arab world, *gyro* in Greece and *pastor* in Mexico) has become a ubiquitous fast food in Europe. In 1996, various media outlets in Germany celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its arrival.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Datenreport 2004*, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> Kızılocak, *Dünden bugüne Almanya*.

Now it has the status of undisputable Turkishness in the European context, although its ascent to fast-food status in Turkey is relatively new.

In Germany, perhaps more than anywhere else in Europe, *döner* has become a major fast-food item. According to *Aufgespiesst* (Skewered),<sup>56</sup> a book dedicated to *döner*'s popularity with Germans, Berlin has more than 1,300 kiosks (*imbiss*) and small restaurants selling 25 tons of *döner* every day. A rough calculation indicates that the daily consumption of *döner* in Germany is about 200 tons, which adds up to a consumption of 72,000 tons, or 720 million sandwiches, per year. In short, by 1996 it was an industry of gross DM 3.6 billion with ever-increasing sales and had a larger market share than major corporate food giants in Germany – among them McDonald's Deutschland, Mövenpick and Burger King.<sup>57</sup>

*Döner* kiosks were the first consumer outlets to reach the so-called barren topography of East Germany, their owners assuming the role of frontier entrepreneurs. Since the 1990s, the *döner* industry has been re-making its image in its competition with other fast-food chains. Product differentiation (*döner* with feta cheese, chicken *döner*, *döner* with grilled vegetables), product standardisation (*döner* meals), uniforms (sales personnel in caps and wearing t-shirts with store colours), and new store names (McMahmud, McKebab, Keb'up, Mister Kebab) are all part of this new orientation towards standardised fast-food outlets and chains.<sup>58</sup>

The reason I narrate this silent success story of *döner kebab* as a European fast food is to draw attention to the futility of unremittingly deployed arguments for the resilience of cultural difference. The reinvention of *döner kebab* as a European fast food, with its new extras (red and white cabbage and three different sauces – anathema in Turkey) testifies to the swift reconfiguration of the so-called 'traditional' habits and established meanings of taste, German or otherwise.

*Döner* is not the only consumer product making its way into the German culture, so to speak. Slowly but surely, many Turkish foodstuffs are becoming standard items. The recent trend among Turkish entrepreneurs in Berlin is to open specialty stores selling Turkish-style roasted nuts, herbs and spices, and coffee and tea and pastry shops specialising in varieties of *baklava* and

56 Eberhard Seidel-Pielen, *Aufgespiesst: wie der döner über die Deutschen kam* (Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1996).

57 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

58 See Ayşe S. Çağlar, 'McDöner: döner kebab and the social positioning struggle of German Turks', in Janeen Arnold Costa and Gary J. Bamossy (eds.), *Marketing in a Multicultural World: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Seidel-Pielen, *Aufgespiesst*.

other sweets. The reverse (the ‘German effect’, for lack of a better expression) is also instantly recognisable. One finds in the shelves of Turkish grocery chains *halal* (pork-free) varieties of every possible variant of German salami and sausage. Most bakeries in Berlin are now owned by Turks, who bake and serve traditional German *Brötchen* (small breakfast breads) and pastries, along with *espresso*. It is safe to say that after forty years of migration, some traditions are no longer entrenched as definitely Turkish or German – at least in the field of provisions and food habits.

### Culture, Islam and women

Religion is the most contentious issue as regards the ‘integration’ of immigrants. In policy and academic debates, religious orientation categorically serves as the measure against which integration should be judged. To compound the problem, there has, since the 11 September attacks, been heightened sensitivity towards ‘Islamic’ inclinations of Turks and Arabs in Europe. Revived debates on the ‘veil’, newly invented ones on ‘parallel societies’ (i.e. segregated ethnic enclaves) and the proclivity of Muslim youths to ‘terrorism’ bring to the fore an underlying anxiety about the ability of Muslims to integrate into ‘European’ societies and values and, more generally, about the supposed civilisational incommensurability of Islam and the West.

The state authorities in Germany – and Europe – have an uneasy relationship with Islam. The inflammatory emphasis on religious orientation as an indicator of ‘dis-integration’ seriously contradicts the discursive emphasis on diversity and cultural rights on the part of European courts and state agencies. While the ‘security’ concerns lead to measures that constrain the realm of activities for immigrants, by designating them de facto Muslims and therefore dangerous, discourses of diversity promote religion as a cultural right and facilitate provisions for realising this right.

The state of Berlin, like many other states in Germany, pursues a concerted policy of multiculturalism, relentlessly expressing support for cultural diversity and funding projects to that end. Multiculturalism at work in Berlin since the early 1990s hardly amounts to an unambiguous conceptual framework and coherent policy agenda. At times, the acts of multiculturalism stop short of being a feel-good discursive practice on the part of state officials and immigrant activists. Nonetheless, as a discursive instrument and policy tool, the idea of multiculturalism exists across the political spectrum, even within certain factions of conservative parties. As it is practised in Berlin, multiculturalism is rather consequential.

A case in point is the teaching of religion in schools. In a recent court case, for instance, the Islamic Federation in Berlin won the right to provide religious education in Berlin's schools, establishing parity between Islam and formally accepted Protestant and Catholic churches. The major Alevi association in Berlin, claiming religious and cultural difference from the Sunni Islamic Federation, appealed to Berlin state and was granted the right to teach its own religion classes. Now there are after-school courses on Alevi teachings and rituals offered in a number of schools in Berlin, taught by educators on the state payroll. In addition, the Foreigners' Office, recently renamed the Directorate for Integration and Migration, published a book on Alevi culture as part of its effort to publicise the cultural diversity of the city, adding another entry to the series of forty-plus booklets produced under the generic title of *Miteinander Leben* (Living Together).

Another field of government action in which multiculturalism brings about substantial results is youth work. Berlin, for instance, is the centre of youth organisations. These organisations display a spectrum of orientations and attract representative cross-sections of Berlin's migrant youth. In Kreuzberg, NaunynRitze, a youth centre operating under the auspices of Kreuzberg's municipal government, operates as the headquarters for hip-hop. In the early 1990s, NaunynRitze was home to a successful and long-lasting hip-hop posse, *To Stay Here is My Right*. Under the approving supervision of NaunynRitze's social-work team, the posse flourished into a successful 'hip-hop community' and attracted prospective stars and hip-hop hopefuls to NaunynRitze. Graffiti-writing sessions, breakdance practices, rap courses and hip-hop parties came to dominate the cultural agenda of the 'ghetto' youth attending NaunynRitze. Throughout the 1990s, the hip-hop scene in Kreuzberg produced prominent names such as MC Gio, writers Neco and Sony, DJ Derezon, dancer Storm and rapper Boe B. Their pictures and words were prominently featured in the stylish pages of cosmopolitan Berlin bi-weeklies. Their stories and art were interpreted, and amplified, as the necessary condition of social harmony and the multicultural unity of Berlin. Like Neco, who has become an important director with three feature films to his credit, many of these young artists have found themselves niches in the art scene of Berlin.

In addressing the youths as cultural producers of hip-hop, NaunynRitze was not alone. In the 1990s, almost every other state and private agency reverted to hip-hop in order to reach out to the youth. It was chosen as the natural art form for migrant (ghetto) youths – though it was difficult to call Berlin's immigrant neighbourhoods 'ghettos' proper. There was, for instance, the state-subsidised Hiphop Café in Schöneberg for rappers and writers, a Berlin-wide annual rap

competition for young women, initiated by non-profit organisations, and a two-day dance and music show, called İstanbul, organised by Tempodrom, one of the major music venues in Berlin. Gangway, a Berlin-wide organisation funded by various state agencies to deliver social work to 'street kids', arranged trips to hip-hop festivals in various European countries.

Though the most prominent, hip-hop is only part of the range of creative cultural projects migrant youths of Berlin produce and consume. They stage concerts, poetry readings, parties, dance shows and plays. They dance through the streets of Berlin the entire day in the Carnival of Cultures, print poems on love and justice in short-lived literary periodicals, write articles on bilingualism, and take part in rallies to protest against the drastic budget cuts proposed by the state.

This cultural participation does not preclude an intensive – and increasingly contentious – debate over Turks and Islam, and the prospects of a multicultural society. The cover of a recent issue of the journal *Focus* (10 April 2006), which styles itself as 'the modern news magazine', was headlined 'Die Multikulti-Lüge' (The Multikulti Lie) against a stencilled figure of a woman in a headscarf. *Focus* was not alone in spotlighting 'multikulti' as *the* problem of Germany. It was simply following suit and highlighting the usual stories: headscarves, youth gangs, segregated men's coffee houses, segregated high-rises with 70 per cent immigrant inhabitants, soaring crime figures, low language skills, unemployment and extremism of various kinds – indeed, a bleak picture.

Something that ignited the integration debate was the brutal murder of a twenty-three-year-old Turkish woman, Hatun Sürücü, by her brothers for disgracing her family. Hatun's crime was to leave her husband and attempt to raise her child as a single mother – thus bringing shame to her family. At the trial, the youngest brother pleaded guilty, while the older brothers proclaimed their innocence – or ignorance – of the crime. When the trial ended, the older brothers were acquitted, and celebrated their release with V-signs in front of the cameras; the younger brother was sent to a juvenile prison to serve nine years.

The murder of Hatun Sürücü galvanised the long-entrenched doubts and questions about the compatibility of Turkish (and/or Muslim) traditions with Western norms and ways of life, particularly with regard to the place of women in Muslim societies and cultures. The debate did not simply position Germans against Turks, but generated a multi-vocal questioning. The Turkish feminist activist Necla Kelek, for instance, publicly condemned honour killings, and made a plea to Muslims to question their traditions and change. Her call for reform in Islam was answered in the pages of the renowned intellectual weekly

*Die Zeit*, with a strongly worded rejoinder from sixty prominent German and Turkish ethnographers, intellectuals, immigration researchers and activists, calling attention to the complexity of the debate and the dangers of the blanket condemnation of immigrants (as Muslims) at a time when there is increasing anti-immigrant sentiment, both among the populace and policy makers.<sup>59</sup>

The polemic of 'Kelek vs. Intellectuals and Ethnographers' was not the first of its kind. In the past, more often than not, female authors and activists of immigrant origin, mostly with feminist a orientation, have enraged their detractors with their critical stances against headscarves, the segregation of women, honour killings and other kinds of violence against women within immigrant communities and in their home countries. It is also crucial to point out that the critique of 'tradition' is not a stance restricted to women and activists. It is a passionately and publicly debated issue, creating unusual alliances and rivalries – between Germans and Turks, the intellectuals and the streetwise, religious and lay persons, leftist and rightists, men and women.

Without going further into the details and merits of such polemics, I would like to assert that what lies at the locus of all this debate on integration – and the divergent positions as regards gender equality and culture – is the question of women. In the post 11 September era, the term 'Muslim' has attained a status of unqualified infamy, leading to the widespread perception of every Muslim person as an adherent of an uncivilised, non-modern culture, if not a terrorist. Muslim women, not coincidentally, have always been at the centre of the debates on Islam and its place in European social spaces.

In Europe today, imprinted on the female body, the headscarf empirically demonstrates foreignness (as in being non-Western) and authenticates it, mostly, as Islamic. When the subject matter is immigration or Islam, pictures of women with headscarves invariably accompany newspaper articles, television coverage and academic works. The image provides the necessary visual accreditation to the written and spoken word.

On the one hand, the headscarf (variously named *hijab*, *turban*, *foulard*, *kopftuch*) signifies an eternal Islam that underwrites the submission of women to the authority of Muslim men and tradition. The tradition as such is considered anathema to the normative values of the West, and appears as an obstacle to the integration of Muslim women into Europe or the West. On the other hand, Muslim women without headscarves are considered

59 For the debate between Kelek and her adversaries, see Mark Terkessidis and Yasemin Karakasoğlu, 'Gerechtigkeit für die Muslime!', *Die Zeit*, 1 February 2006, no. 6; and Necla Kelek, 'Sie haben das Leid anderer zugelassen!', *Die Zeit*, 9 February 2006, no. 7.



secular – and hence ‘Westernised’. However, according to this reasoning, being ‘Westernised’ denotes not integration but rather a loss of tradition, ‘cultural’ dislocation, and inauthentic selves.

In short, the headscarf as a sign hides Muslim women behind a timeless culture and tradition, regardless of their actual religious beliefs and political and cultural orientations. If immigrant women wear the sign, they are deemed to be the factual prisoners of Muslim culture – and thus silent. If they are without it, they are considered culturally confused – and thus are silenced by the logic of inauthenticity. They become located in the shadows of a precarious tradition, standing at an incommensurable distance from the modernity and present tense of the West.

Though intuitive, this cultural perception, with its undue emphasis on the headscarf – and thus on Islam – renders invisible the extensive participation of immigrant women in the social, cultural and the economic life of the countries in which they reside. Their accomplishments, and their resilience, inventiveness and activism, have become captive to reified categorical identities (Turkishness and Islam) since they have surfaced in the imagination of the European mind. Lost is the female voice, speaking of their conditions and expectations, speaking to the world at large, articulating utopias against the uncertainties of their lives – as exemplified in the intolerable death of Hatun Sürücü.

At this juncture in the history of migration, Germany and Europe seek to reconcile the task of managing diversity with that of achieving security, both highly charged discursive and policy agendas. The apparent conflict between these two agendas seems likely to continue for some time to come, and will afford grounds for a continuing debate on the potential integration of immigrants in Europe.

. . . and the end

The story I have told here does not amount to a complete account of Turkish migration to/in Germany. That is a task far beyond the means of this chapter – perhaps an unmanageable one in the rapidly changing, and ‘globalizing’, world. I have, however, offered an account that recapitulates the contemporary condition of Turkish immigration. The trends I have drawn from the sample of statistics presented here are not always encouraging, but neither are they discouraging. One thing that they clearly indicate is the incorporation of migrants into legal and societal institutions, regimes of rights and membership, and economies of ownership and inequity.

The incorporation of immigrants in Germany has proceeded rather rapidly and without exceptional controversy. The amplified talk of integration today is more about maintaining the categorical integrity of the national order and fighting the ghost of a civilisational enemy than about remedying empirical inequalities, which are more often than not subsumed under the foreignness of migrants and erased from social agendas. In other words, heightened but undue attention to the cultural ‘problems’ associated with migration disregards the processes of incorporation and the difficulties of maintaining foreignness in a globalising world. What we end up with is an elementary story of integration, in which the parameters that create difference and identity are taken to be national/ethnic/religious – i.e. Turkishness, Germanness, Islam. Rather than attending the complex layering of inequities and affinities within and without the nation-state, the incessant debate on integration concerns itself with apocalyptic cultural fragmentations, parallel societies and Islamic ghettos. In the end, ‘ironically, as immigrants are increasingly incorporated into the membership schemes of European host polities, the debate over how well they “adjust” intensifies, and their cultural otherness is accentuated. Guestworkers become *symbolic* foreigners’ in Europe.<sup>60</sup>

As symbolic foreigners (Turks in Germany, Indians in Britain, Arabs in France), contemporary immigrants are confined to an unyielding past – the past of their home and culture – and a persistent present, the present of their host country and their Otherness. They are considered to be bounded by their nation (or religion) in the nations of others, and in this boundedness they live in permanent diasporas. Lost in this vision are futures, dreams and competencies, along with the possibility of having more than one home, and living with/out nations. Are all stories of migration about homes, pasts and tedious repetitions of the present? Is contemporary migration simply a cultural economy of movement between peripheries with edenic pasts and centres with affluent presents, or between the nothingness of underdevelopment and the wealth of advancement?

These are difficult questions in search of a new narratives and new answers. New narratives and answers are in the making in the stories of migrants who traverse the world in disproportionate numbers, mobilized by market demands, political upheavals, environmental catastrophes, and imaginaries of desire. We encounter their stories not only in Europe, but also in presumably remote corners of Asia and Africa. Their numbers encumber statistical maps so orderly kept by states; their travels confound geographies mapped

60 Nuhoglu Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*, p. 135.

into *nation*-states. As the 'immigration problem' becomes a world-level norm, finding a wide variety of (il)legal aliens in unlikely places becomes increasingly unsurprising.

The volume of the movement registered as immigration in the post-war period is also staggeringly different from and more massive than what we are conditioned to imagine. Based on statistics kept by the German state, for instance, between 1954 and 1994 about 21.9 million foreigners entered and 15.6 million left the country. Taken in terms of conventional nation-state-centred understanding of immigration, these numbers translate into a net immigration of 6.3 million. If looked at from another interpretive frame, the numbers highlight a movement involving 37.5 million people in a span of forty years. This is a movement which goes far beyond the simple numbers of net immigration registered in statistical accounts, expeditiously affecting the people on the move, their families and their towns, at both the points of departure and destination. The geography, as well as social and economic design of this movement, covers places within and without Europe. The simplicity of the net immigration figure only reveals the inadequacy of singular *national* accounts of immigration in capturing the complexity and density of the movement, and its human condition.

To complicate the story, let me add a note on Turkey's accession to EU. This is a hotly debated issue in Europe today – and perhaps will remain so for years to come. On 17 December 2004, the current leaders of the Union agreed on a date when the formal talks on Turkey's accession would begin and, about a year later, on 3 October 2005, the accession negotiations started. The public imagination in Europe is already saturated with a heightened debate on the Europeaness of Turks and Turkey. Although the question is asked where the Turks belong culturally (possibly an unanswerable question, because it is a political rather than an empirical matter), the real pressing issue is migration – the fear of a potential flood of Turks overburdening Europe's stagnant labour markets and welfare institutions. Expert opinion about this prospect is divided. While the opponents of Turkish accession forecast an imminent disaster, those who favour Turkey's membership draw attention to the decreasing and ageing population of Europe and welcome the promise of a new, young labour force.

The question I pose is slightly different one: what will happen to our understanding of migration when Turkey becomes a member of the Union? With the Union, in effect with Turkey's accession talks, comes the 'free movement of people', and with the free movement, the term 'immigrant' becomes redundant. The matter for negotiation will not be number of Turks who can migrate,

## The migration story of Turks in Germany

but the question of when Turkish citizens – in the future, also European citizens – will be allowed to move freely in Europe search of their fortunes and futures. Are we witnessing a superfluous debate on immigration and integration of Turks in Europe? This question, I assert, anticipates the end of the migration story of Turks in Germany. The end(s), however, contain and prelude new beginning(s).

## Politics and political parties in Republican Turkey

FEROZ AHMAD

In the transition from a multinational empire to a nation-state, political life in the new Turkey experienced a radical transformation. There is still heated debate among scholars as to whether there was continuity or change in the Republic's political life. Some have argued in favour of continuity, claiming that the architects of the Republic belonged to cadres who had acquired their experience of politics after 1908. That is true, though the transitions from empire to nation-state, from monarchy to republic, from theocracy to a laicist/secular state and society, seem sufficient reasons to strengthen the claims for change, even for revolutionary change.

When war ended in total collapse in November 1918, it seemed doubtful that a viable Turkish state would emerge from the ruins. The territory left to the Ottomans by the armistice of 1918, which the nationalists then claimed as the borders of the new Turkey, was also contested by Greece and Armenian nationalists, as well as by Britain and France. Thus before there could be any political life, the Turks had to salvage a new state from the ruins of empire, and that took almost five years of war and diplomacy to achieve. During these years the Turkish elites were divided. The sultan's supporters relied on diplomacy and the goodwill of Britain for their very survival. But Britain had its own post-war agenda and did not support Istanbul's aspirations. As a result, the sultan was left with a truncated state by virtue of the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, which he was forced to sign on 10 August 1920. The sultan justified his total surrender, declaring to his privy council that a weak existence is preferable to total annihilation.

Nationalist forces under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal refused to accept the terms of treaty and continued to fight the Greek invasion of Anatolia that had begun in May 1919. While they fought the Greek army in the west and Armenian nationalists in the east, the nationalists presented a united front. But cracks began to appear in their ranks as soon as victory was in sight. However, in August 1921, when faced with defeat, the assembly appointed Mustafa

Kemal commander-in-chief and even allowed him to exercise authority over the assembly in military matters. After winning the battle of Sakarya in September, he became the dominant force in the national movement. Had the nationalists been defeated at Sakarya, leadership might well have passed to another successful general, possibly the conservative nationalist Kazım Karabekir. But for the moment, Mustafa Kemal was triumphant and the National Assembly bestowed upon him the title Gazi (warrior in the holy war or *jihād*).

Now that their Greek clients had lost the war, the Allies hoped to divide the nationalists by inviting both the sultan in Istanbul and the assembly in Ankara to send delegations to Lausanne to negotiate peace. But the Ankara assembly claimed that it was the only legitimate authority, Istanbul having lost any claim to legitimacy when it collaborated with the Allies. General Refet Bele, a prominent nationalist who sought to maintain the monarchy, advised the sultan to dismiss the ‘phantom government’ of Istanbul and recognise Ankara. But Vahdeddin refused. In November, the assembly abolished the sultanate, claiming that the sultan’s government had ceased to exist on 16 March 1920 when the Allies had occupied his capital. Thenceforth Istanbul was to be governed as a province from Ankara. Having lost all authority, Sultan Vahdeddin fled his capital on 17 November aboard a British battleship. Next day, the assembly, where the radical nationalists declared that sovereignty resided, elected Abdülmecit caliph.

The opposition objected to the assembly exercising such direct authority and claimed that there was no precedent for such practice. Mustafa Kemal responded to this criticism in a speech in which he argued that ‘we are unique’ (*‘Biz bize benzeriz’*) and had no need to copy other models of government. The opposition then attempted to disqualify Mustafa Kemal’s membership of the assembly by proposing a law that required five years residence in Anatolia in order to be elected to the assembly. Mustafa Kemal pointed out that his military career had not permitted such residence anywhere, and the proposal was withdrawn. He saw the strength and determination of the opposition and decided to fight back. He announced to the press that he would form the People’s Party as the vehicle to wage the political struggle. After touring Anatolia and testing the pulse of the country, Mustafa Kemal announced the party’s formation in April 1923.<sup>1</sup>

1 On the founding of the party and its history until 1950, see Mete Tunçay, ‘Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (1923–1950)’, in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VIII (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002); Kemal Karpat, ‘Republican People’s Party, 1923–1945’, in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1991).

Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal took measures to weaken the opposition in Istanbul. When Ankara was declared the capital of Turkey in October 1923, Istanbul was marginalised from political life. The declaration of the Republic on 29 October 1923 and Mustafa Kemal's election as its president also caught the opposition off guard as its prominent leaders – Rauf, Refet, Adnan and Ali Fuad – were out of Ankara. By proclaiming a republic, the Kemalists not only weakened the caliph's supporters who wanted the office of president to go to him, but they proclaimed their commitment to modernity and equality, rather than the modernisation and patriarchal hierarchy of the old order. The Kemalists had rejected hierarchy and tradition, the foundations on which the old order had rested and which the conservative nationalists, who went on to form the Progressive Republican Party, wished to maintain.

The offensive against the opposition continued with the arrival of an independence tribunal in Istanbul to deal with dissidents. Prominent members of the opposition were arrested soon after the Istanbul press published the letter of two prominent, pro-British Indian Muslims – the Agha Khan and Ameer Ali – appealing to the government to retain the caliphate. In December 1923, the assembly passed a law that ended whatever military support there was for the opposition; officers were given the choice between their military careers and politics, and officers on active service were barred from being deputies. The opposition wanted Mustafa Kemal to leave the People's Party and become an above-party president. But he rejected both suggestions and declared that conditions in the country were not ripe for more than one party.<sup>2</sup>

For some time there were rumours that the opposition was about to found a party to be called the Progressive Republican Party. The People's Party responded by adding 'Republican' to its own name, becoming the RPP. The Progressive Republican Party (PRP) was founded on 17 November and its programme was published the next day.<sup>3</sup> As a gesture to the opposition, Mustafa Kemal replaced İsmet Paşa as prime minister with Ali Fethi, a figure more acceptable to the opposition. But tension between the parties continued until the outbreak of Şeyh Said rebellion among the Kurdish tribes in February 1925. The government declared martial law and Prime Minister Fethi Bey asked the opposition to dissolve their party. But General Kazım Karabekir refused, claiming there was no reason to do so. In March the assembly passed the Maintenance of Order Law (*Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu*) and restored the

2 Erik Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pp. 42–3, citing Mustafa Kemal's speeches in Trabzon and Samsun on 18 and 29 September 1924 respectively.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 55ff.

independence tribunals. For the moment all further political activity in the country was frozen. The opposition press was closed down along with those of the nascent left and in June 1925 the government finally ordered the disbandment of the PRP.

Having crushed the Kurdish rebellion and free of all opposition, the Kemalist regime was able to implement policies that destroyed the social foundations of the old order and established those of the new one. In its 1923 regulation the party spoke of exercising national sovereignty in a democratic manner and of modernising society. Now that the government was in a position to carry out reforms, Mustafa Kemal declared: 'Gentlemen . . . the Republic of Turkey cannot be a country of Sheikhs, dervishes, disciples, and followers. The most correct and truest path is the path of civilization.'<sup>4</sup> During the next four years, until the Law for the Maintenance of Order was repealed in March 1929, the legal structure of the country was transformed: women were given rights they had never enjoyed in the past and religion was brought under the state's control so that it could not be manipulated for political ends by opponents of the regime.

There were protests against the reforms and the opposition was driven underground. The institutions associated with the sufi mystical orders (*tarikats*) may have been destroyed, but their tradition remained strong, even while it was dormant. They reasserted themselves after 1950 and have continued to play a critical political role thereafter. The Kemalists were aware of the existence of opposition and tried to defuse it by promoting a friendly opposition party in the legislature. Therefore in August 1930, Mustafa Kemal announced that Ali Fethi (Okyar), his close associate, had been permitted to found an opposition party, the Free Republican Party. However, such was the people's discontent with the regime, exhibited by popular demonstration on behalf of the new party, that the RPP felt threatened. The government resorted to fraud and vote rigging in the local elections and the Free Party protested but to no avail. Unable to obtain any satisfaction from the RPP, Fethi Bey dissolved his party and thus ended the brief experiment with multi-party politics.<sup>5</sup>

The Free Party episode alarmed the ruling party by exposing the strength of conservative forces opposed to the iconoclastic reforms. But the incident in Menemen (23 December 1930), a small town in the most advanced region of western Anatolia, shook the regime to its foundations. Supporters of the old order, led by a Naqshbandi Shaykh, demanded the restoration of the caliphate

4 Speech in Kastamonu, 28 August 1925, *Söylev ve Demeçleri* 2 (1959), p. 215.

5 See Walter Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey: The Free Party and its Aftermath* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); and Tevfik Çavdar, 'Serbest Fırka', in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VIII.



and the *şeriat*. They even beheaded a reserve officer who had been sent to investigate. The government realised that the reforms had not taken root and had to be explained to the people with an ideology and appropriate institutions. The RPP decided to do just that.<sup>6</sup>

In his speech before the RPP's Izmir congress (28 January 1931), Mustafa Kemal redefined his party. He noted that political parties could be founded for a specific and limited purpose; for example, the merchants of Izmir could found a party that would meet their own interests or farmers could form their own party. 'However, our party has not been founded for such a limited purpose. On the contrary, it is a body designed to meet the interests of every class equitably without undermining those of any other.'<sup>7</sup> Along with this above-class policy, the RPP also began to disband organisations outside party control. Thus the Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocakları*), an independent nationalist body, was disbanded in April 1931 and soon after replaced with the party-run People's Houses (*Halkevleri*). Their goal was to spread modern culture and civilisation throughout Turkey, as well as to explain Kemalist ideology now defined by its six principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, revolutionism/reformism and laicism. The process of fusing party and state into a mono-party system was completed by 1935 at the party's fourth congress.<sup>8</sup> Though the mono-party trend was undoubtedly influenced by events in the Soviet Union, Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, Mustafa Kemal, Atatürk after 1934, supported the state's supremacy only because it seemed more efficient than the 'chaos' prevailing in the democracies. The nationalist press even reported that Franklin D. Roosevelt's America favoured state intervention in order to cope with the situation created by the world crisis. However, Atatürk continued to support a mixed economy against the hardline statist; in 1932 he backed the Business Bank (*İş Bankası*) group, replacing the statist minister of the economy, Mustafa Şeref (Özkan), with Celal Bayar, founder of Business Bank. Atatürk removed Recep Peker as the RPP's general secretary in June 1936 and prevented him from carrying out measures to reorganise and further strengthen the party.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile an amnesty law passed on the tenth anniversary of the Republic allowed opponents of the party to return from exile. While the political system

6 On the Menemen incident and the regime's reaction see Kemal Üstün, *Menemen olayı ve Kubilay* (Istanbul: Çağdaş, 1981).

7 *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December, 1931; see also C. H. Dodd, 'Atatürk and political parties', in Heper and Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*.

8 Tunçay, 'Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi', p. 2021.

9 *Ibid.*

was being liberalised, paradoxically the state was being strengthened with such measures as the abolition of Turkish Masonic Society and restrictions against the operation of foreign organisations in Turkey. Finally, in November 1938, Celal Bayar replaced İsmet İnönü both as prime minister and deputy party leader, suggesting that the statist faction was being marginalised. That might have been the case had Atatürk lived longer to consolidate the process. But immediately after his death on 10 November 1938, the assembly elected İsmet İnönü president of Turkey and the statist faction was once again firmly in the saddle. Bayar was allowed to remain prime minister until January 1939 when he was replaced by Refik Saydam.<sup>10</sup>

Faced with a threatening world crisis that led to the Second World War, İnönü decided to reconcile Atatürk's opponents with the regime and pursue a policy of moderation. Thus at the fifth party congress in May 1939 he announced the end of the party's control over the bureaucracy; provincial governors would no longer head local party organisations, nor would the secretary general be minister of the interior. Within the assembly a faction called the Independent Group was set up to act as the loyal opposition.<sup>11</sup> In the general election of March 1939 the process of consensus building continued, and such close associates of Atatürk as Şükrü Kaya and Kılıç Ali were left out while former rivals and critics – Kazım Karabekir, Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın, Refet Bele and Ali Fuad Cebesoy – were brought into the assembly.

Politics during the war undermined the consensus upon which the RPP's dominance had rested. Until the war the two sectors – the state and the private – had grown side by side. But the private sector expanded rapidly during the war. Economic growth and the new sense of confidence made the state's paternalism more difficult to bear. The National Defence Law of 1940 gave the state extensive power over the economy as well as over the rights of citizens, while the Capital Tax of 1942 (*Varlık Vergisi*) attempted to destroy the non-Muslim bourgeoisie by impoverishing it. Both laws showed how arbitrary, unpredictable and unaccountable the state could be, even though its measures were designed to benefit the Muslim bourgeoisie. This situation could be remedied only if the state was made accountable so that the rising bourgeoisie would feel secure. But that could happen only once the war was over.

<sup>10</sup> At the extraordinary congress of the RPP Atatürk was declared 'the Party's founder and its eternal leader' while İnönü became its 'permanent national chief' (*millî şef*). See Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> Çetin Yetkin, *Türkiye'de Tek Parti Yönetimi 1930-1945* (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1983), pp. 178-81, İnönü's speech of 29 May 1939.

The statist wing of the party also understood that post-war changes were under way and had to be taken into account if the party was to remain relevant. They wanted to transform Turkey by implementing land reform and creating a prosperous landholding peasantry instead of a feudal landlord class. The government saw the land reform bill as a 'genuinely revolutionary law'.<sup>12</sup> But the bourgeoisie and the landlords wanted a free-market economy, an independent landed class and integration with the West. They responded by supporting the opposition within the party.

On 7 June 1945, four dissident members of the RPP wrote a memorandum demanding political liberalisation. They proposed that the government implement fully the principle of national sovereignty as stated in the constitution and that party business be carried out in accordance with the principles of democracy. The four were Celal Bayar, a banker and close associate of Atatürk; Adnan Menderes, a prominent landowner from the Aegean region; Fuad Köprülü, a historian and professor of Turcology; and Refik Koraltan, a seasoned bureaucrat. President İnönü's response was not immediate. But in his speech of 1 November, he hinted that he was prepared to make major adjustments to the political system and to bring it in line with the changed circumstances in the world, a reference to the victory of the democracies over fascism. The main deficiency in the Turkish system, he noted, was the lack of an opposition party and he indicated that he was now prepared to allow the formation of such a body. There were rumours in the press that Bayar and his friends were about to form such a party; these rumours were confirmed when the formation of the Democrat Party (DP) was officially announced on 7 January 1946.<sup>13</sup>

Once the opposition became active, multi-party, mass politics soon replaced the politics of elites of the single-party period. The centre of political life also shifted from the cities to the provinces largely untouched by Kemalist reforms or modern secular culture. That explains the growing role of Islam after 1945, and both the RPP and the DP facilitated the Islamic resurgence, as any party would have done, so as to compete successfully in the new political climate.

12. That was the description of Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu. See *Aydın Tarihi* (Ankara: Basın Genel Direktörlüğü, June 1945), pp. 35–47.

13. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, remains the most comprehensive book on the transitional years 1945–50. But see also B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 294 ff.; and Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish experiment in Democracy, 1950–1975* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977) pp. 1–34. Dankwart Rustow, 'Political parties in Turkey: An overview' in Heper and Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*, p. 21, n.2, notes that between 1945 and 1952 thirty political parties were founded, but only the DP was of any consequence.

Despite some hostility to the new party in RPP circles, there was no sense of alarm at the advent of the opposition party. After all, its leaders were all Kemalists of long standing who espoused the same basic philosophy as their opponents, with only a difference in emphasis. Celal Bayar liked to use the metaphor of the two parties resembling two cooks preparing the same dish, but he said that his party had the better recipe for Turkey's development. The RPP leadership expected the DP to behave as the Free Party and done in 1930 and the Independent Group during the war, as a token opposition that would never question the legitimacy of the government. The public therefore saw the new party as a means to deflect popular hostility against the government rather than offering a genuine alternative. The Democrats seemed to be serving that very function, as their programme hardly differed from that of the RPP. They adopted the 'six Kemalist principles', as required by the constitution, but declared that they would interpret them according to the needs of the times rather than dogmatically. Their main aim was to advance democracy by curbing government intervention and increasing the rights and freedoms of the individual. They emphasised populism and popular sovereignty and wanted political initiative to come from the people and not from the party. The Democrats soon became the spokesmen for private enterprise and individual initiative, which won them the support of the businessmen, the intelligentsia and the voting public.

The Republicans had transformed the country by reforming its legal and institutional structure. But most of the people had gained little, though their expectations had risen sharply. They had suffered under the wartime regime that was imposed upon them, marked by widespread corruption and the rule of the gendarme. They especially resented the policy of laicism/secularism, and never understood how they had benefited from it. It was all very well for the RPP to claim that what was being done was 'for the people', but why was it being done 'in spite of the people', as the party's slogan had it?

Between 1946 and 1950, the two parties acquired new identities designed to appeal to the electorate. İnönü reinvented his party by giving it a liberal face, declaring that he was no longer the 'National Chief' or the 'Permanent Chairman'. He decided to hold an early general election before the DP was able to organise, but the Democrats refused to participate in any election until the laws had been democratised. The government therefore made further concessions, amended the electoral law to allow direct elections instead of a two-tier ballot through electoral colleges, granted the universities administrative autonomy and liberalised the press laws. The RPP also abolished the law proscribing associations with the purpose of propagating class distinction,

class interest and regionalism.<sup>14</sup> Republican radicals wanted to make the RPP a 'class party' and win the support of peasants, workers, tenant farmers, artisans and small merchants, at the same time isolating the Democrats as the party of landlords and big business. However, the party's moderates prevailed and the RPP continued to oppose class struggle, seeking instead a balance among the classes.

Despite the reforms, the RPP failed to placate any constituency other than its traditional supporters. The Democrats exploited this popular antagonism towards government by emphasising its arbitrary character and promising to end the hated rule of the gendarmerie and the bureaucracy. They became the party of the masses by constantly attacking 'the tyranny of the state'. Voters were convinced that by bringing the Democrats to power they would free themselves of an oppressive state and improve their material lot as well. Having lost the 1946 election, the Democrats realised that they could come to power only in a fair and honest election in which the bureaucracy remained neutral. They began to prepare the ground for that by winning over the bureaucracy.

The world conjuncture – the triumph of the democracies and the free-market system, the beginning of the Cold War – seemed to favour the Democrats. But President İnönü also understood the trend and supported his party's moderate faction against the statist. On 12 July 1947 he abandoned the single-party option for Turkey and gave the opposition total freedom of action and equality with the RPP.<sup>15</sup> He met the DP's challenge by adopting free-market policies and opening up Turkey's economy. He was convinced that Turkey's future was best served by market rather than state capitalism and that foreign investment on a grand scale was vital for rapid economic growth. If foreign investment could be attracted by political stability and multi-party politics, he was willing to take that path. The lira was devalued, import regulations were eased and banks were permitted to sell their gold reserves. The result of the '7 September measures' was to begin an inflationary trend that pleased local and foreign businesses but alienated the masses. İnönü, the devout secularist, began to make concessions on that front as well. Religious concessions were considered of prime importance to isolate the Democrats as well as the Nation Party, which had been formed in 1948 by conservative dissidents in the DP. Therefore religious instruction was permitted in schools and other concessions followed. Finally in January 1949 Şemsettin Günaltay, a professor of history and a man with Islamist sympathies, was appointed prime minister.

<sup>14</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 106.

<sup>15</sup> Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, p. 169.

The political initiative seemed to have passed to the Republicans. Over the years the RPP had taken on so much of its rival's colouring that it was difficult to tell them apart. The programmes of the two parties hardly differed. Both spoke of an anti-Soviet/communist bipartisan foreign policy that supported the West in the Cold War. As early as June 1946 the left-wing Socialist Workers' and Peasants' Party had been closed down and in 1948 leftist influence was liquidated in Ankara University by the purge of its faculty.

İnönü was confident of success in the general election of 14 May 1950. But he forgot that he personally symbolised the past, and voters were convinced that nothing would really change while he was at the helm. Moreover, the DP had neutralised the bureaucracy by holding the RPP, and not the state, responsible for past misdeeds. Had the bureaucracy remained hostile, the DP's electoral victory would have been uncertain. In a society dominated by the concept of an all-powerful state, the influence of the official in political life was, and still remains, overwhelming.

The May 1950 election results came as a great surprise: the voters delivered a shattering defeat to the RPP, giving the DP 53.35 per cent of the vote and 408 seats while the RPP won a respectable 38.38 per cent but only 39 parliamentary seats. Such was the verdict of the winner-take-all system used at the time. As late as 1954, İnönü described his party's defeat as the 'ingratitude' of the voter.<sup>16</sup> Rarely had a ruling party given up its power at the polls.

The DP victory was a radical turning point in Turkey's political landscape: power had passed into the hands of new elites and away from the old civil-military bureaucracy. Roles were reversed as the DP became the governing party and the RPP went into opposition, creating an identity crisis difficult to adjust to. Had the political culture of Turkey matured sufficiently, İsmet İnönü, the leader of a defeated party, would have retired and allowed a new leadership appropriate to the times to emerge. But the RPP had become 'İnönü's party' and there was a fear that it would fragment if he retired. For their part, the Democrats believed that the people had given them the mandate – what they described as the national will (*milli irade*) – to run the country according to their programme and that the opposition was duty bound to let them do so.

In power the DP leaders were faced with a dilemma: they had promised to destroy the single-party system once they assumed office. But in office they were forced to work with the institutions established by the single-party regime – the constitution, the bureaucracy, the army, in short the entire state

<sup>16</sup> İnönü's comment to Dankwart Rustow was: 'I never expected to see so much ingratitude', quoted in his 'Political parties in Turkey', p. 22, n.12.

structure – as well as with the RPP itself. The government wanted to work within the inherited system and to transform the country. The party's rank and file, on the other hand, pressured the government to destroy the institutions of the old regime as rapidly as possible. İnönü was a constant reminder of the past and became a factor – the 'Paşa factor' – in Turkey's political life throughout the 1950s. The Democrats feared that state institutions, especially the army, continued to be loyal to him because of the historic role he had played in the founding of the Republic. The Democrats countered this fear by leaning on their electoral victories in 1950 and 1954 and the 'national will', which they believed gave them the right to monopolise all state institutions with total disregard for the opposition. Such was the mono-party mentality exercised during the multi-party period.<sup>17</sup>

Even before the general election of May 1954, relations between the parties deteriorated dramatically. The government declared war on the RPP, confiscating the party's assets not indispensable for the continuation of its activities. Laws were passed to strengthen its position in the country by curbing all possible criticism; for example, a law forbade university faculties from participating in the country's politics. Only a sense of insecurity accounts for the anti-opposition measures taken by Prime Minister Menderes. Given the government's economic record, electoral victory in 1954 seemed assured without any repressive measures. Good harvests, foreign credit and investments in public works, especially road construction, gave an air of growing prosperity the opposition could hardly contradict. On 2 May 1954 the voters delivered their verdict with a massive victory for the DP with 57 per cent of the vote and 504 seats, while the RPP's share of the vote declined to 35 per cent with only 31 seats.<sup>18</sup>

Adnan Menderes was transformed by the result. The transition period of 1950–4 was over; he now expected all opposition to bend to the 'national will' or he threatened to break it. In the process he alienated both the universities and the press, the bastions of Turkey's intelligentsia. With a huge majority in parliament, only the party could rein him in. The Istanbul anti-Greek riots of 6–7 September 1955 led to dissension in the party and forced the interior minister to resign on 10 September. Even Menderes's position was shaken and

17 See Ahmad, *Experiment*, in which chapters 2, 3, and 5 are devoted to the DP era, while chapter 4 discusses the RPP in opposition. See also Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, 'The Democratic Party, 1946–1960' in Heper and Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*. Samet Ağaoğlu, *Demokrat Partinin doğuş ve yükseliş sebepleri bir soru* (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1972) provides an insider's view.

18 Ahmad, *Experiment*, pp. 50–1.

he considered resigning. As there was no other leader willing to replace him, his cabinet resigned instead and the assembly gave him a vote of confidence, abandoning the principle of cabinet responsibility! Academics who had supported the DP gave up hope of reform from within the party. They broke away in December 1955 and formed the Freedom Party (FP, *Hürriyet Partisi*). The DP had become 'Menderes's party' and there was no one of any stature to challenge him.

The opposition was in disarray. The RPP was the only party with a national following. But during its years in opposition it failed to offer any alternative to the DP, shed its image as an authoritarian party or win the public's confidence. The Freedom Party, though it became a significant opposition with thirty-two members in the assembly, lacked national organisation to transform itself into an effective opposition. Thus when Menderes announced that an early general election was to be held on 27 October 1957, the three opposition parties – the RPP, the FP and the Republican Nation Party (RNP) – failed to agree on any formula for cooperation, blaming İnönü for the failure.

Though the Democrats won the 1957 election, the turnout was lower and their vote declined to below 50 per cent, losing them their right to claim the mandate of the 'national will'. They still enjoyed a substantial majority in parliament with 424 seats as compared to 178 Republican seats and only 4 each for the FP and RNP. The opposition became more confident, questioned the election results and called for the reform of political institutions. Meanwhile the economy stagnated with high inflation. Under Western pressure, Menderes was forced to introduce a stabilisation programme in August 1958, devaluing the Turkish lira from 2.80 to 9.025 to the US dollar.

Because of the deteriorating economic situation and rising social tensions, the country began to experience popular unrest against the government. There were student demonstrations encouraged by the opposition and troops were called in to quell them. In January 1958 there were rumours of a military conspiracy marked by the arrest of nine officers. But the government was unable to uncover a plot despite a long investigation. The government had lost control over virtually the entire state apparatus – the armed forces, the bureaucracy, the universities and the press. The July 1958 military coup and the overthrow of the monarchy in Iraq had a detrimental effect on political life in Turkey. As a result the Democrats become more truculent and began calling for measures against the opposition, accusing it of engaging in 'subversive activities'.

Prime Minister Menderes spoke of curtailing democracy if the RPP did not desist from its negative policies, but the RPP refused to be intimidated. On



12 October 1958 the Democrats called for the creation of a 'Fatherland Front' in order to counter what they described as the RPP's 'front of malice and hostility'. The Republicans had become more confident after the 1957 election and harassed the government at every opportunity. The decision of the FP to dissolve itself and merge with the Republicans added to their confidence. Moreover, the RPP had begun to acquire a new image by focusing on the country's concern with growing economic inequality and social justice. The party began to call for constitutional and institutional reforms, reforms they themselves had failed to carry out during their long years in power.

After Menderes survived a crash at London's Gatwick airport in February 1959 the government began to exploit a cult of personality. The tragic crash took the lives of fourteen of his entourage who had come to resolve the crisis in Cyprus. But Menderes's survival was portrayed as a miracle; Islam was now used more explicitly in the political struggle against the opposition. Meanwhile, early in 1959, İnönü proposed that the government hold early elections in order to calm the situation. In April, he launched a country-wide campaign whose climax was his tour of the DP's stronghold, the Aegean region where the İnönü party was attacked and he was struck by a stone. The RPP exploited the incident and walked out of the assembly when the DP majority refused to discuss, let alone investigate, the incident.

Political life was polarised and there seemed no common ground between the parties. The RPP kept demanding an early election while DP hardliners called for the disbandment of the RPP. Any possibility of an early election was ruled out on 1 March when the government passed the 1960 budget and political calculations based on an early poll were upset; the RPP declared that 'it was now impossible for the two parties to overcome their differences'.<sup>19</sup>

The political situation continued to deteriorate with neither side willing to compromise. On 18 April 1960 the government established a committee of Democrats to investigate whether the RPP had transgressed the legal limits of opposition. The committee was given extraordinary powers superseding those of the assembly and the courts. It recommended the suspension of all political activity for three months as well as a press blackout on its investigation. As though that was not sufficient, on 27 April the government gave the committee further powers to control the press, to issue subpoenas and even to imprison anyone who hampered the investigation.

The committee sparked off a demonstration in the capital on 19 April and law professors denounced these measures as unconstitutional. In assembly

<sup>19</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 12 March 1960.

debates that followed, İsmet İnönü was suspended for twelve sessions for inciting the people to revolt and resist the law, attacking the Turkish nation and army and the integrity of the assembly.<sup>20</sup> The opposition responded by using its youth organisation to demonstrate in Ankara and Istanbul, leading to the establishment of martial law and the closure of the universities.

By early May the situation had stabilised, largely because the demonstrations had not spread to the urban masses. But relations between the parties remained brittle and there was talk of military intervention. İnönü, hinting at the fall of Syngman Rhee in South Korea, told foreign journalists that ‘an oppressive régime can never be sure of the army’; Foreign Minister Zorlu replied that the ‘Turkish officer is fully aware that the army should not interfere in politics’.<sup>21</sup> But plans for a coup were already at an advanced stage, and though the government seemed aware of a conspiracy it could do little to prevent it. Menderes decided to shore up his position by demonstrating that he still enjoyed popular support by going before meetings throughout the country. He addressed large crowds throughout western Turkey, returning to Ankara for the 19 May Youth Day festival.

The situation seemed to be under control until the War College cadet demonstration of 21 May. The government was flustered, and responded by declaring a state of siege in the capital. Ironically, the conspirators, fearing lest an investigation of the cadets might lead to the discovery of their plot, hastened their coup. It was scheduled to take place while Menderes was visiting Greece on 25 May. But on 24 May Menderes decided to postpone the visit and set out on another tour of Anatolia. He declared that the investigating committee had completed its work and was preparing its report. He was even going to announce an early general election for June in his Konya speech, hoping that would restore political normality. But before he could do so, the conspirators arrested him on the morning of 27 May, opening a new page in Turkey’s political life.<sup>22</sup>

### Political life after 27 May 1960

Having captured political power the military junta of thirty-eight officers, calling itself the National Unity Committee (NUC), adopted the opposition’s ideas of amending the 1924 constitution and bringing Turkey’s institutions in

<sup>20</sup> Ahmad, *Experiment*, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147 ff.



Fig. 9.1 President Celal Bayar inspecting troops with Cemal Gürsel [author's personal collection]

line with the requirements of the post-war world. Professor Siddik Sami Onar, the rector of Istanbul University, was invited to write a new constitution. The junta's decision to involve intellectuals transformed a military coup into an institutional revolution, a 'revolution of the intellectuals'.

The Onar Commission presented its preliminary report on 28 May and legitimised the intervention, describing how the DP had corrupted political power and lost respect for the constitution, the press, the army and the university. The commission recommended creating a totally new state and social institutions before restoring political authority and legal government to civilians. Meanwhile on 12 June 1960 the NUC set up an interim government legalised by a provisional constitution allowing the NUC to rule until a new parliament had been elected.

Broadly speaking, there were two factions in the NUC: moderates and radicals. The moderates constituted the majority representing the liberal and democratic wing that wanted to restore power to the politicians – that is to say, the RPP. The radicals, mainly junior officers under Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, wanted to retain power *sine die* so as to carry out a more thorough

institutional restructuring than that envisaged by the intellectuals. However, on 13 November the fourteen radicals were purged from the NUC, allowing the moderates to carry out their programme. On 22 February 1962 and 20/21 May 1963, frustrated junior officers and cadets led by Colonel Talat Aydemir attempted to carry out coups against the NUC. These were the last attempts at coups from below; the senior officers took counter-measures to ensure that any future military intervention was limited to the hierarchical principle.

The 1961 constitution and the new institutions such as the electoral law guaranteeing proportional representation were designed to prevent 'majoritarian democracy' of the type practised between 1950 and 1960. It was a radical departure from its predecessor. There was a bicameral parliament, with the lower house elected by proportional representation, and an upper house, the senate, consisting of 150 members, some elected by a straight majority while others were appointed by the president. The two chambers together constituted the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The assembly elected the president for a term of seven years from among its own members by a two-thirds majority. The cabinet was responsible to the assembly. An important innovation that frustrated future governments was the creation of the constitutional court, whose principal function was to review the constitutionality of legislation. It became one of the most important and controversial institutions, constantly under attack from politicians whose arbitrary acts it refused to sanction.<sup>23</sup>

The 1961 constitution guaranteed citizens the freedoms of thought, expression, association and publication, as well as other civil liberties, and promised 'social and economic rights . . . and the freedom of work and enterprise'. The military high command was made the guardian of the new regime. Article 111 created the National Security Council (NSC) made up of 'the Ministers provided by law, the Chief of the General Staff, and representatives of the armed forces'. Its function was to assist the cabinet 'in the making of decisions related to national security and co-ordination'. The term 'national security' was so broad and all-embracing that the generals had a say in virtually every problem that came before the cabinet. In March 1962, a bill increased the powers and influence of the NSC, allowing the body to interfere in the deliberations of the cabinet. Moreover Article 110 made the chief of staff responsible to the prime minister, not the defence minister, in the exercise of his duties and powers. The armed forces had become an autonomous institution recognised as the

23 On the new constitution and post-1960 institutions see C. H. Dodd, *Politics and Government in Turkey* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), pp. 107 ff.

guardians and partners of the new order. The high command had become an integral part of the political and socio-economic life of the country.

The revolution changed the political architecture in other ways as well. Turkey now enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than ever before. Citizens had greater civil rights, and the universities greater autonomy, with students allowed to organise their own associations. Workers were given the right to strike as well. In such a political environment, some intellectuals and trade unionists organised the Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT) to represent workers and peasants.

The Democrat Party became a part of history, but its political base remained a much-sought-after prize by all the neo-Democrat parties of the centre-right. Two such parties were formed in 1961 as soon as political activity was restored. They were the Justice Party (JP), led by a retired general with close ties to the junta, and the New Turkey Party (NTP), whose leader, Ekrem Alican, had opposed Menderes and formed the Freedom Party in 1955. In the general election of October 1961, these parties won 48.5 per cent of the vote between them (34.8 and 13.7 per cent respectively) compared to the 36.7 per cent won by İnönü's RPP. The election was a tribute to the charisma of Adnan Menderes. After a public trial that was designed to humiliate him and destroy his prestige, Menderes and two ministers, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu (foreign affairs) and Hasan Polatkan (finance), had been hanged in September 1961. But he continued to exercise his authority from beyond the grave, and the election was also a vote of censure against the military regime which had ousted him. As there was no question of permitting a neo-DP coalition to form the government – that would have invited another intervention by the army – President Cemal Gürsel asked İsmet İnönü to do so.

The first coalition (10 November 1961 – 30 May 1962) was a partnership between the RPP and a reluctant JP. It lasted barely six months because of constant threats and prodding from the Armed Forces Union. The second coalition was formed with great difficulty on 25 June, and only after much bullying by the generals. It survived until December 1963. All the parties in the assembly except the JP provided ministers: that is to say the RPP the NTP and the Republican Peasants' Nation Party, plus independents. But the RPP's partners performed so badly in the local and municipal elections of November 1963 that they withdrew from the coalition, concluding that collaborating with İsmet İnönü was the kiss of death. After these elections, the JP became the most popular party in the country.

İnönü formed his last cabinet with independents on 25 December 1963, coinciding with the crisis over Cyprus and the threat of war with Greece. No

longer commanding a majority in the assembly, İnönü survived and received a vote of confidence on 3 January 1964 because some members of the opposition parties supported the government in the crisis. But throughout 1964, the opposition gave no quarter to the government, despite the country's preoccupation with Cyprus. The cabinet could have been brought down at any time. But JP's leader, Süleyman Demirel, waited for the opportune moment after his own position was more secure both in the party and with the generals. By the beginning of 1965 he was ready to assume control and decided to use the budget debate on 12 February as the occasion to force İnönü's resignation.

The fourth coalition was JP rule by proxy. It was led by Suat Hayri Ürgüplü, an independent senator elected on the JP list, and included other independents as well as ministers from the parties of the right. This government's principal task was to lead the country to the general election later in the year and restore political stability. The voters were tired of weak, ineffective governments. In the 1965 general election they therefore voted for the nearest option they had to the populist DP: Süleyman Demirel's JP.

The JP had been formed on 11 February 1961 with the blessing of the army. It is no coincidence that its leader, Ragıp Gümüşpala, was a retired general who had commanded the Third Army in May 1960. He was appointed chief of the general staff on 3 June and retired in August to emerge as the leader of the principal neo-Democrat party six months later. Gümüşpala was the army's insurance against DP revanchisme and the ex-Democrats' insurance against military pressure. His death on 5 June 1964 brought the party face to face with the crisis of leadership. All the factions put forward their candidates: the hard-line ex-Democrats nominated Said Bilgiç; those who wanted to appease the army proposed a retired air force general, Tekin Arıburun, who had also been Celal Bayar's aide-de-camp; the conservatives supported a law professor, Ali Fuad Başgil; and the middle-of-the-road moderates put forward Demirel, a relatively unknown engineer whose patron had been Adnan Menderes. Because he was the least controversial candidate, the party chose Demirel as its leader.

Süleyman Demirel epitomised the new Turkish politician who rose to the top because the junta had purged the top layer of leadership from politics. That was perhaps either the most destructive or the most constructive aspect (depending on one's political perspective) of the military intervention. An artificial political vacuum was created which sucked in people who would otherwise have remained outside politics. Demirel had been an engineer in the state's Department of Water Works and it is doubtful if he would have entered politics but for the extraordinary circumstances of the 1960s.

Within the party Demirel was seen as a technocrat ideally suited to deal with the modern world and who, in sharp contrast to Menderes, understood the workings of a complex economy. Since he lacked a political base in Isparta, his place of birth, he was considered politically weak and therefore unlikely to dominate the party. Moreover, his modest village–small-town background, which he exploited with skill, made Demirel appealing to the ‘ordinary Turk’, especially the ambitious rural migrant who had settled in the shantytowns of the major cities and who could identify with Demirel as a ‘self-made man’. Though he was not an exceptional orator, his idiom and the way he spoke made him a ‘man of the people’ while leaders like İnönü, and even the socialist Mehmed Ali Aybar, the leader of the WPT, clearly belonged to the old military–bureaucratic elite.<sup>24</sup>

Politics in the 1960s contrasted sharply with those of the previous decade. Turkey had been thoroughly politicised after 1960 and the new freedoms provided by the constitution permitted ideological politics for the first time. There was now a left-wing presence in the country, especially in the universities. Students had organised their own political associations, some affiliated to the WTP. Political literature, especially translations of left-wing writings from the West, was readily available. The isolation of Turkey came to an end and the country became more aware of the world around it. The right, alarmed by this awakening, abandoned its complacency and began to mobilise its own forces in support of what was described as ‘the struggle against communism’.

These political trends coincided with the country’s disenchantment with the United States. Throughout the 1950s Menderes had remained totally loyal to Washington and had supported US Cold War policy without question. On seizing power, the junta immediately reaffirmed Turkey’s commitments to her Western allies. During the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, Prime Minister İnönü promised to stand by Washington even if that meant facing a Soviet attack and nuclear annihilation, as it very nearly did. But during that crisis Turkey learned that she was little more than a bargaining counter in the negotiations between the superpowers and that her ally did not take her interests into account during the negotiations. Public opinion became convinced that Turkey’s interests were negotiable and that she was no longer a ‘strategic asset’ for Washington. The Cyprus crisis of 1963/4 in which Washington seemed to side with Athens – especially the Johnson letter of June 1964 – inflamed public opinion against America. There were anti-American

24 Ibid., pp. 55–103; and Ahmad, *Experiment*, pp. 112–36.

demonstrations which continued on and off until the military takeover of 12 March 1971.<sup>25</sup>

Turkish public opinion had become so outraged by the events on the island and was so convinced of the righteousness of the Turkish cause that there was overwhelming support for military intervention. That is why the shock was so great when the country learned of President Johnson's letter of 5 June to Prime Minister İnönü forbidding intervention. Though the full text of the letter became public knowledge only much later, its contents were leaked to the press almost immediately. It seemed to confirm the claims of the nationalists who, since the Cuban missile crisis, had charged that Turkey was a pawn of the West, which had no intentions of coming to her defence if ever the need arose. The Johnson letter gave rise to virulent anti-Americanism and a clamour from nationalists and the left for a 'non-aligned Turkey'. Even the government was shaken by Johnson's bluntness and its own impotence.

Anti-Americanism became more than an issue of foreign policy; it polarised the country into two camps, which have been rather crudely defined as the pro-American right and the anti-American left. In fact, those who made up the anti-American camp included neo-Kemalist nationalists of all political stripes as well as leftists, and the two often overlapped. Such people came to see Turkey's predicament in terms of dependence on and exploitation by the capitalist West whose leader was the United States. The history of Turkey's war of liberation was reinterpreted and presented as a struggle against imperialism with the Kemalists bent on establishing an independent, non-aligned state while their opponents were willing to accept foreign tutelage.

A similar analysis was applied to post-war Turkey, and the rulers were criticised for lacking the determination to preserve the country's true independence. Both the RPP and the DP were found guilty; the former for accepting the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the latter for leading Turkey into NATO and the Baghdad Pact. However, there was no excuse for continuing these policies now that they had been exposed by recent events as being futile.

For the first time, such criticism came from outside the bureaucratic establishment and the major parties. It came mainly from the intelligentsia, especially groups of students who formed 'ideas clubs' (*fikir kulubleri*) in the universities where they discussed the problems confronting their underdeveloped society or, in their words, a society which had been 'left underdeveloped' by

<sup>25</sup> See George Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1972).



imperialism. These clubs were the first serious attempt to create a civil society in a country where bureaucratic control had smothered all initiative. Some of their members joined the WPT, which provided a political platform for their views. Even the RPP was influenced by these radical trends and was forced to respond by describing itself as 'left-of-centre' in order to remain politically relevant.

The right was alarmed by the appeal of this new radical nationalism which it denounced as communist. Since the neo-Kemalists had succeeded in making nationalism one of the tenets of their ideology, the right, which hitherto had monopolised nationalism, was forced to use Islam as a counterforce. New right-wing organisations such as the Association to Combat Communism were formed as early as 1962 and presented 'Islam as the antidote to communism'. This political manipulation of Islam continued to increase throughout the 1960s, especially after Saudi money became influential through the organisation known as the Union of the World of Islam or the Rabitat-ul Alem-ul Islam. But religion also became significant politically when the economic policies of import substitution marginalised an entire sector of society, parts of which, as we shall see, sought a remedy in Islamist politics.<sup>26</sup>

Demirel, whose Justice Party won the 1965 election with a majority sufficiently large to form the government, had to cope with all the new forces released by the 27 May regime. Because he spent a year in America as an Eisenhower fellow and was employed by a US multinational corporation operating in Turkey, Demirel became the symbol of modern capitalism and the link with the United States. He was therefore attacked from all sides: by the left and the neo-Kemalists, as well as the religious right, which denounced him as a Freemason. Demirel's political position deteriorated as the 1960s drew to a close. He had no solution for the frustration over the Cyprus problem which continued to fester with time, seeming to favour the Greeks. The country became more politicised, resulting in increasing anti-Americanism, especially after the US intervened in Vietnam and the 1967 war in the Middle East.

During these years, Turkey's workers became more militant and politicised by the events of the 1960s, especially by the propaganda of the WPT. Consequently, in 1967 a group of unions broke away from the pro-government confederation, Türk-İş, and formed the radical confederation DİSK (the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions). The former, founded on

<sup>26</sup> Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); Mehmet Yaşar Geyikdağı, *Political Parties in Turkey: The Role of Islam* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

the American model, concentrated on economic demands and discouraged political affiliation. The latter, following Europe's example, claimed that economic demands could be won only through political action. It therefore supported the WPT. The split resulted in defections and the weakening of Türk-İş which, despite claims to the contrary, was unofficially affiliated to the JP. The government and the employers' unions were alarmed. They saw that they were losing control of the workers' movement and decided to regain control before it was too late.

Demirel may have controlled the situation better had his own party remained united. But that was not the case, not because of any failing on his part, but because of the consequences of economic policies with which he was identified. He wanted to be the architect of a modern capitalist state and society, willing to bury old, outmoded structures in order to achieve this goal. He told the assembly: 'The path of the modern Turkish state will be totally different from the methods of nineteenth-century capitalism.' And so it was. Large-scale modern capitalist enterprises, which in some areas had the character of a monopoly, soon became dominant throughout Anatolia. A small group of capitalists, some of whom were soon to be listed among the Fortune 500 companies, took advantage of the new economic policies. But the small independent tradesmen, merchants and artisans who were scattered throughout the country failed to survive the competition.

Those who represented this traditional lower-middle class in the JP began to criticise Demirel for falling into the hands of vested interests and serving them rather than the people. They adopted Islamist rhetoric and denounced him as a Freemason, allegedly like most big businessmen and industrialists in Turkey. Demirel recognised the dilemma of these people, but he offered them no help, only advice. 'In our country', he told their delegation, 'there are a million and a half tradesmen and artisans; that means about five or six million people. Self-sufficient, experienced, knowledgeable, and skilled people are a force in the democratic order. Today's small tradesman may be tomorrow's factory owner.' But in order to rise above their predicament they were told to organise and pool their resources. However, few were either able or willing to do that; many went bankrupt.

If these people failed to heed Demirel's advice, they did begin to organise politically, supporting those who opposed Demirel and his policies. In May 1968, Professor Necmettin Erbakan, soon to found the Islamist National Order Party (NOP), attacked the government's economic policies which he said had made Turkey into 'an open market for Europe and America'. A year later, with the support of the delegates from Anatolia, Erbakan defeated Demirel's

candidate in the election for the presidency of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The JP won the general election in October 1969 but its share of the vote was reduced by 6.4 per cent. Encouraged by these results, Erbakan formed his own party in January 1970. Later in the year, in December, another faction broke away from the JP and formed the Democratic Party. Meanwhile, Colonel Türkeş, who had seized control of the Republican People's Nation Party in 1965, renamed it the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) in February 1969. His aim was to attract the same lower-middle-class vote by creating a militant, ultra-nationalist, neo-fascist party that claimed to be equally opposed to monopoly capitalism and communism. The RPP had also split soon after it adopted the left-of-centre programme in 1965. Its right wing broke away in protest and under Professor Turhan Feyzioğlu's leadership formed the Reliance Party, later the Republican Reliance Party. This fragmented right became the major factor of political instability of the 1970s.

Rising political tensions, societal changes and events around the world coalesced in the late 1960s and early 1970s to produce an explosive situation. Industrial expansion with a high rate of growth created ever-rising expectations that proved impossible to meet. High inflation restricted consumption to an affluent minority; the labour force grew but never in proportion to the demand for jobs so that unemployment was always rising, though mitigated by emigration to Europe to fuel its 'economic miracle'. At the same time workers became more militant and joined unions in increasing numbers. As in most Third World countries, Turkey's population not only increased rapidly, but the percentage of those under thirty assumed alarming proportions. The education system, already inadequate, failed to meet the needs of a growing student body while the economy failed to provide jobs to thousands of new graduates each year. Schools and institutions of higher education (universities, teachers' training colleges and schools of theology) doubled their enrolment in the 1960s and became recruiting grounds for fringe political groups of the left and right.

Murat Belge, a left-wing activist in the 1960s and an ideologue of the left, wrote that in 'the prevailing hothouse atmosphere of Turkish student politics, the dramatic events of 1968 – the Tet offensive in February, the French student rising in May, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August – had an even greater impact than in most countries'.<sup>27</sup> These events coincided with the

27 Murat Belge [Ahmet Samim], 'The left', in Irvin Schick and Ertigrul Tonak (eds.), *Turkey in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). On the WPT see Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961–1971)* (Istanbul: Yurt Yayınları, 2002).

amendment of the electoral law on 1 March abolishing the 'national remainder system'. This provision of the electoral law had allowed the Workers' Party to win fourteen seats in the 1965 assembly and play an oppositional role of historic importance totally out of proportion to its size. That is why the government wanted to amend the law and remove the WPT from the political scene.

Under the amended law, the WPT would have secured only three seats for the same number of votes; in the 1969 election it won only two. Commenting on the new law, *The Economist* (9 March 1968) drew the obvious conclusion: 'Since the Turkish Communist party is banned, the Labour [i.e. Workers'] party is indeed the only legal home for extreme left-wingers. Subversion thrives in political frustration, and whether the Labour party is subversive now, it is much more likely to be tempted in that direction if its parliamentary outlet is largely stopped up.'

The WPT itself did not become subversive, though some of its supporters did. Convinced that the parliamentary road had been closed off to the left, some came to believe that the only way to power was via a military coup in partnership with sympathetic officers. The left became divided among those who continued to support the WPT and those who supported the 'National Democratic Revolution' – that is to say, an alliance with radical military officers. Others were convinced that the answer to Turkey's problems was to be found in Maoism of perhaps the Indian, Naxalite variety, or the Latin American urban guerrilla strategy.

Meanwhile, the government, having wounded the left with the election law, decided to destroy DİSK's political unionism by passing a law favouring the pro-government Türk-İş. The amended law, wrote Professor Işıklı, an expert on the Turkish union movement, 'prohibited the existence of unions unless they represented at least one third of those working in a particular workplace. Most important, however, was the explicit and public admission by government spokesmen that the amendment was going to be used to wipe DİSK out of existence.'<sup>28</sup>

The workers responded to this law by staging a vast and largely spontaneous demonstration on 15/16 June 1970 and succeeded in totally paralysing the entire Istanbul–Marmara region. This was the last straw for the regime, which described the demonstration as 'the dress rehearsal for revolution'. Observers noted the government's inability to maintain law and order with the institutions of the Second Republic and predicted another period of

<sup>28</sup> Alpaslan Işıklı, 'Wage labor and unionization', in Schick and Tonak (eds.), *Turkey in Transition*, p. 320.

military tutelage. Demirel had often complained that it was impossible to run the country with such a liberal and permissive constitution.

By January 1971, Turkey seemed to be in a state of chaos. The universities had ceased to function. Left-wing students emulating Latin American urban guerrillas robbed banks, kidnapped US servicemen and attacked American targets. Neo-fascist militants bombed the homes of university professors critical of the government. Factories were on strike and more workdays were lost between 1 January and 12 March 1971 than during any prior year.<sup>29</sup> The Islamists had become more aggressive and the NOP openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces.

By the beginning of March, Demirel had been overwhelmed by the rapidly deteriorating situation which he no longer controlled. A meeting of his party's assembly group on 8 March showed that he no longer enjoyed its confidence and the generals learned of this immediately from their confidants in the JP. Two days later, they met and decided that Demirel would have to go since he no longer enjoyed the full support of his own party. Therefore on 12 March, the generals acting on behalf of the Turkish armed forces presented a memorandum to President Sunay and the chairmen of the two chambers. They demanded the formation of a strong, credible government capable of implementing reforms envisaged by the constitution. They threatened to take power if the government refused to resign, leaving Demirel with no alternative. His resignation cleared the way for the anti-democratic measures he had often called for but had been unable to take because of the guarantees provided by the 1961 constitution.

*Social democracy and political terror, 1971–80*

The generals gave priority 'to the restoration of law and order', and that meant the elimination of the political left and all its organisations such as the Workers' Party, the Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey or the Dev-Genç youth movement, the ideas clubs in the universities, branches of the Union of Teachers and DİSK. At the same time, the so-called Idealist Hearths, the youth organisation of the Nationalist Action Party, were given free rein to act as vigilantes against their ideological rivals.

The junta replaced Demirel's government with an 'above-party' cabinet of technocrats and on 19 March Professor Nihat Erim, a conservative Republican, was appointed prime minister. He was supported by the right-wing parties and, with İnönü's backing, was expected to win over the RPP. Erim failed

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 325.

to carry out the reform programme envisaged by the junta, partly because of the fresh outbreak of terrorist violence carried out by left-wing extremists driven underground when the political left was proscribed. Martial law was declared in April in eleven provinces, including the south-east where Kurdish separatists were active. As a result political life ground to a halt and on 3 May all strikes and lockouts were declared illegal.

For the next two years, repression became the order of the day. The constitution, blamed by the right for all of Turkey's problems, was amended without public discussion so that the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the 1961 constitution were removed. The generals had concluded that the liberal constitution was a luxury for Turkey, a developing society. After the liberal constitution had been amended, there was talk of reform. But the right was opposed to economic reforms and Demirel therefore created a crisis by withdrawing JP ministers from the cabinet. The crisis was resolved on Demirel's terms but eleven reformist ministers, convinced that reform was dead, resigned and forced Erim to follow suit.

The second Erim cabinet (11 December 1971–17 April 1972) was also a failure. Without Demirel's support Erim could do little, and Demirel was biding his time in order to regain power at the next election. Erim therefore resigned and was succeeded by Ferit Melen, who continued to give priority to law and order rather than reform and the fundamental problems of economy and society remained untouched. But as 1973 approached, the mood in the country began to change with the promise of elections. In May 1972 Bulent Ecevit had succeeded in capturing the RPP's leadership from İsmet İnönü and began to steer the party towards social democracy. He also abandoned İnönü's policy of collaborating with the generals; instead, he and Demirel agreed not to elect General Faruk Gürler president when General Cevdet Sunay's term expired in 1973. On 6 April retired admiral Fahri Korutürk, a compromise candidate, was elected president. When Melen resigned on 7 April, Korutürk appointed Naim Talu, a conservative spokesman for big business, as prime minister. Reform was now a dead letter and it was left to the post-election government to carry it out.

Turkey began to prepare for election. The right seemed firmly under Demirel's control, though it was still fragmented thanks to the formation of such small parties as the Reliance Party, the National Action Party and the National Salvation Party (NSP), formed after the closure of the Order Party in 1971. The left, heavily bruised after March 1971, began to coalesce around the new, social democratic RPP. Social democracy became so dominant after the October 1973 election that the generals were forced to intervene

even more forcefully in September 1980. The RPP had won with 33.3 per cent of the vote and 185 seats, but it still lacked the 226 necessary for a parliamentary majority. Ecevit was forced to form a coalition with a party of the right.

When Ecevit was asked to form the government, Turkey's establishment wanted to see an RPP–JP coalition, with Demirel restraining Ecevit's radicalism. But Demirel refused to join any coalition, knowing that the new government would face the odium of having to take unpopular economic measures in order to deal with a worsening economic crisis, partly the result of a downturn in the world economy. Ecevit was forced to turn to Necmettin Erbakan, the Islamist populist leader. After much haggling, the RPP–NSP coalition, formed in January 1974, was based not on any shared programme but on pure political opportunism. It was therefore fragile and not destined to last. It ended on 18 September when Ecevit resigned. Having become a charismatic leader following his decision to intervene in Cyprus after the Greek Cypriot coup against President Makarios, he was convinced that he would win an early election and come to power on his own.

He miscalculated badly because the parties of the right, fearing an Ecevit landslide, refused to permit an early election. Instead, they agreed to form a coalition under Demirel that came to be known as the 'Nationalist Front', the 'Rightist Front against the Left'. The cabinet, announced on 31 March 1975, was made up of four parties – Justice, Salvation, Reliance and the Nationalist Action Party – supported from the outside by Democratic Party defectors acting as independents. The Action Party was able to have two of its three deputies in the cabinet, thereby legitimising its neo-fascist ideology. The parties of the right used the coalition to colonise the state by placing their supporters in various ministries. The pro-Front media popularised the slogan 'Demirel in Parliament, Türkeş in the Street' and the party's militants, known as the Grey Wolves, began to play an even more active role in the violence so that political terrorism became a regular feature of Turkish life. Political violence plagued Turkey throughout the 1970s, provoking military intervention in 1980. Its immediate aim was to undermine Ecevit's social democratic movement as an electoral factor.

The attack on RPP meetings did not have the desired effect of intimidating the party's supporters. When the senate elections were held in October 1975, Ecevit's share of the vote increased from 35.4 to 43.9 per cent. Demirel's also increased, from 30.8 to 40.8 per cent, while that of the small parties declined. It seemed as though the country, tired of squabbling coalitions, was returning to a two-party system.

The voters responded neither to the Islamist propaganda of the Salvationists nor to the exploitation by the neo-fascists of the communist threat. They voted parties with programmes: the RPP's promise to create a capitalist Turkey 'with a human face', and Demirel's 'Great Turkey' of which all Turks would be proud.

Ironically the election results guaranteed the continuation of the Nationalist Front coalition until the general election for which all parties began to prepare in earnest via their control over the state structure. Violence increased throughout 1976 and 1977 with the government unable to check it. The liberal press spoke openly of the threat of fascism. Prime Minister Demirel decided that the only way to extricate himself from the Nationalist Front was to hold an early general election. On 5 April 1977 the JP and the RPP voted together to hold the election on 5 June.

The tempo and intensity of political violence increased sharply with the announcement of elections. It reached its climax on May Day 1977 when a huge rally was organised in Istanbul as a show of strength against what it described as 'the rising tide of fascism'. The right succeeded in turning the rally into a massacre. If their aim was to intimidate voters it failed miserably, for when the election was held the following month the turnout had increased from 68.8 per cent in 1973 to 72.2 per cent and though the RPP won 213 seats it failed to win the 226 necessary to form the government on its own.<sup>30</sup>

Ecevit formed a minority government, the first in Turkish history, but he failed to win a vote of confidence on 3 July. Demirel then formed the 'Second Nationalist Front' government on 21 July. In this coalition the JP had thirteen portfolios, the Islamists eight and the neo-fascists five, exposing how dependent the JP had become on the extreme right. However, this coalition did not survive the local elections of December 1977. On 31 December, Demirel failed to win the vote of confidence when twelve JP deputies who had resigned voted against the government because of the ongoing violence and oppression against the Kurds in the south-east.

Ecevit was able to form a cabinet with the support of defectors from the JP and the old RPP, all acting as independents. He knew that such men would never permit him to implement his programme, and all he promised to do was to 'restore peace and unity' in the country. But he failed to accomplish

<sup>30</sup> The RPP won 41.4 per cent of the ballot and the JP 36.9 per cent. The share of other parties, apart from the NAP, was substantially reduced and the Democratic and Reliance parties were virtually eliminated. The Salvationists lost half their seats in the assembly, suggesting that religion was not the primary factor in determining the way Turks voted. Only the NAP among the minor parties did well in 1977; its vote increased from 3.4 to 6.4 per cent and its representation in the assembly from three to thirteen seats. In this case both violence and state power had paid off.



even that and political terrorism took a sinister turn when the right began a campaign of assassination, culminating on 1 February 1979 with the murder of Abdi İpekçi, the editor of *Milliyet*, a liberal daily. Ecevit was forced to declare martial law in thirteen provinces on 25 December 1978 when the terrorists began targeting the Alevi community, an offshoot of the Shia sect. Even the limited martial law failed to curb the violence, and support for Ecevit began to erode. When partial senate and by-elections were held on 14 October 1979, the voters punished Ecevit: his vote declined to 29 per cent, that of the JP rose to 46.83 per cent, while the NSP and the NAP made no gains.

Ecevit resigned on 16 October and Demirel formed a minority government on 12 November. Another Nationalist Front cabinet was totally unacceptable though Demirel continued to depend on support of the right. The right had accomplished its aim of destroying social democracy just as the political left had been destroyed after 1971. Demirel won a vote of confidence on 25 November, although his government could not provide the political stability the region required after the political turmoil caused by the revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Moreover, the onset of globalisation also required a government that was not amenable to populist electoral politics. Both required a military intervention that reorganised the entire political structure of Turkey to provide such a government. That is precisely what the military intervention of 12 September 1980 set out to do.

*Political and economic restructuring after 1980*

After dismissing the Demirel government, the generals set themselves up as the executive and legislative branch by establishing the National Security Council (NSC), made up of General Kenan Evren, who was chief of staff, and the chiefs of the army, navy, air force and gendarmerie. They governed, though some power was delegated to a technocratic cabinet led by retired admiral Bülent Ulusu until civilian rule was restored after the elections of November 1983. Meanwhile martial law was established and the generals set about restoring 'law and order'. All political life came to a standstill as the political parties were closed down and former politicians banned from participating in politics. Before some semblance of political life was restored, Turkey's institutions – the constitution, the electoral law, the universities – were radically amended so as to depoliticise the country.

When political parties were restored in 1983, only 'new politicians' were allowed to form them. Party leaders were carefully vetted, and were disqualified if they seemed a threat to the new regime. All members of the

1980 parliament were disqualified from political activity for five years and all party leaders for ten. Thus when elections were held only three parties participated. The centre-right had coalesced around Turgut Özal's Motherland Party, known by its Turkish acronym ANAP, and retired general Turgut Sunalp's Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), while the centre-left was represented by the Populist Party led by Necdet Calp, a retired bureaucrat whose only qualification was that he had been İsmet İnönü's secretary!<sup>31</sup> Though banned, former politicians such as Süleyman Demirel, Bülent Ecevit, Necmettin Erbakan and Alpaslan Türkeş continued to cast a long shadow on political life.

The election of November 1983 brought Özal's ANAP to power with 45.15 per cent of the vote, with the Populist Party receiving 30.46 per cent and the NDP 23.27 per cent. Özal claimed that his party represented all the ideological tendencies – from left to right – that had existed before 1980. He was a technocrat who had led the economy in Demirel's last cabinet and continued to do so under the generals. He had asked for five years of 'social peace' with no political disruptions, and that is what the regime provided. He was given a free hand 'to correct the country's economic problems' as he saw fit. That meant bringing down inflation by freeing prices, cutting back on consumption by holding down wages, increasing exports, and signing agreements with foreign creditors to postpone debt repayments that amounted to about eighteen billion dollars.

In Turkey, parties tend to assume the character of the leader rather than remain parties of ideas or programmes. Thus the RPP became İnönü's party, the DP Menderes's party, the JP Demirel's party and the Islamist parties Erbakan's parties. ANAP was Özal's party right from the start, and his cabinets reflected his absolute control over the body; there was never a question of inner-party democracy. This remained true even after he became president in 1989 and formally left the party's leadership.

By early 1986 the banned leaders – Demirel, Ecevit, Erbakan and Türkeş – had emerged on the political scene behind proxy parties. But these men had to wait until the referendum of 6 September 1987 before their political rights were restored. The way was open for an early election set for 29 November, with Özal calculating that the less time the opposition had to organise the better for his party. ANAP won the election but with a

31 See Üstün Ergüder, 'The Motherland Party, 1983–1989'; Andrew Mango, 'The Social Democratic Populist Party, 1983–1989', and Feride Acar, 'The True Path Party, 1983–1989', all in Heper and Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*.

reduced majority of 36.29 per cent, with the Social Democrats (SHP), led by İsmet İnönü's son, Erdal İnönü, coming second with 24.81 per cent, and Demirel's True Path Party (TPP) coming in third with 19.15 per cent. Four smaller parties failed to clear the 10 per cent hurdle introduced by the new electoral law and therefore won no seats. The left vote was now divided between the SHP and Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DLP), which won 8.53 per cent.

ANAP'S position continued to decline, and the local election of 26 March 1989 proved to be disastrous; within five years the party's vote had declined from 45 to 22 per cent. Özal knew that he would lose his majority by the time the next general election was held in 1992, ending his political career. He therefore decided that he would have the assembly elect him president when General Evren's term ended in 1989. The party, divided between Islamists of the 'Holy Alliance' and nationalists, saw Özal's departure as an opportunity to seize control. Turgut Özal was elected Turkey's eighth president on 31 October and assumed office on 9 November 1989.

Özal's presidency (1989–93) was marked by political instability. Led by Yıldırım Akbulut, a colourless prime minister and without Özal's controlling hand, factions began to struggle for leadership, further weakening the party. There was talk of military intervention because the government was unable to deal with a growing Kurdish insurgency, political assassination, 'Islamic fundamentalism', and economic problems. The Gulf crisis of 2 August 1990 distracted the country's attention from domestic issues and strengthened Özal's position. But the effect was only temporary. A survey taken in March 1991 showed that support for ANAP had slipped in Istanbul from 22 to 18 per cent. The fortunes of the social democrats had also declined and only Demirel's TPP had made some gains. The election in June of the young, 'modern' Mesut Yılmaz – he was only forty-three – as ANAP's leader, and the defeat for the nationalist–religious groups, promised to improve the party's standing in the country. He decided to hold the general election in 1991 rather than 1992 when the economic situation would be even worse. Therefore the assembly voted to go to the polls on 20 October.

The elections vindicated Yılmaz's decision, and ANAP came second behind Demirel's TPP. The real losers were the divided social democrats. The Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), the most popular party in 1989, had slumped to third place with 20.8 per cent of the vote and eighty-eight seats while Ecevit's Democratic Left Party won 10.8 per cent of the vote and seven seats. Erbakan's Welfare Party entered the assembly with sixty-two seats, reflecting the growing political importance of Turkey's Muslim middle class.

There were no significant ideological differences between the two centre-right parties – ANAP and TPP – but they refused to merge and form a strong government. Vested interests prevailed and Yılmaz preferred to go into opposition rather than accept Demirel's leadership. Instead, despite ideological differences, Demirel formed a coalition with the Erdal İnönü's social democrats, the kind of non-ideological coalition the country had sought throughout the 1970s.<sup>32</sup> The government had 266 assembly seats and 48 per cent of the popular vote. In theory, it was a strong government capable of carrying out the reforms necessary to enter the global market.

Turgut Özal died suddenly on 17 April 1993, and was succeeded in May as president by Süleyman Demirel. He gave up the party's leadership to Tansu Çiller (1946-), a relatively young and inexperienced politician, with a doctorate in economics and close links with the business community. The American-educated Çiller was expected to give a modern image to the party. She continued the coalition with the social democrats whose position with the voters eroded as they gave support to right-wing policies detrimental to the common man. The Welfare Party – the reincarnation of the Islamist NSP – took advantage and strengthened its position with the electorate.

During the 1990s, the Kurdish insurrection, which began in 1984, became more serious and moderate Kurdish politicians formed political parties in order to put their case in the assembly. One such party, the People's Labour Party, was banned by the constitutional court in August 1993, and so was its successor, the People's Democracy Party (HADEP), formed in May 1994. It too ran into problems. Meanwhile, the fortunes of the TPP declined rapidly under Çiller's leadership and the Welfare Party won the general election in December 1995 with 21.38 per cent of the vote and 158 seats.<sup>33</sup>

None of the parties had won sufficient seats to form the government, and attempts to form coalitions led nowhere. The secular parties refused to join a Welfare-led coalition while the leaders of TPP and ANAP – Çiller and Yılmaz – refused to serve under each other's leadership. In March 1996, Yılmaz and Çiller finally agreed to form a coalition, with a rotating premiership, which was

32 See M. Hakan Yavuz, 'Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey', *Comparative Politics* 30, 1 (October 1997) and Metin Heper and Filiz Başkan, 'The Politics of Coalition Government in Turkey, 1961–1999', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 7, 1–2 (Spring 2001). See also Ziya Öniş, 'The Political Economy of the Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective', *Third World Quarterly* 18, 4 (1997).

33 The DYP received 19.18 per cent and 135 seats; ANAP, 19.65 per cent and 133 seats; DSP, 14.64%; RPP, 10.71%, reverted to its historic name; MHP, 8.18%; HADEP 4.17%; YDM (New Democracy Movement), 0.48%; Nation Party, 0.45%; New Democracy Party (YDP), 0.34%; the TPP split as a result of Çiller's leadership and dissidents formed the Democrat Turkey Party.

supported by Ecevit's Democratic Left Party. Refah's Erbakan undermined this coalition, threatening to expose Çiller's alleged corruption by launching a parliamentary investigation. Such a coalition was too unstable to have a long life, and tensions within the cabinet forced Mesut Yılmaz to resign on 6 June. There was no choice but to ask Erbakan to form the next cabinet, the first to be led by an Islamist.

Erbakan's blackmail paid off, and Tansu Çiller agreed to form a coalition with the Islamists providing he froze the investigation against her. Erbakan, ever the opportunist, agreed and a 'Welfarepath coalition' with Erbakan as prime minister was announced on 29 June 1996.<sup>34</sup> In the wake of such unprincipled political behaviour, a survey revealed that people had lost confidence in politicians as well as other state institutions, and only confidence in the military had increased.

Despite his cautious approach as prime minister, Erbakan was constantly criticised in the secular media. The generals who dominated the NSC humiliated him by further expanding Turkey's military cooperation with Israel. Moreover, his efforts to appease the secular elites alienated his own grassroots supporters, who expected the kind of aggressive Islamist policy he had always spoken of before coming to power. But Welfare's leadership had become moderate and centrist because of the gains made by the Anatolian bourgeoisie, the so-called 'Anatolian tigers', since the 1980s. The Islamist bourgeoisie wanted to share in the benefits of globalisation, and these were forthcoming only if their party was in power. The rank and file, on the other hand, having suffered economic hardship, continued to voice radical demands.

In February 1997, things came to a head when a Welfare Party mayor organised a 'Jerusalem Day' demonstration and called for the liberation of the city from Israel. It was a demonstration reminiscent of the Menemen incident of 1930, and the secular forces, particularly the armed forces, were appalled that such an event could be staged so near the capital. The army responded by sending tanks through the Sincan township, arresting the mayor, declaring the Iranian ambassador, who had spoken at the demonstration, *persona non grata*, and launching an investigation against the Welfare Party. Moreover, on 28 February the generals, describing political Islam as more dangerous than Kurdish nationalism, forced Erbakan to accept a twenty-point programme designed to undermine the influence of political Islam. Its supporters were to be purged from the state apparatus along with schools for prayer leaders and

<sup>34</sup> See Heper and Başkan, 'The Politics of Coalition Government'.

preachers, the expansion of which the generals had legislated after September 1980 in order to counter the influence of 'leftist ideologies'.

In August a law was passed extending secular education from five to eight years with the aim of weakening the hold of political Islam on Turkey's lower- and lower-middle-class youth.

Premier Erbakan's position became untenable, and he resigned on 18 June 1997. He hoped that the coalition would survive if President Demirel appointed Tansu Çiller prime minister. But Demirel appointed ANAP's Mesut Yılmaz, and the courts launched an investigation against the Welfare Party. The leaders, realising that their party would be dissolved, responded by forming another party – the Virtue Party (VP, *Fazilet Partisi*) in December 1997 with Recai Kutan as its leader.<sup>35</sup> Each time the Islamist party was dissolved, its successor claimed to be more moderate and less Islamist. By May, Recai Kutan had abandoned the hardline Islamist rhetoric of Erbakan and no longer spoke of leaving NATO or of introducing Islamic banking. He also went to Anıtkabır to pay his respects to Atatürk, a demonstration that the Islamists were willing to join the mainstream of political life.

Nevertheless, the constitutional court dissolved the Virtue Party in June 2001, describing it as a hotbed of fundamentalism, especially for its role in promoting the headscarf in its campaign against the secular state. In July, Islamists formed Saadet or Felicity Party (FP), while in August the reformist and 'modern' wing of the Virtue Party formed the Justice and Development Party or JDP which they claimed was secular. Its leader was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former mayor of Istanbul, who had been imprisoned for inciting religious hatred and the violation of secularism. He soon became the most popular leader, and polls showed that his party would win the next election.

The Yılmaz-led coalition with the Democratic Left Party and the Democrat Turkey Party, founded by anti-Çiller dissidents, lasted until November 1998. Yılmaz was brought down by an opposition censure motion that charged him with corruption and links with the 'mafia'. Ecevit, a rare politician with a clean record, formed a coalition with independents on 11 January 1999. His task was to lead Turkey to elections to be held on 25 April 1999. The capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the

<sup>35</sup> The constitutional court had disbanded the Welfare Party in January 1998 and banned Erbakan and the party's principal leaders from politics for five years. See Birol Yeşilada, 'Realignment and Party Adaption: The Case of *Refah* and *Fazilet* Parties', in Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Eşmer (eds.), *Politics, Parties, and Election in Turkey* (Boulder and London: Lynne Reiner, 2003).

PKK, on 15 February heightened the nationalist mood of the country, virtually guaranteeing a nationalist landslide in the coming election.

Ecevit, who had virtually abandoned social democracy, had reinvented himself as an ardent nationalist while the Action Party had no problem flaunting its extreme nationalism. The election result was described as a political earthquake. The nationalists (DLP and NAP) had eclipsed the liberals (ANAP, TPP) because voters were tired of the corruption and bickering of Yılmaz and Çiller. The Islamist vote had also declined from 19 in 1995 to 15.94 per cent in 1999, but the party was still a force to be reckoned with, as municipal election results showed. HADEP, the pro-Kurdish party, had failed at the national level but it controlled cities in south-east Anatolia. The RPP, on the other hand, seemed to offer nothing to the voter and failed to enter parliament.<sup>36</sup>

Bülent Ecevit formed a coalition with ANAP and the NAP. His principal task was to manage a stagnant economy, and the coalition partners promised to work together and provide sorely needed political stability, thereby winning the support of the business community led by the Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association of Turkey (TÜSİAD, Türkiye Sanayiciler ve İş Adamları Derneği). But the devastating earthquakes of 17 August and 12 November 1999 marginalised plans to reform the economy, forcing the parties to pull together in the crisis. However, they could not agree to amend the constitution and allow Süleyman Demirel a second term when his presidency expired on 5 May 2000. They agreed to elect Ahmet Necdet Sezer as Turkey's tenth president. He was president of the constitutional court, an independent-minded liberal secularist who promised to supervise the reform agenda required to meet the 'Copenhagen criteria' for Turkey's entry into the EU. These criteria included economic reform, restoration of human rights and the protection of minorities (Kurds, Alevis and non-Muslims), as well as bringing the military under civil control. The EU's demands divided the coalition and slowed down the reform programme.

In 2001 a new crisis rocked the coalition, which had been the most stable government of the last five years. On 19 February President Sezer rebuked Ecevit for tolerating corruption in his cabinet. Ecevit exploded, describing Sezer's accusation as a 'crisis'. The stock market, anticipating a political crisis,

<sup>36</sup> The DSP share of the vote rose 10 per cent from 14 per cent in 1995 to 23.33 per cent; NAP's rose over 100 per cent from 8.18 to 17.07 per cent; the Virtue Party's vote fell from 19 to 15.94 per cent; ANAP fell 5 per cent to 14.12; DYP fell 8 per cent from 19 to 11.11 per cent; the CHP with 9.02 failed to clear the barrage. For the first time, the CHP found itself out of parliament; HADEP also failed to clear the 10 per cent threshold. See Ali Çarkoğlu, 'The Geography of the April 1999 Turkish Elections', *Turkish Studies* 1, 1 (Spring 2000).

collapsed, creating financial and economic turmoil. The country's financial situation was already weak, and Ecevit's words merely triggered a storm that was about to break.<sup>37</sup>

Economic instability inevitably led to political instability. There were rumours that the coalition would be replaced by an interim government that would lead the country to fresh elections. On 16 July, Ecevit issued the warning that rumours were undermining confidence in the coalition and its ability to carry out the IMF programme. President Bush's 'war on terror', following the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington, enhanced Turkey's strategic position, ensuring urgent US loans for the recovery programme. But Washington required that Turkey have a stable government as well.

The ideologically divided coalition failed to carry out many of the reforms required by the EU, such as the abolition of the death penalty, giving certain rights to the Kurdish population, or bringing the armed forces under civilian control. It was a question of votes and the NAP feared it would lose its constituency (the lower middle class of Anatolia) if it supported such reforms. Ecevit's sudden illness on 4 May 2002 raised the question of his resignation, but he refused to make way for a new leader. Had Ecevit resigned the coalition could have carried on under a new DLP leader such as İsmail Cem. As it was, however, the coalition was paralysed; the three parties knew that an early election might mean that they would not even clear the 10 per cent hurdle and be left out of the next parliament. Polls showed that the Justice and Development Party was considered the favourite in an early election.

On 7 July 2002, the NAP's leader, Devlet Bahçeli, finally called for an early election to be held on 3 November, bringing the political crisis to a head. Next day the deputy prime minister, Hüsamettin Özkan, and three others from the DLP resigned. When Foreign Minister İsmail Cem resigned from the cabinet and the party, there were rumours that he would form a new political party with Kemal Derviş and Hüsamettin Özkan that would govern Turkey with the support of centre-right parties (ANAP and the TPP). But Ecevit refused to resign, and announced on 16 August that he would lead the country to early elections.

İsmail Cem's New Turkey Party was formed on 22 July. Kemal Derviş, the most significant member of the troika, failed to join. When he resigned in August, he joined the RPP after failing to bring about a union of the centre-left

37 See Sefa Kaplan, *Kemal Derviş: Bir 'kurtarıcı' öyküsü* (Istanbul: Metis, 2001). Kemal Derviş gives his own account, in Kemal Derviş, *Krizden çıkış ve çağdas sosyal demokrasi* (Istanbul: Doğan, 2006). He describes the period from 25 February 2001, when he received a phone call from Ecevit, to 23 August, when he joined the RPP.



that included elements of the centre-right. He wanted to create a political movement he called 'contemporary social democracy', capable of coming to power on its own at the next election and forming a strong government that could carry out the reforms necessary to end the political and economic crises that had plagued Turkey throughout the 1990s. When he failed to form such a movement, Derviş joined the RPP led by Deniz Baykal. His membership of the RPP and his support in the media improved the party's standing among voters. Surveys showed that Baykal was receiving only about 6 per cent of the vote while the JDP was in the 20 per cent range. Baykal had failed to enter parliament in 1999 and it was doubtful that he would do so in 2002. By early September the polls showed that the RPP had moved up from 6.9 to 14.3 per cent thanks to the 'Kemal Derviş factor'. Meanwhile, the JDP's vote had risen to almost 25 per cent. Confronted with this reality, on 18 September TÜSİAD's chair Tuncay Özlühan stated his preference for an RPP-JDP coalition, especially if Kemal Derviş was in charge of the economy. That was the hope of the bourgeoisie: that the election of 3 November 2002 would produce a two-party coalition so that the RPP could control the 'extremist, Islamist' tendencies of its JDP partners.

The election results on 4 November produced a surprise. Justice and Development emerged as the winner with over 34 per cent of the votes and 363 seats, more than the number required to form the government. The RPP had won 19 per cent of the votes and had 180 seats, becoming the only opposition. All the other parties had failed to clear the 10 per cent barrier and therefore had no representation in a parliament in which 37 per cent of the voters were not represented.<sup>38</sup> The voters were totally disenchanted with the old leaders and parties, and Erdoğan was seen as a new leader. Though he had cut his teeth in Erbakan's Welfare Party he had broken away and had not joined its successor. He also had the common touch: he lacked a modern, professional education and knew no foreign language, but had succeeded in becoming a dollar millionaire while mayor of Istanbul. He was seen as a role model.

Though the JDP had its roots in political Islam, most of its leaders had moved to the centre and declared their party to be secular, democratic and conservative, Muslim democrats, rather like the Christian democrats in Europe. Surveys showed that the party's support was 51 per cent rural and 49 per cent urban, and largely male. Housewives (17 per cent) tended to vote JDP while

38 It seemed that the voters had humiliated and eliminated the former party leaders Bülent Ecevit, Devlet Bahçeli, Necmettin Erbakan, Mesut Yılmaz and Tansu Çiller. Even the newly founded Young Party of the business tycoon Cem Uzan won only 7.2 per cent of the vote. Professional advertisers had run his campaign and given the voters musical concerts and free food, as well as much publicity in the Uzan-owned media.

urban working women tended not to. The Felicity Party, formed on 21 July 2001, was the successor to former parties of political Islam, and the electorate humiliated it by giving it only 2.5 per cent of the vote. The JDP represented the counter-elite that had emerged in Anatolia, and the press described the 2002 election as 'the Anatolian revolution'.

The JDP relied on what may be described as the support of 'moderate' Muslims, the majority of whom (43 per cent) opposed the implementation of the *şeriat*. Some of its vote (27 per cent) came from the Felicity Party base, who voted for the JDP mainly because other parties had failed to deal with the economic crisis, marked by unemployment and rising prices. They reasoned that Erdoğan, having successfully run 'greater Istanbul', would be able to do the same with Turkey.<sup>39</sup>

Having served a prison sentence for making a divisive political speech, Erdoğan became prime minister in March 2003 only after a constitutional amendment permitted him to be elected to parliament. Under his leadership the party strengthened its position, increasing its vote in the local elections of March 2004 from 34 to 43 per cent while that of the RPP declined from 19 to 15 per cent. The Republican opposition offered no alternative programme while the governing party passed 'reform packets' to meet EU demands. Such was the progress in passing reforms that on 17 December 2004 the EU accepted Turkey's membership conditionally on further reforms being implemented, and announced that accession talks could begin on 3 October 2005.

The liberal press saw the talks as the beginning of a long journey that would create a 'new Europe and a new Turkey'. But there was also a nationalist backlash resulting from all the barriers that some European countries were raising in Turkey's path, constantly making new demands for Turkey to meet. Thus Baykal's RPP, like other opposition parties, was becoming nationalist and conservative rather than retaining its social democratic identity. The JDP was also affected by its own policies, which alienated its radical Islamist wing, disenchanted by the fact that the party had failed to legalise the headscarf in public spaces such as the universities, or open up more employment opportunities for the graduates of religious schools. On the other hand, secular forces in Turkey feared that Erdoğan had a secret agenda to Islamise society by colonising the state by means of packing the bureaucracy with his party's supporters, a fear heightened by Erdoğan's defence of a partial ban on alcohol sales in December 2005.

39 See Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*. (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002).

By 2006 the major political issue was the succession to President Ahmed Necdet Sezer, a militant secularist, whose term expired in May 2007. Secular Turkey was alarmed when it realised that Prime Minister Erdoğan was determined that his party should elect the president while it had the necessary majority in parliament to do so. The opposition therefore called for an early general election hoping that the JDP, whose popularity was thought to be declining, would not have the necessary votes in the new parliament to elect its nominee as president. It would therefore have to settle for a compromise candidate and elect an above-party president. But Erdoğan stated categorically: 'Don't expect early elections.' On 10 April 2007, President Sezer, presiding over his last NSC meeting, warned his audience that religious fundamentalism had reached alarming proportions and Turkey's only guarantee against this threat was its secular order, hinting that a military intervention was still on the cards if the governing party persisted in electing an 'Islamist' president. However, Erdoğan was faced with opposition from the radical 'Islamist' wing in his own party. Led by Bülent Arınç, the speaker of the house, they demanded that a committed 'Islamist' be nominated, failing which Arınç would put himself forward, thus dividing the party. Erdoğan compromised and chose Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, a founding member of the JDP and respected by the secularists as a moderate Islamist.

The Republican opposition in parliament objected that the president could not be elected without a two-thirds quorum in the chamber, and they took their objection to the constitutional court. The court agreed, and annulled the first round of voting on 1 May 2007. When, five days later, parliament again failed to elect Abdullah Gül, his candidacy was withdrawn and the scene was set for an early general election, to be held on Sunday 22 July. The parties began to negotiate mergers so as to present the electorate with a robust and united front against the JDP. The 'centre-left' RPP and the Democratic Left Party (DSP) failed to agree on the terms of a merger, though the DSP agreed to fight the election alongside the RPP. The centre-right parties – the True Path and the Motherland Party – tried to reinvent themselves by calling themselves the Democrat Party, hoping that the magic of the name would bring them the necessary 10 per cent of the vote to get into parliament. However ANAP withdrew from the negotiations and the party decided not to contest the election, thereby virtually disappearing from political life. Erdoğan tried to appeal to the centre-right voters by purging his party's electoral list of radical 'Islamists' so as to present a moderate face. The Nationalist Action Party decided to strengthen its ultra-nationalist image by including in its electoral list Tugrul Türkeş, the son of Alparslan Türkeş, the party's founder. Meanwhile

there were massive demonstrations in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir against the JDP and in support of a secular Turkey.

The result of the general election of 22 July 2007 confounded most predictions. The JDP performed far better than expected, winning 45.5 per cent of the vote and 341 parliamentary seats, while the RPP won 21 per cent and 112 seats, and the Nationalist Action Party won 15 per cent and 71 seats. Independents unofficially representing the DSP, which would not have cleared the 10 per cent barrier, won 23 of the 26 independent seats and were therefore able to articulate Kurdish grievances in the next parliament.

The 2007 election is considered one of the most important elections of the multi-party period. It highlighted the bankruptcy of the traditional centre-right parties – the DYP and ANAP – with the failure of the newly created Democrat Party to enter parliament. Some therefore see the JDP, despite its Islamist roots, as the new representative of the centre-right. The RPP's poor performance under its current leadership forced it to find a new leader who would take the party from ultra-nationalism back to the kind of social democracy that made it so successful in the 1970s. The ultra-nationalist NAP emerged as the party of the extreme right, having doubled its share of the vote since the November 2002 election. The 2007 election was undoubtedly one of the most important elections of the multi-party period, marking the bankruptcy of the centre-right. Following the elections, Erdoğan again chose Abdullah Gül as the AKP's candidate for the presidency, and he was duly elected the eleventh president of the Republic on 28 August 2007. At the time this chapter was written (October 2007) the AKP controlled three principal levers of power – the executive, the legislature and the presidency. It remained to be seen whether the party would use its powers to pursue policy to maintain the secular character of society or try to impose traditional–'religious' values on Turkey.

## Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey: is the glass more than half full?

ŞEVKET PAMUK

### Introduction

One metaphor for assessing Turkey's economic performance in the twentieth century may be to ask whether the glass is half full or half empty. On the one hand, Turkey has experienced far-reaching economic changes since the early 1920s. The primarily rural and agricultural economy of the early twentieth century has transformed into a mostly urban economy. Average or per capita incomes have increased more than fivefold during this period. Other indicators of standards of living have also improved significantly. Life expectancy at birth has almost doubled from under thirty-five years in the interwar era to sixty-nine years. Adult literacy rates have increased from about 10 per cent to about 90 per cent (see table 10.1).

On the other hand, it would be misleading to judge economic performance only in absolute terms. The twentieth century, especially its second half, was a period of rapid increases in the standards of living in most parts of the developing world, of which Turkey is still considered a part. Increases in per capita incomes in Turkey since the First World War have been close to, but slightly above, world averages and averages for the developing countries. The income per capita gap between Turkey and the high-income countries of Western Europe and North America was about the same in 2005 as it was on the eve of the First World War. Certainly, Turkey has not been one of the miracle-producing economies of the twentieth century. Moreover, its record in human development has been weaker than its record in economic growth, close to but perhaps below average for the developing world. In addition, these increases or improvements have not all been achieved at a steady pace. In fact, Turkey's economy has been plagued by recurring political and macro-economic instability that has led to a number of crises, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. The most severe of these, a financial crisis, occurred in 2001. That the economy managed to rebound strongly within a few years should perhaps remind us of the above metaphor.

Table 10.1. *Economic and human development indicators for Turkey, 1913–2005*

	1913	1923	1950	1980	2005	
Population (mill.)	17	13	21	45	72	
Share of urban pop. (5000 inhab.) in total pop. (per cent)	28	24	25	44	68	
Share of agriculture in the labour force (per cent)	80	85	84	51	34	
Share of agriculture in GDP (per cent)	55	42	54	26	11	
Share of industry in GDP (per cent)	13	11	13	21	26	
GDP per capita, PPP adj. in 1990 US\$	1,200	710	1,620	4,020	7,500	
GDP per capita as per cent of (W. Europe + US)	29	16	24	25	30	
GDP per capita as per cent of developing countries	168	n.a.	188	219	225	
GDP per capita as per cent of world	79	n.a.	77	89	117	
Life expectancy at birth (years)	30?	n.a.	47	62	69	
Adult literacy (ages above 15 in per cent)	10	n.a.	32	69	89	
<b>Annual growth rates (in per cent)</b>	<b>1913–50</b>	<b>1923–50</b>	<b>1950–80</b>	<b>1980–2005</b>	<b>1913–2005</b>	<b>1923–2005</b>
Population	0.6	1.8	2.6	1.9	1.6	2.1
GDP per capita	0.8	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.0	2.9
Total agricultural output	1.0	4.5	2.9	1.2	1.7	2.9
Total industrial output	3.1	5.8	7.7	5.8	5.3	6.5

*Notes:* The inclusion of women working in the family farm in the labour force but the exclusion of urban women working at home from the labour force tends to overstate the share of agriculture in Turkish employment statistics. Per capita GDP in constant US dollars is the basic indicator for examining long-term increases in average incomes. These series are calculated with a purchasing power parity adjustment in order to take into account the fact that price levels tend to be lower and the same dollar income purchases more in lower-income countries.

*Sources:* For Turkish data except per capita GDP: State Institute of Statistics, *Statistical Indicators, 1923–2002*; for GDP per capita series: Maddison, *The World Economy, 2001* and 2003; Eldem, *Osmanlı*; Özel and Pamuk, ‘Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyete’; and Pamuk, ‘Estimating Economic Growth’.

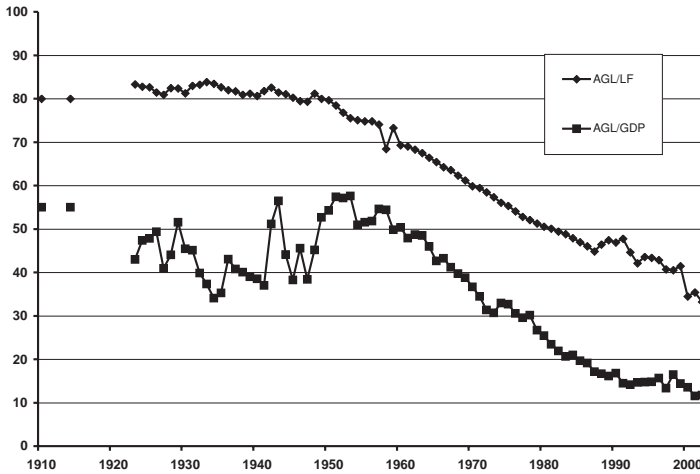
Also on the positive side, the last decade has witnessed important changes in Turkey's relations with the European Union (EU). Although the first agreement for cooperation between Turkey and what was then the Common Market dates back to 1963, both sides remained doubtful about Turkey's integration. Turkey's first application for membership in 1987 was turned down, but it joined the European customs union in 1996. After a reasonably successful implementation of the customs union for one decade, formal negotiations for membership in the EU began in 2006.

I begin below with several key indicators that offer a summary evaluation of Turkey's economic development record since 1923 or 1913 in a comparative framework. The rest of the chapter attempts to understand that record. In recent years, a growing literature has emphasised the contribution of the social and political environment, and more specifically of institutions defined as written and unwritten rules and norms, to long-term economic change. In the second section, I will sketch a framework for understanding the linkages between the evolution of institutions and economic change in twentieth-century Turkey. I will then examine, in the third section, world economic conditions, government economic policies and the basic macro-economic outcomes for Turkey in three sub-periods, in order to gain additional insights into its absolute and relative growth record. With its very large share in employment and total output until recently, agriculture is of central importance also for understanding long-term economic development in Turkey. Similarly, income distribution, or more generally the distribution of gains, must be part of any long-term evaluation. In the fourth section, I focus on these two themes, agriculture and income distribution and regional disparities, before offering some concluding remarks in the fifth section.

### Economic growth and development record

In the 1920s, less than 25 per cent of Turkey's population lived in urban centres with more than 5,000 inhabitants. The rural-urban shares remained little changed until after the Second World War, but Turkey has been experiencing rapid urbanisation since then. The proportion of the population living in urban centres, as defined above, increased to 44 per cent by 1980 and to 68 per cent by 2005. Rapid urbanisation has been accompanied by large shifts within the labour force. Agriculture's share in total employment declined from about 80 per cent in 1913 and in 1950 to 34 per cent in 2005, while industry's share rose from about 9 to 23 per cent, and that of services increased from 11 to 43 per cent. Similarly, agriculture's share in GDP declined from about 55 per cent

## Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey



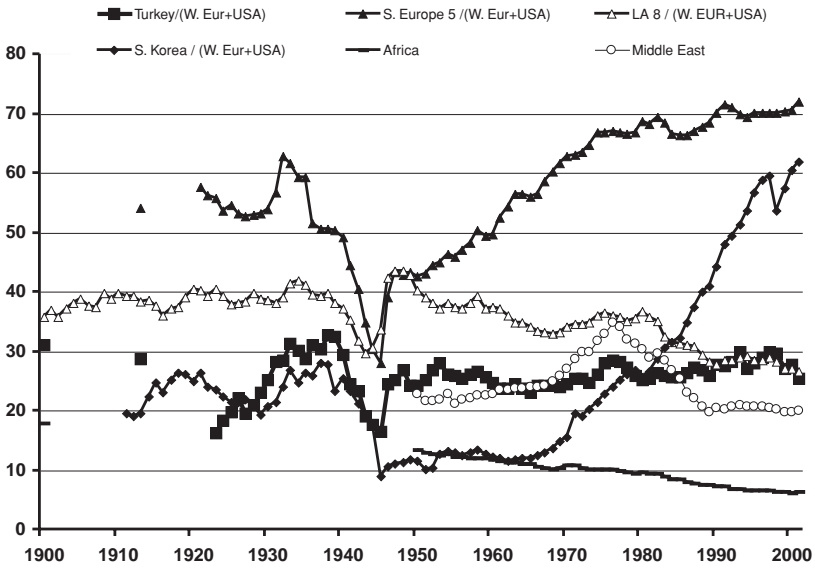
Graph 10.1 Share of agriculture in GDP and labour force in Turkey, 1910–2000

in 1913 and 54 per cent in 1950 to 11 per cent in 2005. The share of industry has increased from about 13 per cent in 1913 to 26 per cent in 2005 while the share of services has increased from 34 to 64 per cent during the same period (see table 10.1 and graph 10.1).

The beginning date or base year for long-term comparisons of economic growth (1913 vs. 1923) requires an explanation. A decade of wars beginning in 1912 had resulted in a dramatic 20 per cent decline in population and as much as 40 per cent decline in per capita income by 1922. As a result, the GDP per capita levels for Turkey were sharply lower than long-term trend values in the early 1920s. For this reason, the year selected for long-term comparisons makes a big difference. While I provide values for both base years in table 10.1, for most comparisons I will use 1913, which is also used in most international comparisons.

Per capita income in Turkey and the rest of the Ottoman Empire rose during the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the gap between the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States and the developing world, including the Ottoman Empire, widened considerably during the century before the First World War, due to the rapid rates of industrialisation in the former group. GDP per capita in the area within the present-day borders of Turkey was approximately US\$ 1,200 in 1913 (see table 10.1). This was 29 per cent of the level of GDP per capita in the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States, calculated on a population-weighted basis, and





Graph 10.2 GDP per capita as percentage of (USA + W. Europe), 1900–2000

168 per cent of the GDP per capita income in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, also calculated on a population-weighted basis and for the same year.

Two world wars and a great depression later, per capita income in Turkey in 1950 was more than 30 per cent higher, at US\$ 1,620 constant or inflation adjusted. This was equal to 24 per cent of the per capita income of the high-income countries and 188 per cent of the per capita income in the developing countries. By 2005, GDP per capita in Turkey had reached US\$ 7,500, an increase of more than fivefold since 1913. This figure corresponded to about 30 per cent of the level of GDP per capita in the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States, and approximately 225 per cent of the GDP per capita income of the developing countries for the same year. In other words, average incomes in Turkey have increased at about the same rate as those in high-income countries since 1913. Turkey has not been able to close any of this large gap. At the same time, increases in average incomes in Turkey since 1913 have been slightly faster than those in the developing world. If 1923 were chosen as the base year, Turkey's long-term record would look considerably better (table 10.1)

In graph 10.2, I provide per capita GDP series for Turkey and a number of other regions and continents as percentages of the average for Western

Europe and the United States for the period since 1913. This graph allows further insights into Turkey's comparative economic record in the twentieth century. It shows that while its growth record was better than the averages for Latin America, Middle East and Africa as a whole, Turkey has lagged well behind Southern Europe and East Asia since 1950.

However, GDP per capita is not an adequate measure of economic development or more generally of standards of living. For this reason, the human development index (HDI), a broader measure first introduced by the United Nations in 1990, has become quite popular. HDI has three components: longevity as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge as measured by a weighted average of adult literacy; and years of schooling and income as measured by GDP per capita. Estimates for HDI for Turkey and other countries are available for the benchmark years of 1950 and 1975, as well as for the period since 1990. Recently, I made a separate estimate for Turkey in 1913, making use of the data cited above. These estimates allow us to obtain an overview of the standards of living in twentieth-century Turkey and insert it into a comparative framework (table 10.2).

It is not easy to compare the evolution of HDI of developing countries with those of developed countries today or in the past. For this purpose, I present in the last column of table 10.2 a measure for the extent to which countries have reduced the distance between their level of HDI of 1950 and the maximum attainable score of 1. While Turkey and many other developing countries with low initial levels have experienced large increases in HDI since 1950, the developed countries have generally shown larger increases when measured as per cent of maximum possible increase. In terms of this latter measure, Turkey has done better than African and Eastern European countries, about the same as Latin American countries, and has lagged behind East Asian countries since 1950.

Changes in life expectancy at birth, or  $e(0)$ , provide a dramatic example of changes in twentieth-century Turkey. The earliest period for which we have estimates of  $e(0)$  is for the 1930s, when the figure was thirty years. Life expectancy at birth had increased to forty-seven years by 1950 and to sixty-two years by 1980. In 2004, the latest year for which we have the estimates,  $e(0)$  stood at seventy years: sixty-eight years for men and seventy-three years for women (table 10.1). While official estimates are not available for adult literacy in the early years of the Republic, it can be safely assumed that the rate did not exceed 10 per cent in the 1920s. In 1935, the literacy rate for individuals over the age of fifteen was 19 per cent: 31 per cent for men and only 8 per cent for women. By 1950, the adult literacy rate had increased to 28 per cent: 47 per cent

Table 10.2. *Changes in the human development index, 1913–2003*

Country	1913	1950	1975	2003	Change in 1950–2003 as per cent of possible
Western Europe	0.580	0.707	0.848	0.935	77.8
North America	0.643	0.774	0.861	0.945	75.7
Japan	0.466	0.676	0.851	0.943	82.4
China	n.a.	0.225	0.522	0.755	68.4
India	0.143	0.247	0.406	0.602	47.1
Africa	n.a.	0.271	n.a.	0.549	38.1
Greece		0.625	0.800	0.912	76.5
Russia	0.345	0.694	n.a.	0.795	33.0
Bulgaria	0.403	0.607	n.a.	0.808	51.1
Argentina	0.511	0.526	0.784	0.863	71.1
Mexico	0.270	0.484	0.688	0.814	64.0
Brazil	0.249	0.448	0.641	0.792	62.3
South Korea	n.a.	0.459	0.687	0.901	81.7
Malaysia	n.a.	0.407	0.614	0.796	65.6
Thailand	0.388	0.603	0.757	0.778	44.1
Indonesia	n.a.	0.337	0.467	0.697	54.3
Tunisia	n.a.	0.303	0.512	0.753	64.6
Iran	n.a.	0.331	0.507	0.736	60.5
Egypt	n.a.	0.291	0.433	0.659	51.9
Nigeria	n.a.	0.194	0.326	0.453	32.1
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>0.190</b>	<b>0.382</b>	<b>0.592</b>	<b>0.750</b>	<b>59.5</b>

*Notes:* Regional or continental averages are weighted by the population of the individual countries. For definition of HDI, see the text. In the last column, the maximum possible improvement in HDI is 1-(HDI in 1950).

*Sources:* Crafts (1997) and (2002) for 1913–1975 values except for Turkey in 1913 and United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2005* for 2003 values.

for men and 13 per cent for women. In 2005, it stood at 89 per cent: 95 per cent for men and 82 per cent for women (table 10.1).

Since 1913 and especially since 1950, levels and improvements in life expectancy in Turkey have been comparable to those in other developing countries with similar levels of income. However, since 1913 and 1950 education levels in Turkey as measured by literacy, years of schooling and school enrolment have been lagging significantly behind education levels in developing countries with similar levels of GDP. At the same time, the incidence of poverty in Turkey has been lower in comparison to developing countries with similar levels of income. These contrasts can be clearly observed in a

comparison of Turkey with countries in Latin America since 1913 and 1950. Levels of schooling in Turkey have been below the averages for the larger Latin American countries throughout the twentieth century. The lagging performance in education is not a matter for the historical record alone, however. This deficit will make itself increasingly felt in the decades ahead. For further increases in GDP per capita, Turkey will need a better-educated labour force and significant increases in the technology and knowledge component of its economy.

Along with other Muslim majority countries, Turkey also lags behind developing countries with comparable levels of per capita income in indices aiming to measure gender equality and the socio-economic development of women.<sup>1</sup> One other reason why many of Turkey's human development measures have been lagging behind is the large regional differences in these indicators between the mostly Kurdish south-east and the rest of the country, as discussed on pp. 296–97 below.

### Institutional change and economic growth

For decades it was believed that economic growth results in part from the accumulation of factors of production and improvements in their quality through investment in machines and skill formation, and in part from increases in productivity derived from advances in technology and organisational efficiency. In recent years, however, a useful distinction is being made between the proximate and the ultimate sources of economic growth. The former relates to the contributions made by the increases in factor inputs and productivity as cited above. The latter refers to aspects of the social and economic environment that influence the rate at which inputs and productivity grow. A growing literature emphasises the importance of institutions or written and unwritten rules of a society and policies such as property rights and their enforcement, norms of behaviour, political and macro-economic stability, which affect the incentives to invest and innovate. In this new perspective, the basic function of institutions is to provide certainty in economic activity. More complex economic structures will not emerge unless institutions can reduce the uncertainties associated with such structures. Recent research has also revealed very large differences in total productivity levels between countries. It appears that more than half of the differences in levels of per capita production are due to the

<sup>1</sup> Based on the World Bank, *World Development Report*, and United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* for recent years.

productivity obtained from the same amount of resources rather than from the accumulation of more machines or skills per person.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the quality of institutions is increasingly seen as the key to the explanation of economic growth and long-term differences in per capita GDP. Economic institutions also determine the distribution of income and wealth. In other words, they determine not only the size of the aggregate pie, but also how it is divided amongst different groups in society.

The process of how economic institutions are determined and the reasons why they vary across countries are still not sufficiently well understood. Nonetheless, it is clear that because different social groups including state elites benefit from different economic institutions, there is generally a conflict of interest over the choice of economic institutions, which is ultimately resolved in favour of groups with greater political power. The distribution of political power in society is in turn determined by political institutions and the distribution of economic power. For long-term growth, economic institutions should not offer incentives to narrow groups, but instead open up opportunities to broader sections of society. For this reason, political economy and political institutions are considered key determinants of economic institutions and the direction of institutional change.<sup>3</sup>

The evolution of economic institutions in Turkey and their consequences for economic growth and distribution of income have not been closely studied. In the next section, I will examine structural change, industrialisation and the basic macro-economic outcomes in three sub-periods: the interwar years or the single-party era until the end of the Second World War; the import-substituting industrialisation era after the Second World War; and the globalisation era since 1980. I will thus seek to gain insights not only into Turkey's record of economic growth and distribution, but also into the evolution of the economic institutions that played a key role in these outcomes. Briefly, there were significant institutional changes in Turkey during the interwar period. Ultimately, however, political and economic power remained with the state elites. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, the regime remained decidedly

2 There is growing evidence that this generalisation applies to Turkey as well: Şeref Saygılı, Cengiz Cihan and Hasan Yurtoğlu, 'Productivity and Growth in OECD Countries: An Assessment of the Determinants of Productivity', *Yapı Kredi Economic Review* 12 (2001); Sumru Altuğ and Alpay Filiztekin, 'Productivity and growth, 1923–2003', in S. Altuğ and A. Filiztekin (eds.), *The Turkish Economy: The Real Economy, Corporate Governance and Reform* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

3 Daron Acemoğlu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson, 'Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth', in P. Aghion and S. N. Durlauf (eds.), *Handbook of Economic Growth* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005); see also Elhanan Helpman, *The Mystery of Economic Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

urban in a country where the overwhelming majority lived in rural areas and engaged in agriculture. As a result, these institutional changes did not reach large segments of the population. Rates of increase of per capita GDP remained low in Turkey as in most developing countries during this period. Pace of economic growth accelerated in both the developed and developing countries including Turkey after the Second World War. With the transition to a more open political regime and urbanisation, urban industrial groups began to take power away from the state elites. The economic institutions began to reflect those changes. This transition, however, has not been smooth or easy. For most of the last half-century, political and macro-economic instability, including three military coups and a series of fragile coalitions and the shortcomings of the institutional environment, seriously undermined the economy's growth potential. The glass has remained only half full.

*World wars, the Great Depression and étatism, 1913–1946*

The Ottoman economy, including those areas that later comprised modern Turkey, remained mostly agricultural until the First World War. Nonetheless, per capita income was rising in most regions of the empire during the decades before the war.<sup>4</sup> But the destruction and death that accompanied the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, the First World War and the War of Independence, 1920–2, had severe and long-lasting consequences. Total casualties, military and civilian, of Muslims during this decade are estimated at close to 2 million. In addition, most of the Armenian populace of about 1.5 million in Anatolia were deported, killed or died of disease, after 1915. Finally, under the Lausanne Convention, approximately 1.2 million Orthodox Greeks were forced to leave Anatolia, and in return, close to half a million Muslims arrived from Greece and the Balkans after 1922.

As a result of these massive changes, the population of what became the Republic of Turkey declined from about 17 million in 1914 to 13 million at the end of 1924.<sup>5</sup> The population of the new nation-state had also become more homogeneous, with Muslim Turks and the Kurds who lived mostly in the south-east making up close to 98 per cent of the total. The dramatic decline in the Greek and Armenian populations meant that many of the commercialised, export-oriented farmers of western Anatolia and the eastern Black Sea coast,

4 Şevket Pamuk, 'Estimating Economic Growth in the Middle East since 1820', *Journal of Economic History* 66 (2006).

5 Based on Behar Cem, *The Population of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, 1500–1927* (Ankara: State Institute of Statistics, 1995) and Vedat Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun iktisadi şartları hakkında bir tetkik* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Publications, 1970).

as well as the artisans, leading merchants and moneylenders who linked the rural areas to the port cities and the European trading houses, had died or departed. Agriculture, industry and mining were all affected adversely by the loss of human lives and by the deterioration and destruction of equipment, draft animals and plants during the war years. GDP per capita in 1923 was approximately 40 per cent below its 1914 levels<sup>6</sup> (also table 10.1).

The former military officers, bureaucrats and intellectuals who assumed the positions of leadership in the new republic viewed the building of a new nation-state and modernisation through Westernisation as two closely related goals. They strove, from the onset, to create a national economy within the new borders. The new leadership was keenly aware that financial and economic dependence on European powers had created serious political problems for the Ottoman state. At the Lausanne Peace Conference (1922–3), which defined, amongst other things, the international economic framework for the new state, they succeeded in abolishing the regime of capitulations that had provided special privileges to foreign citizens. The parties also agreed that the new republic would be free to pursue its own commercial policies after 1929. The new government saw the construction of new railways and the nationalisation of the existing companies as important steps towards the political and economic unification of the new state inside new borders. Despite its rhetoric to the contrary, the regime's priorities lay with the urban areas. It considered industrialisation and the creation of a Turkish bourgeoisie to be the key ingredients of national economic development.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the new regime abolished the much-dreaded agricultural tithe and the animal tax in 1924. This move represented a major break from Ottoman patterns of taxation and a significant decrease in the tax burden of the rural population. While this decision has been interpreted as a concession to the large landowners, the new leadership was concerned more about alleviating the poverty of the small and medium-sized producers, who made up the overwhelming majority of the rural population. In the longer term, the abolition of the tithe and tax-farming helped consolidate small peasant ownership. The

6 Işık Özel and Şevket Pamuk, 'Osmanlı'dan cumhuriyet'e kişi başına üretim ve milli gelir, 1907–1950', in Mustafa Sönmez (ed.), *75 Yılda Paranın Serüveni* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), based on a comparison of the Turkish agricultural statistics of the 1920s as summarised in Tuncer Bulutay, Yahya S. Tezel and Nuri Yıldırım, *Türkiye milli geliri, 1923–1948*, 2 vols. (Ankara: University of Ankara Publications, 1974) with the Ottoman agricultural statistics before the First World War as given in Tevfik Güran, *Agricultural Statistics of Turkey during the Ottoman Period* (Ankara: State Institute of Statistics, 1997).

7 Şerif Mardin, 'Turkey: the transformation of an economic code', in E. Özbudun and A. Ulusan (eds.), *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980).

recovery of agriculture provided an important lift to the urban economy as well. By the end of the 1920s, GDP per capita levels had attained the levels prevailing before the First World War.<sup>8</sup>

### The Great Depression

The principal mechanism for the transmission of the Great Depression to the Turkish economy was the sharp decline in prices of agricultural commodities. Decreases in the prices of leading crops, such as wheat and other cereals, tobacco, raisins, hazelnuts and cotton, averaged more than 50 per cent from 1928–9 to 1932–3, much more than the decreases in prices of non-agricultural goods and services. These adverse price movements created a sharp sense of agricultural collapse in the more commercialised regions of the country, in western Anatolia, along the eastern Black Sea coast and in the cotton-growing Adana region in the south.<sup>9</sup>

Earlier in 1929, even before the onset of the crisis, the government had begun to move towards protectionism and greater control over foreign trade and foreign exchange. By the second half of the 1930s, more than 80 per cent of the country's foreign trade was conducted under clearing and reciprocal quota systems.<sup>10</sup> As the unfavourable world market conditions continued, the government announced in 1930 a new strategy of *étatisme*, which promoted the state as a leading producer and investor in the urban sector. A first five-year industrial plan was adopted in 1934 with the assistance of Soviet advisers. By the end of the decade, state economic enterprises had emerged as important and even leading producers in a number of key sectors, such as textiles, sugar, iron and steel, glass works, cement, utilities and mining.<sup>11</sup> *Etatisme* undoubtedly had a long-lasting impact in Turkey, and later in other countries around the Middle East. However, the initial efforts in the 1930s made only modest contributions to economic growth and structural change. For one thing, state enterprises in manufacturing and many other areas did not begin operations until after 1933. Close to half of all fixed investments by the public sector during this decade went to railway construction and other forms of transport. In 1938, state

8 Özel and Pamuk, 'Osmanlı'dan cumhuriyet'e'.

9 İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *1929 Dünya Buhramı'nda Türkiye'nin iktisadi politika arayışları* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1977); Yahya S. Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin iktisadi tarihi (1923–1950)*, 2nd edn. (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986), pp. 98–106.

10 Ibid., pp. 139–62

11 Korkut Boratav, 'Kemalist economic policies and etatism', in A. Kazancıgil and E. Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (London: C. Hurst, 1981), pp. 172–89; Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin*, pp. 197–285; İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Uygulamaya geçerken Türkiye'de devletçiliğin oluşumu* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1982).



enterprises accounted for only 1 per cent of total employment in the country. Approximately 75 per cent of employment in manufacturing continued to be provided by small-scale private enterprises.<sup>12</sup>

*Etatisme* did not lead to large shifts in fiscal and monetary policies, either. Government budgets remained balanced, and the regime made no attempt to take advantage of deficit finance. In fact, 'balanced budget, strong money' was the government's motto for its macro-economic policy. The exchange rate of the lira actually rose against all leading currencies during the 1930s. The most important reason behind this policy choice was the bitter legacy of the Ottoman experience with budget deficits, large external debt and inflationary paper currency during the First World War. İsmet İnönü, the prime minister for most of the interwar period, was a keen observer of the late Ottoman period and was the person most responsible for this cautious, even conservative, policy stand. In other words, government interventionism in the 1930s was not designed, in the Keynesian sense, to increase aggregate demand through the use of devaluations and expansionary fiscal and monetary policies. Instead, the emphasis was on creating a more closed, autarkic economy, and increasing central control through the expansion of the public sector.<sup>13</sup>

#### Economic growth and its causes

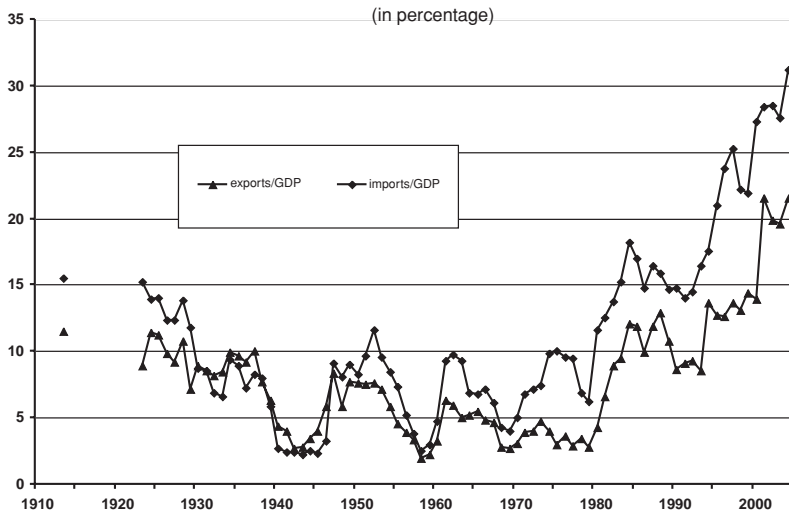
Available estimates suggest that GDP and GDP per capita grew at average annual rates of 5.4 and 3.1 per cent respectively during the 1930s, despite the absence of expansionary fiscal and monetary policy (see table 10.1 and graph 2). One important source of the output increases after 1929 was the protectionist measures adopted by the government, ranging from tariffs and quotas to foreign-exchange controls, which sharply reduced the import volume from 15.4 per cent of GDP in 1928–9 to 6.8 per cent by 1938–9 (graph 10.3). Import repression created attractive conditions for the emerging domestic manufacturers, mostly the small and medium-sized private manufacturers.

There is another explanation for the overall performance of both the urban and the national economy during the 1930s, which has often been ignored amidst the heated debates over *étatisme*. Thanks to the strong demographic recovery, agriculture – the largest sector of the economy, employing more than

12 Tezel, *Cumhuriyet Döneminin*, pp. 233–7.

13 Şevket Pamuk, 'Intervention during the Great Depression, another look at Turkish experience', in Ş. Pamuk and Jeffrey Williamson (eds.), *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization Before 1850* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 332–4.

## Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey



Graph 10.3 Degree of openness of Turkey's economy, 1913–2005

three-fourths of the labour force and accounting for close to half of the GDP – did quite well during the 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

Given its balanced-budget policy stand, government actions in response to sharply lower agricultural prices after 1929 were limited to purchases of small amounts of wheat. It is remarkable that despite the adverse price trends, agricultural output increased by 50–70 per cent during the 1930s. The most important explanation of this outcome is the demographic recovery in the countryside. In the interwar period, Anatolian agriculture continued to be characterised by peasant households who cultivated their own land with a pair of draft animals and the most basic of implements. With the population beginning to increase at annual rates around 2 per cent after a decade of wars, expansion of the area under cultivation soon followed. It is also likely that the peasant households responded to the lower cereal prices after 1929 by working harder to cultivate more land and produce more cereals in order to reach certain target levels of income, very much like the peasant behaviour predicted by the Russian economist Chayanov. In other words, behind the high rates of industrialisation and growth in the urban areas were the millions

<sup>14</sup> Frederic C. Shorter, 'The Population of Turkey after the War of Independence', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 17 (1985).

of family farms in the countryside, which kept food and raw materials prices lower until the Second World War.<sup>15</sup>

#### Difficulties during the war

Although Turkey did not participate in the Second World War, full-scale mobilisation was maintained during the entire period. The sharp decline in imports and the diversion of large resources for the maintenance of an army of more than one million placed enormous strains on the economy. Official statistics suggest that GDP declined by as much as 35 per cent and the wheat output by more than 50 per cent until the end of the war. In response, the prices of foodstuffs rose sharply and the provisioning of urban areas emerged as a major problem for the government. Under these circumstances, *étatisme* was quickly pushed aside. Large increases in defence spending were financed by monetary expansion. High inflation, wartime scarcities, shortages and profiteering accentuated by economic policy mishaps soon became the order of the day. Measures such as the 1942 *Varlık Vergisi*, or Wealth Levy, which was applied disproportionately to non-Muslims, only made things worse.<sup>16</sup>

As declining production and sharply lower standards of living combined with increasing inequalities in the distribution of income, large segments of the urban and rural population turned against the Republican People's Party (RPP), which had been in power since the 1920s. In terms of economics, the war years, rather than the Great Depression and *étatisme* era, thus appear to be the critical period in the political demise of the single-party regime.

Despite two world wars and the Great Depression, per capita levels of production and income in Turkey were 30–40 per cent higher in 1950 than the levels on the eve of the First World War (see table 10.1 and graph 10.2).<sup>17</sup> Around mid-century, the economy was much more inward-oriented than it had been in 1913. Due to the impact of two world wars and a depression, rural–urban differences and regional disparities were considerably higher than they had been in 1913.

15 Pamuk, 'Intervention', pp. 334–7.

16 Şevket Pamuk, 'War, state economic policies and resistance by agricultural producers in Turkey, 1939–1945', in F. Kazemi and J. Waterbury (eds.), *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: University Presses of Florida, 1991); Ayhan Aktar, 'Varlık Vergisi nasıl uygulandı?', *Toplum ve Bilim* 71 (1996).

17 Özel and Pamuk, 'Osmanlı'dan cumhuriyet'e'.

*The post Second World War era, 1946–80*

Domestic and international forces combined to bring about major political and economic changes in Turkey after the Second World War. Domestically, many social groups had become dissatisfied with the single-party regime. The agricultural producers, especially poorer segments of the peasantry, had been hit hard by wartime taxation and government demands for the provisioning of the urban areas. In the urban areas, the bourgeoisie was no longer prepared to accept the position of a privileged but dependent class, even though many had benefited from the wartime conditions and policies. They now preferred greater emphasis on private enterprise and less government interventionism.<sup>18</sup>

International pressures also played an important role in the shaping of new policies. The emergence of the United States as the dominant world power after the war shifted the balance towards a more open political system and a more liberal and open economic model. Soviet territorial demands pushed the Turkish government towards close cooperation with the United States and Western alliance. The US extended the Marshall Plan to Turkey for military and economic purposes beginning in 1948.

Agriculture-led growth, 1947–62

The shift to a multi-party electoral regime brought the Democrat Party (DP) to power in 1950. Undoubtedly the most important economic change brought about by the Democrats was the strong emphasis placed on agricultural development. Agricultural output more than doubled from 1947, when the pre-war levels of output were already attained, through 1953.<sup>19</sup> A large part of these increases were due to the expansion in cultivated area, which was supported by two complementary government policies, one for the small peasants and the other for larger farmers. First, the government began to distribute state-owned lands and open communal pastures to peasants with little or no land. Second, the DP government used Marshall Plan aid to finance the importation of agricultural machinery, especially tractors, whose numbers jumped from less than 10,000 in 1946 to 42,000 at the end of the 1950s. Agricultural producers also benefited from favourable weather conditions and strong world market demand for wheat, chrome and other export

18 Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), pp. 112–14; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye iktisat tarihi, 1908–2002*, 7th edn. (Ankara: İmge, 2003), pp. 93–101.

19 State Institute of Statistics, *Statistical Indicators, 1923–2002* (Ankara: DİE, 2003).

commodities, thanks to American stockpiling programmes during the Korean War.<sup>20</sup>

The agriculture-led boom meant good times and rising incomes for all sectors of the economy. It seemed in 1953 that the promises of the liberal model would be quickly fulfilled. These golden years did not last very long, however. With the end of the Korean War, international demand slackened and prices of export commodities began to decline. With the disappearance of favourable weather conditions, agricultural yields declined as well. Rather than accept lower incomes for the agricultural producers, who made up more than two-thirds of the electorate, the government decided to initiate a large price support programme for wheat, financed by increases in the money supply. The ensuing wave of inflation and the foreign-exchange crisis, which was accompanied by shortages of consumer goods, created major economic and political problems for the DP, especially in the urban areas.<sup>21</sup> One casualty of the crisis was the political as well as economic liberalism of the DP. Just as it responded to the rise of political opposition with the restriction of democratic freedoms, in most economic issues the government was forced to change its earlier stand and adopt a more interventionist approach. It finally agreed in 1958 to undertake a major devaluation and began implementing an IMF and OECD-backed stabilisation programme.

To this day, agricultural producers and their descendants, many of whom are now urbanised, continue to view the DP government, and especially the prime minister, Adnan Menderes, a large landowner, as the first government to understand and respond to the aspirations of the rural population. The DP also offered the first example of a populist economic policy in modern Turkey. Not only did it target a large constituency and attempt to redistribute income towards them, but it also tried to sustain economic growth with short-term expansionist policies, with predictable longer-term consequences. The 1950s also witnessed the dramatic acceleration of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey. Both push and pull factors were behind this movement, as conditions in rural areas differed widely across the country. The development of the road network also contributed to the new mobility.<sup>22</sup>

20 Bent Hansen, *Egypt and Turkey: The Political Economy of Poverty, Equity and Growth*, published for the World Bank (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 338–44; Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, pp. 117–35.

21 İlkay Sunar, 'Demokrat Parti ve populizm', in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. VIII (Istanbul: İletişim, 1984).

22 Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), p. 235; Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, pp. 135–40; Reşat Kasaba, 'Populism and democracy in Turkey,

Import substituting industrialisation, 1963–77

One criticism frequently directed at the Democrats was the absence of any coordination and long-term perspective in the management of the economy. After the coup of 1960, the military regime moved quickly to establish the State Planning Organisation (SPO). The idea of development planning was now supported by a broad coalition: the RPP with its étatist heritage, the bureaucracy, large industrialists and even the international agencies, most notably the OECD.<sup>23</sup>

The economic policies of the 1960s and 1970s aimed, above all, at the protection of the domestic market and industrialisation through import substitution (ISI). Governments made heavy use of a restrictive trade regime, investments by state economic enterprises and subsidised credit as key tools for achieving ISI objectives. The SPO played an important role in private sector decisions as well, since its approval was required for all private-sector investment projects which sought to benefit from subsidised credit, tax exemptions, import privileges and access to scarce foreign exchange. The agricultural sector was mostly left outside the planning process.<sup>24</sup>

With the resumption of ISI, state economic enterprises once again began to play an important role in industrialisation. Their role, however, was quite different in comparison to the earlier period. During the 1930s, when the private sector was weak, industrialisation was led by the state enterprises and the state was able to control many sectors of the economy. In the post-war period, in contrast, the big family holding companies, large conglomerates which included numerous manufacturing and distribution companies as well as banks and other services firms, emerged as the leaders.

For Turkey, the years 1963 to 1977 represented what Albert Hirschman has called the easy stage of ISI.<sup>25</sup> The opportunities provided by a large and protected domestic market were exploited, but ISI did not extend to the technologically more difficult stage of capital goods industries. Export orientation of the manufacturing industry also remained weak. Turkey obtained the foreign exchange necessary for the expansion of production from traditional

1946–1961', in E. Goldberg, R. Kasaba and J. S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

23 Vedat Milor, 'The Genesis of Planning in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 4 (1990).

24 Hansen, *Egypt and Turkey*, pp. 352–3; Henry J. Barkey, *The State and the Industrialization Crisis in Turkey* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), chapter 4; Ziya Öniş and James Riedel, *Economic Crises and Long-term Growth in Turkey* (Washington, DC: World Bank Research Publications, 1993), pp. 99–100.

25 Albert O. Hirschman, 'The Political Economy of Import-Substituting Industrialization in Latin America', *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 82 (1968).

agricultural exports and remittances from workers in Europe. The ISI policies were successful bringing about economic growth, especially in their early stages. GNP per capita increased at the average annual rate of 4.3 per cent during 1963–77 and at 3.5 per cent per annum including the crisis years of 1978–9. Rate of growth of manufacturing industry was considerably higher, averaging more than 10 per cent per annum for 1963–77<sup>26</sup> (see also table 10.1 and graph 2).

The role played by the domestic market during this period deserves further attention. Despite the apparent inequalities in income, large segments of the population, including civil servants, workers and, to a lesser extent, agricultural producers, were incorporated into the domestic market for consumer durables. Perhaps most importantly, real wages almost doubled during this period. Behind this exceptional rise lay both market forces and political and institutional changes. While industrial growth increased the demand for labour, the emigration of more than a million workers to Europe by 1975 kept conditions relatively tight in the urban labour markets. At the same time, the institutional rights they obtained under the 1961 constitution supported the labour unions at the bargaining table. Large industrial firms, which were not under pressure to compete in the export markets, accepted wage increases more easily since higher wages served to broaden the demand for their own products. By the middle of the 1970s, however, industrialists had begun to complain about the high level of wages and an emerging labour aristocracy.<sup>27</sup>

While industry and government policy remained focused on a large and attractive domestic market, they all but ignored exports of manufactures, and this proved to be the Achilles' heel of Turkey's ISI. The export sector's share in GDP averaged less than 4 per cent during the 1970s, and about two-thirds of these revenues came from the traditional export crops (graph 3). A shift towards exports would have increased the efficiency and competitiveness of the existing industrial structure, acquired the foreign exchange necessary for an expanding economy and even supported the import substitution process itself in establishing the backward linkages towards the technologically more complicated intermediate and capital goods industries.

There existed an opportunity for export promotion in the early 1970s, especially in the aftermath of the relatively successful devaluation of 1970. By that

26 State Institute of Statistics, *Statistical Indicators*; see also Aydın Çeçen, A. Suut Doğruel and Fatma Doğruel, 'Economic Growth and Structural Change in Turkey, 1960–1988', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (1994).

27 Hansen, *Egypt and Turkey*, pp. 360–78; Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, chap. 7; Barkey, *Industrialization Crisis*, chap. 5.

time, Turkish industry had acquired sufficient experience to be able to compete or learn to compete in the international markets. For that major shift to occur, however, a new orientation in government policy and the institutional environment was necessary. The overvaluation of the domestic currency and many other biases against exports needed to be eliminated. Instead, the successes obtained within a protected environment created vested interests for the continuation of the same model. Most of the industrialists as well as organised labour, which feared that export orientation would put downward pressure on wages, favoured the domestic market-oriented model. Moreover, political conditions became increasingly unstable during the 1970s. The country was governed by a series of fragile coalitions with short-time horizons. As a result, the government made no attempt to shift towards export-oriented policies or even adjust the macro-economic balances after the first oil shock of 1973.<sup>28</sup>

#### The crisis of ISI

The short-lived coalitions chose to continue with expansionist policies at a time when many industrialised countries were taking painful steps to adjust their economies. Turkey's existing policies could be sustained only by very costly external borrowing schemes. In less than two years it became clear that the government was in no position to honour the outstanding external debt stock, which had spiralled from 9 to 24 per cent of GDP.<sup>29</sup> By the end of the decade Turkey was in the midst of its most severe balance of payments crisis of the post-war period. As rising budget deficits were met with monetary expansion, inflation jumped to 90 per cent in 1979. The second round of oil-price increases only compounded the difficulties. With oil increasingly scarce, frequent power cuts hurt industrial output as well as daily life. Shortages of even the most basic items became widespread, arising from both the declining capacity to import and the price controls. The economic crisis, coupled with the continuing political turmoil, brought the country to the brink of civil war.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the basic lesson to be drawn from the Turkish experience is that an ISI regime becomes difficult to dislodge owing to the power of vested interest groups who continue to benefit from the existing system of protection and subsidies. To shift towards export promotion in a country with a large domestic market required a strong government with a long-term horizon and

28 Barkey, *Industrialization Crisis*, pp. 109–67.

29 Merih Celasun and Dani Rodrik, 'Debt, adjustment and growth: Turkey', in Jeffrey D. Sachs and Susan Collins (eds.), *Developing Country Debt and Economic Performance*, vol. III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

30 Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, chap. 8.



considerable autonomy. These were exactly the features lacking in the Turkish political scene during the 1970s. As a result, economic imbalances and costs of adjustment increased substantially. It then took a crisis of major proportions to move the economy towards greater external orientation.

*The globalisation era since 1980*

Against the background of a severe foreign-exchange crisis and strained relations with the IMF and international banks, the newly installed minority government of Süleyman Demirel announced a comprehensive and unexpectedly radical policy package of stabilisation and liberalisation in January 1980. Turgut Özal, a former chief of the SPO, was to oversee the implementation of the new package. The Demirel government was unable to gain the political support necessary for the successful implementation of the package, but the military regime that came to power later that year endorsed the new programme, and made a point of keeping Özal in the government, as deputy prime minister responsible for economic affairs.

The aims of the new policies were to improve the balance of payments and reduce the rate of inflation in the short term, and to create a market-based, export-oriented economy in the longer term. The policy package included a major devaluation followed by continued depreciation of the currency in line with the rate of inflation, greater liberalisation of trade and payments regimes, elimination of price controls, freeing of interest rates, elimination of many government subsidies, substantial price increases for the products of the state economic enterprises, subsidies and other support measures for exports and promotion of foreign capital. Reducing real wages and the incomes of agricultural producers were important parts of the new policies.<sup>31</sup>

With the shift to a restricted parliamentary regime in 1983, Özal was elected prime minister as the leader of the Motherland Party. He soon launched a new wave of liberalisation of trade and payments regimes. These measures began to open up the ISI structures to competition. However, frequent revisions in the liberalisation lists, the arbitrary manner in which they were made and the favours provided to groups close to the government created a good deal of uncertainty regarding the stability and durability of these changes. The response of the private sector to import liberalisation was mixed. While export-oriented groups and sectors supported it, the ISI industries, especially the

<sup>31</sup> Tosun Arıcanlı and Dani Rodrik, 'An Overview of Turkey's Experience with Economic Liberalization and Structural Adjustment', *World Development* 18 (1990).

large-scale conglomerates whose products included consumer durables and automobiles, continued to lobby for protection.<sup>32</sup>

From the very beginning, the programme of January 1980 benefited from the close cooperation and goodwill of the international agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the international banks. For most of the decade these agencies portrayed Turkey as a shining example of the validity of the orthodox stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes. In economic terms, this support translated into better terms in the rescheduling of the external debt and substantial amounts of new resource inflows. As a result, the foreign-exchange constraint disappeared very quickly and the public sector had less need for inflationary finance at home. These were undoubtedly indispensable ingredients for the success of the programme.<sup>33</sup>

One area of success for the new policies was in export growth. Turkey's merchandise exports sharply rose from a mere 2.6 per cent of GDP in the crisis year of 1979 to 8.6 per cent of the GDP in 1990 (graph 3). Turkey in fact ranked first amongst all countries in rate of export growth during this decade. Equally dramatic was the role of manufactures, which accounted for approximately 80 per cent of this increase. Among the exports, textiles, clothing and iron and steel products dominated the market. It is thus clear that the success in export growth was achieved by reorienting the existing capacity of ISI industries towards external markets. In addition to a steady policy of exchange-rate depreciation, the exporters were supported by generous credits at preferential rates, tax rebates and foreign-exchange allocation schemes during this drive.

The impact of the new policies on the rest of the economy was mixed, however. Most importantly, the new policies did not generate the high levels of private investment necessary for long-term growth. In the manufacturing industry, high interest rates and political instability were the most important impediments. Even in the area of exports, new investment was conspicuously absent; most of the increase was achieved with the existing industrial capacity. The response of foreign capital to the new policies was not very strong either, apparently for reasons similar to those of domestic capital.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the growth performance of the economy was modest. GNP increased at the annual rate of 4.6 per cent and GNP per capita increased at 2.3 per cent during the

32 Ziya Öniş and Steven Webb, 'Political Economy of Policy Reform in Turkey in the 1980s', *Policy Research Working Paper Series*, World Bank, 1059 (1992).

33 Arıcanlı and Rodrik, 'An Overview', pp. 1348–50.

34 Korkut Boratav, Oktar Türel and Erineç Yeldan, 'Dilemmas of Structural Adjustment and Environmental Policies under Instability: Post-1980 Turkey', *World Development* 24 (1996), pp. 1347–8; Arıcanlı and Rodrik, 'An Overview', pp. 1347–8.

1980s (table 10.1 and graph 2). Moreover, these were obtained at the cost of accumulating a large external debt, which climbed more than fivefold from less than \$10 billion in 1980 to more than \$50 billion in 1990.

Another important area where the record of the new policies was bitterly contested was income distribution. From the very beginning, the January 1980 package set out to repress labour and agricultural incomes, and these policies were maintained until 1987 thanks to the military regime and the limited nature of the transition to multi-party politics. Real wages declined by as much as 34 per cent and the intersectoral terms of trade turned against agriculture by more than 40 per cent until 1987, although some of this deterioration had occurred during the crisis years of 1978 and 1979.

The agricultural sector, which continued to provide employment to about half of the labour force, was all but ignored by the military regime and the Motherland Party. The most important change for the sector was the virtual elimination of subsidies and price-support programmes after 1980, which combined with trends in the international markets to create a sharp deterioration in the sectoral terms of trade. As a result, the agricultural sector showed the lowest rates of output increase during the post-war era, averaging only 1 per cent per year from 1980. Agricultural output thus failed to keep pace with population growth for the first time in the twentieth century.

Turgut Özal was a critical figure in Turkey's transition to a neo-liberal development model in the 1980s. There can be no question that his bold initiatives helped accelerate the opening and market orientation of the economy. His legacy is not wholly positive, however. Özal preferred to govern by personal decisions and decrees, and tended to underestimate the importance of rule of law and a strong legal infrastructure for the effective operation of a market economy. His rather relaxed attitude towards the rule of law had devastating long-term consequences. The significant rise in corruption in Turkey during the 1990s should be considered a direct legacy of the Özal era.<sup>35</sup>

With the transition to a more open, competitive electoral regime, the opposition began to criticise the deterioration of income distribution and the arbitrary manner in which Özal often implemented his policies. In response, the government increasingly resorted to old-style populism and lost its room for manoeuvre. Public sector wages, salaries and agricultural incomes were sharply increased. Real wages almost doubled from their decade-low point in

<sup>35</sup> Ziya Öniş, 'Turgut Özal and his Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2004).

1987 until 1990. These, in turn, sharply increased the deficits and borrowing requirements of the public sector.<sup>36</sup>

#### A decade to forget

The globalisation process offered opportunities as well as vulnerabilities to developing countries. In the case of Turkey, political instability and large public-sector deficits that lasted until 2002 made it increasingly costly to participate in the new environment. In 1989, as the macro-economic balances began to deteriorate, Özal decided to fully liberalise the capital account and eliminate the obstacles in the way of international capital flows. He made this shift at least in part to attract short-term capital inflows, or hot money, to help finance the deficits. In the longer term, however, the decision to liberalise the capital account before achieving macro-economic stability and creating a strong regulatory infrastructure for the financial sector was very costly. As the economy became increasingly vulnerable to external shocks and sudden outflows of capital, the 1990s turned into the most difficult period in the post-Second World War era.

Public-sector deficits continued to widen in the 1990s, with programmes directed towards various segments of the electorate, cheap credit to small businesses, lower retirement age and more generous retirement benefits and, most importantly, high support prices for the agricultural producers. The war against the Kurdish separatist PKK in south-eastern Turkey, which lasted from 1984 until 1999, also imposed a large fiscal burden. Domestic and external borrowing was the most important mechanism for financing the growing deficits. High interest-rates and a pegged exchange rate regime attracted large amounts of short-term capital inflows. Private banks rushed to borrow from abroad in order to lend to the government. In addition, large public-sector banks were directed by the governments to finance part of these outlays. Last but not least, monetary expansion was used as a regular instrument for fiscal revenue.

Along the way, the structural reforms that would have increased the resilience of the economy to internal and external shocks were pushed aside. Virtually no progress was made in the privatisation of the state economic enterprises. Attempts to sell large state enterprises were often accompanied by scandals involving leading politicians. The privatisation of some of the smaller public-sector banks resulted in very large losses for the state sector as

<sup>36</sup> Öniş and Webb, 'Political Economy'; see also John Waterbury, 'Export Led Growth and the Center-Right Coalition in Turkey', *Comparative Politics* 24 (1991).

these banks were stripped of their assets by the well-connected buyers, and the full guarantees on bank deposits made the public sector responsible for their large losses. Not surprisingly, inflows of foreign direct investment remained limited.

The result was a period of very high inflation, which peaked at more than 100 per cent in 1994 and remained above 50 per cent per annum through 2001, very high nominal and real interest rates, steady increases in public debt and increasing vulnerability to external shocks which led to crises in 1991, 1994, 1998 and 2000–1, the last of which was the most severe. GDP per capita continued to rise as a long-term trend but at a pace lower than the earlier era (graph 2). High inflation and high interest rates made income distribution increasingly unequal, especially in the urban sector. One significant achievement of the period obtained at some political and economic cost was the customs union agreement with the EU that began in 1996.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of 1999 it was clear that the macro-economic balances were not sustainable. Negotiations with the IMF led to a new stabilisation programme with a pegged exchange-rate regime as the key anchor to bring down inflation. This programme was deeply flawed in design, however, as it ignored significant problems in the financial sector, especially the large deficits of the public-sector banks, which had been used for financing part of the budget deficits. After some initial successes, the programme disintegrated into a full-blown banking and financial crisis in 2001. In the face of massive capital outflows, the government was forced to suspend the programme and accept a dramatic depreciation of the lira.

In early 2001, the Turkish government invited Kemal Derviş to leave the World Bank and take up the job of economy minister. With IMF support, his team developed a programme based around fiscal discipline and large budget surpluses. The programme adopted a floating exchange-rate regime and converted the outstanding liabilities of the public-sector banks to long-term public debt. It also featured some long-term structural reforms, including measures to reform the vulnerable financial system, and a series of laws that attempted to insulate public-sector banks and state economic enterprises from the interference of politicians and strengthen the independence of the central bank.

The economy has staged a remarkable recovery since. After declining by 9.5 per cent in 2001, real GDP increased by about 35 per cent during the

37 Ziya Öniş and Ahmet Faruk Aysan, 'Neoliberal Globalisation, the Nation State and Financial Crises in the Semi-Periphery: A Comparative Analysis', *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000).

next four years. By the end of 2005, annual inflation had declined to below 8 per cent, a level not seen since the 1960s (graph 2). Nominal and real interest rates also declined sharply. The credit for this turnaround should begin with Derviş and the initial programme. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government that came to power after the elections of 2002 should also be credited for maintaining fiscal discipline. The generally favourable international environment, with low interest rates for developing countries, also helped. By 2005, significant amounts of foreign direct investment had begun to flow into Turkey, and the government was making some progress in the privatisation of the state economic enterprises. Thanks to economic growth and the large budget surpluses, the debt burden declined from above 100 per cent of GDP in 2001 to less than 70 per cent by 2005. This was mostly a jobless recovery, however. Despite the substantial increases in output and incomes, unemployment in the urban areas remained above 13 per cent through 2005.

#### Anatolian tigers

One important outcome of economic liberalisation after 1980 has been the increasing export orientation of the economy. Exports rose from less than \$3 billion in 1980 to \$70 billion, or 20 per cent of GDP, by 2005 (graph 3). Most of this increase occurred in textiles, steel, automotives and other manufactures, whose share in total exports exceeded 90 per cent in the 1990s. The rapid expansion of exports of manufactures played a key role in the rise of the Anatolian tigers, regional industrial centres such as Gaziantep, Denizli, Kayseri, Malatya, Konya, Çorum and others. With craft traditions and non-unionised workforces, these industrial centres began to account for a significant share of growing exports in textiles and other labour-intensive industries. Their competitive advantage was bolstered by low wages, long working hours and flexible labour regimes. Large numbers of small and medium-sized family enterprises played a central role in the rise of these industrial centres. Their rise was achieved with little state support and little or no foreign investment.

Many of the entrepreneurs in these urban centres have embraced the new liberal discourse. As latecomers to the private sector, they have been more likely to support an Islamist political party and organise under an association of Islamic businessmen as a political counterweight to the Istanbul-based elites. In fact, tensions between the entrepreneurs in the provinces and the Istanbul region's industrial elites go back to the 1960s, when Necmettin Erbakan, the first Islamist political leader in the post-war era, based his political rise on his

election as chairman of the national organisation of chambers of commerce.<sup>38</sup> Erbakan, however, appeared to favour various inward-oriented industrialisation schemes. In contrast, the industrialists of the Anatolian tigers have supported the AKP government and its export-oriented policies in the most recent period.

Similarly, large segments of protected domestic industry had opposed closer ties with Europe in the 1970s. In contrast, both the Istanbul industrialists and the entrepreneurs of the Anatolian tigers have supported European integration since the 1990s. Turkey's favourable experience with export-oriented industrialisation and the discovery that the customs union, which began in 1996, did not lead to the destruction of industry as some had feared, both contributed to the change of attitude. After the acceleration of democratic reforms by the new, AKP-led parliament, the EU decided in 2004 to begin membership negotiations with Turkey. It is not clear when or if Turkey will become a full member of the EU. Nonetheless, the membership process is likely to accelerate institutional changes and create a stronger institutional framework for economic change.

### *Agriculture and structural change*

In the first half of the twentieth century, agriculture accounted for more than 80 per cent of employment and more than half of the GDP in Turkey. Although these shares now stand at 35 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, it is clear that any analysis of long-term structural change, economic growth and income distribution in Turkey needs to examine agriculture closely (graph 1).

The total population of Turkey has increased more than fourfold since 1914. Agricultural output has kept pace, increasing more than fivefold during the same period.<sup>39</sup> As a result, Turkey continues to be mostly self-sufficient in food and agricultural goods today. Agricultural output declined by as much as 50 per cent during the decade of wars after 1914, but began to recover in the 1920s. Increases in land and labour productivity were modest during this period, but population and total output began to exceed pre-First World War levels

38 Sencer Ayata, 'Bir yerel sanayi odağı olarak Gaziantep'te girişimcilik, sanayi kültürü ve ekonomik dünya ile ilişkiler', in S. İlkin, O. Silier and M. Güvenç (eds.), *İlhan Tekeli için Armağan Yazılar* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2005); Ayşe Buğra, 'Class, Culture and State, an Analysis of Interest Representations by Two Turkish Business Associations', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998); Alpay Filiztekin and İnsan Tunalı, 'Anatolian Tigers: Are they for Real?', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 20 (1999).

39 These long term trends are taken from Şevket Pamuk, 'Agricultural output and productivity growth in Turkey since 1880', in P. Lains and V. Pinilla (eds.), *Agriculture and Economic Development in Europe since 1870* (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

by the middle of the 1930s. Agricultural output began to increase more rapidly after the Second World War, at about 3 per cent per annum until 1980. This higher rate of growth was supported by rapid increases in the amount of land under cultivation. Thanks to the availability of land, the total area under cultivation more than doubled during the decade after the Second World War. After the land frontier was reached, a shift occurred towards more intensive agriculture in the 1960s. In this new phase, output rose more slowly but yields and land productivity increased more rapidly with the use of new inputs, agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilisers, irrigation and high-yielding varieties of seeds. Total output and land productivity growth have slowed down to 1 per cent per annum since 1980, but labour productivity growth has accelerated due to the more rapid labour movement away from agriculture in recent years.

In part because of the availability of land and in part due to government policies dating back to the nineteenth century, small to medium-sized enterprises have dominated agriculture in Turkey, except in the Kurdish south-east and in a number of fertile valleys opened to cultivation only in the nineteenth century, such as Çukurova and Söke.<sup>40</sup> This pattern has encouraged politicians to use government programmes as an electoral instrument since the 1950s. With the manipulation of the intersectoral terms of trade in favour of agriculture, the incorporation of the rural population into the national market accelerated. Villages became important markets for textiles, food industries and, gradually, for consumer durables, as well as agricultural machinery and equipment. In recent decades, non-agricultural activities including tourism and some manufacturing have begun to expand in the rural areas.

The large and expensive irrigation project in the Euphrates valley in south-eastern Anatolia stands apart from all other rural development schemes since the Second World War. It originally envisaged the building of a number of interrelated dams and hydroelectrical plants on the Euphrates river in order to irrigate 1.6 million hectares in the plain of Harran, which would double the irrigated area under cultivation in the country. The project has since evolved into an integrated regional development programme seeking to improve the social and economic fabric of a large and poor region of the country. Now one of world's largest and most ambitious regional development projects, it includes large investments in a wide range of development-related sectors such as agriculture, energy and transport, as well as urban and rural

<sup>40</sup> Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, pp. 177–240.



infrastructure. However, until recently the project has been designed and implemented with a developmentalism-from-above approach, and without sufficient understanding of or concern for the needs of the local population. The absence of a shared vision between the planners and the intended beneficiaries, namely the local Kurdish communities, has seriously limited the benefits of the project.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the large and persistent productivity and income differences between agriculture and the rest of the economy, the strength of small and medium-sized land ownership has slowed down the movement of labour to the rest of the economy. The dominance of small and medium-sized family enterprises in the rural areas was a legacy of the Ottoman era. After the Second World War, it combined with another Ottoman legacy, state ownership of land, to moderate urban inequalities during decades of rapid urbanisation. Many of the newly arriving immigrants were able to use their savings from rural areas to build low cost residential housing (*gecekondu*) on state land in the urban areas. They soon acquired ownership of these plots.

Large productivity and income differences between agriculture and the urban economy have been an important feature of the Turkish economy since the 1920s. Most of the labour force in agriculture are self-employed today in the more than 3 million family farms, including a large proportion of the poorest people in the country. The persistence of this pattern has not been due to the low productivity of agriculture alone, however. If the urban sector had been able to grow at a more rapid pace, more labour would have left the countryside during the last half-century. Equally importantly, governments have offered very limited amounts of schooling to the rural population in the past. Average amounts of schooling of the total labour force (ages fifteen to sixty-four) increased from only one year in 1950 to about seven years in 2005. The average years of schooling of the rural labour force today is still below three years, however.<sup>42</sup> In other words, most of the rural labour force today consists of undereducated men and women, for whom the urban sector offers limited opportunities. The pace with which rural poverty and population will diminish in the decades ahead will depend on the degree to which the countryside experiences institutional changes and receives greater amounts of education and capital.

41 Ali Çarkoğlu and Mine Eder, 'Development alla Turca: the Southeastern Anatolia Development Project (GAP)', in F. Adaman and M. Arsel (eds.), *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 2005).

42 My calculations based on State Institute of Statistics, *Statistical Indicators* data on school enrolment and graduation.

*Income distribution*

Data on income distribution in Turkey have not been not sufficiently detailed and do not easily allow long-term comparisons. In what follows, I will attempt such comparisons by employing simple indicators for which long-term series are available. I will examine changes in income distribution in twentieth-century Turkey in three basic components: (a) distribution within agriculture; (b) agriculture–non-agriculture or rural–urban differences; and (c) distribution within the non-agricultural or the urban sector. The relative weights of these three components have clearly changed over time. Until the 1950s, the first two were more important. With urbanisation after 1950, the second component and, especially since 1980, the third component began to dominate country-wide debates and issues and debates of income distribution.<sup>43</sup>

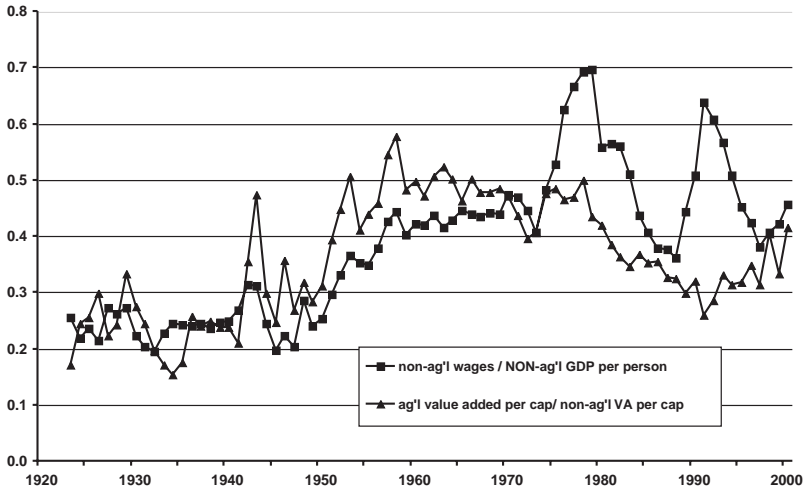
Within the agricultural sector, the evidence on land ownership and land use points to a relatively equal distribution of land, dominated by small and medium-sized holdings in most regions. Despite the limitations of available data, it appears that the Gini coefficients for land distribution and land use have changed little since the 1950s.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, distribution within the agricultural sector has been more equal than both the differences between the agricultural and urban sectors and the distribution within the urban sector.

Evidence for agriculture–non-agriculture differences in average incomes can be obtained from the national income accounts. These indicate that intersectoral differences were largest in the interwar period, especially due to the sharply lower agricultural prices during the Great Depression. The intersectoral differences in average incomes declined in the post-Second World War period, in part because of government policies, but they increased again after 1980. The acceleration of urbanisation and the rapid decline of the agricultural labour force in recent years have helped raise average incomes in agriculture (graph 4).

In the absence of other suitable series for long-term comparisons of income distribution within the urban sector, I will focus on the share of labour in per capita income. More specifically, I will follow the index of urban wages divided by output per person in the urban labour force. This ratio was quite low in the interwar period, because of the low levels of urban wages in relation to urban output per capita. This suggests a rather unequal distribution of income within the urban sector until the Second World War. Share of wages in urban income

43 This section is based on Şevket Pamuk, '20. Yüzyıl Türkiye için büyüme ve bölüşüm endeksleri', *İktisat, İşletme ve Finans Dergisi* 235 (October 2005).

44 Hansen, *Egypt and Turkey*, pp. 275–80 and 495–501.



Graph 10.4 Indices for income distribution in Turkey, 1923–2000

rose steadily after the war, however. Together with the decline in intersectoral differences in average incomes, this pattern indicates that the post-war era until 1980 had a more equal or balanced distribution of income than other period in the twentieth century (graph 4). In the globalisation era since 1980, intersectoral differences in per capita income rose sharply, but they have been declining in recent years with the rapid contraction of the agricultural labour force. It is clear, however, that the country-wide pattern in income distribution is now dominated by changes inside the urban sector. Disparities within the urban sector between labour and non-labour incomes and also between skilled and unskilled labour incomes have increased since 1980.

It is also interesting that for most of the twentieth century, the second and third components of the country-wide income distribution, namely intersectoral differences in average incomes and the distribution of income within the urban sector, have moved together. As the value of these two indices increased, income distribution tended to become more equal and vice versa (graph 4). This pattern suggests that governments were able to influence both components of the income distribution, especially during periods of multi-party electoral politics.

Large regional inequalities are a fourth dimension of income distribution, which especially need to be taken into account in the case of Turkey. Throughout the twentieth century, large west–east differences in average incomes

persisted. Until recently, the private-sector-led industrialisation process was concentrated in the western third of the country. The commercialisation of agriculture had also proceeded further in the western and coastal areas. In addition to lower incomes, the eastern third of the country has also been lacking in infrastructure and services provided by the government, especially for education and health. The development of tourism in the west, the deterioration of the terms of trade against agriculture and the rise of Kurdish insurgency in the south-east during the 1980s further increased the large regional disparities, adding to the pressures for rural-to-urban as well as east-to-west migration. Future progress on the South-East Anatolian Project and the rise of the regional industrial centres may help reduce these disparities. However, economic development in that part of the country hinges, above all, on a political resolution of the Kurdish question.<sup>45</sup>

Large east–west differences in average incomes have been accompanied by large and persistent regional inequalities in human development indicators since the 1920s. The latest country report for Turkey prepared by United Nations Human Development Programme for the year 2002 indicates, for example, that the top ten (out of eighty) high-income, western and north-western provinces in the country, including Istanbul, had an average HDI equal to 0.825, which was close to the HDI for East–Central European countries such as Croatia or Slovakia. On the other hand, the poorest ten provinces in the mostly Kurdish south-eastern part of the country had an average HDI of 0.600, which was comparable to the HDI of Morocco or India in the same year.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

In trying to analyse Turkey's economic record in the twentieth century, I began with a distinction between the proximate and ultimate sources of economic growth. The former relates to the contributions made by the increases in factor inputs and productivity, while the latter refers to aspects of the social and economic environment in which growth occurs. In this context, economic institutions are increasingly seen as the key to the explanation not only of economic growth and long-term differences in per capita GDP, but also the question of how the total pie is divided amongst different groups in society. I have emphasised that because there is generally a conflict of interest over the choice of economic institutions, political economy and political institutions

<sup>45</sup> Çarkoğlu and Eder, 'Development alla Turca'.

<sup>46</sup> UNDP, *Turkey 2004* (Ankara: UNDP, 2004).

are key determinants of economic institutions and the direction of institutional change.

Turkey's transition from a rural and agricultural towards an urban and industrial economy in the twentieth century occurred in three waves, each of which served to increase the economic and political power of urban and industrial groups. Increases in the economic and political power of these groups, on the whole, enabled them to shape economic institutions more in the direction they desired. Each of these waves of industrialisation and economic growth, however, was cut short by the shortcomings or deficiencies of the institutional environment. The first of these waves occurred during the 1930s. After a series of legal and institutional changes undertaken by the new Republic, a small number of state enterprises led the industrialisation process and the small-scale private enterprises in a strongly protected economy. *Etatisme* promoted the state as the leading producer and investor in the urban sector. Ultimately, however, political and economic power remained with the state elites, and these economic and institutional changes remained confined to the small urban sector.

The pace of economic growth was distinctly higher around the world in the decades after the Second World War. Turkey's second wave of industrialisation began in the 1960s, again under heavy protection and with government subsidies and tax breaks. Rapid urbanisation steadily expanded the industrial base. The state economic enterprises continued to play an important role as suppliers of intermediate goods. The new leaders, however, were the large-scale industrialists and the holding companies in Istanbul and the north-western corner of the country. With the rise of political and macro-economic instability in the 1970s, industrialisation turned increasingly inward and short-term interests of narrow groups prevailed over a long-term vision, culminating in a severe crisis at the end of the decade.

A third wave that began in the 1980s under conditions of a more open, export-oriented economy widened the industrial base further to the regional centres of Anatolia. The rapid expansion of exports of manufactures played a key role in the rise of these new industrial centres, which began to challenge the Istanbul-based industrialists. Once again, however, rising political and macro-economic instability, growing corruption and the deterioration of the institutional environment in the 1990s brought this wave to a sharp halt in 2001.

Ever since the Young Turk era, governments in Turkey have supported the emergence and growth of an industrial bourgeoisie. Helped by the growth of the urban sector and successive waves of industrialisation, this bourgeoisie has

been gradually wresting control of the economy away from the state elites in Ankara.<sup>47</sup> For most of the twentieth century the country's industrial elites remained limited to those of the Istanbul region. But with the rise of the Anatolian tigers, the economic base of the bourgeoisie has been expanding socially and geographically. The AKP government of recent years has been supported by these emerging elites in the provinces.

The political and economic power of the workers, as well as their share in the total pie, was on the rise after the Second World War, especially during the ISI era after 1960. In the most recent era of globalisation, however, economic and institutional changes have combined to reduce the power of the workers and trade unions. Similarly, agricultural producers enjoyed a sharp increase in influence, if not power, with the shift to a multi-party political regime in the 1950s. Their influence and their ability to shape economic institutions have been declining gradually but steadily, however, with the decline in the share of agriculture in both the labour force and total output.

While economic power has clearly shifted from Ankara to Istanbul and more recently towards industrial groups in the provinces, the shift in political power and the move towards more pluralist politics have been far from easy or simple. Too often during the last half-century, Turkey's political system has produced fragile coalitions and weak governments which have sought to satisfy the short-term demands of various groups by resorting to budget deficits, borrowing and inflationary finance. The political and macro-economic instability also led to the deterioration of the institutional environment. Rule of law and property rights suffered, and public investment, including expenditure on education, declined sharply. The weak governments have been too open to pressures from different groups, or even individual firms or entrepreneurs, seeking favours. As a result, the pursuit of favours or privileges from local and national governments has been a more popular activity for the producers than the pursuit of productivity improvements or competition in international markets.

The crisis of 2001 ushered in significant institutional changes, especially in the linkages between politics and the economy, with new attempts to insulate the latter from short-term interventions in the political sphere. It remains to be seen, however, whether these institutional changes will be effective and durable or whether politics and the institutional environment will regress to their earlier ways. For most of the last century, Turkey has been considered to

<sup>47</sup> Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*; Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

have high economic potential. Similarly, it remains to be seen whether this will be realised. It is precisely at this juncture that Turkey's integration to the EU assumes critical importance. It is not clear when and if Turkey will become a full member of the EU. Nonetheless, the membership process is likely to create a stronger institutional framework for economic change. For the economy, the key contribution of the goal of membership will be the strengthening of the political will to proceed with the institutional changes that may raise the water level in the glass and carry Turkey's economy to a new level.

## Ideology, context and interest: the Turkish military

ÜMIT CİZRE

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has enjoyed a pervasive sense of its own prerogative to watch over the regime it created and to transcend an exclusive focus on external defence. If the TAF's confidence and ability to do so was not palpable during the years of single-party rule (1923–46), Turkey's multi-party political system has since 1946 been characterised by the military's capacity to control the fundamentals of the political agenda in its self-ordained role as guardian of the Republic.<sup>1</sup> By internalising this role as a central 'mission of belief', the military has been able to interpret internal 'political' conflicts in the language of internal security threats, and reduce 'national security' to a military-dominated concept. On four occasions (1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997), the military intervened in and reshaped Turkish politics, although it always returned control to civilians after a short time. The fourth intervention, on 28 February 1997, marked a qualitative change, when the military-dominated National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, NSC) brought down a constitutionally elected coalition government headed by the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, WP), thus altering the relationship between the military, the state and society. The process of change that the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma

1 In the 'guardian state' model, the military regards itself as the Platonic custodian of a vaguely defined national interest. A. R. Luckham in his seminal article makes a distinction between four sub-types of military guardianship. The first is 'Direct Guardianship', where the military views itself as the unique custodian of national values; the second is 'Alternating Guardianship', where the dynamics are the same but the military alternates in and out of power; and third is 'Catalytic Guardianship', whereby the military in question may not wish to rule itself but installs governments favourable to itself. The last category is 'Covert Guardianship': the military may submerge and yet retain the capacity for direct action by supporting in the long term a political order that supports national security. The Turkish military's political role can be said to have shifted between each of these sub-types over time. See A. R. Luckham, 'A Comparative Typology of Civil–Military Relations', *Government and Opposition* 6, 1 (1971).



Partisi, JDP)<sup>2</sup> government has set in motion since its election victory in November 2002 in terms of curtailing the TAF's political prerogatives and tutelage must also be understood within the context of a major shift in the regional and international power balance after the Iraq war and the democratic reform requirements of the European Union (EU).

A chief feature of Turkey's parliamentary democracy since 1950 has been the formidable presence of the military in public affairs. Another fundamental premise of the regime has been the long-standing Kemalist commitment to identifying Turkey as 'European'. The issue of the military's proper role has created severe difficulties during Ankara's long wait at the doorstep of the EU, which has prescribed a package of political preconditions that must be fulfilled if Turkey is to successfully gain entry into the European fold. While the military's self-defined political role requires that it remains involved in social and political conflicts with little or no accountability, the EU's entry criteria make it clear that the military must be subjected to the democratic control of civilian authorities. The lack of effective civilian control over the armed forces in Turkey has often contradicted democratic norms of civil-military relations. The EU accession process has provided an opening for a wider debate on the link between democracy and national security. It has also raised questions about the proper relations between military and civilian authorities in a democracy in an era of declining military budgets and changing threats. As a result, there is a rising consensus that without effective parliamentary oversight of the armed forces and without bringing Turkish democracy's norms in line with EU requirements, the military's attitude of permanent vigilance towards internal security can make that democracy insecure, conditional and crisis-prone.

However, the challenges to fostering a democratic role change in the TAF are formidable: while the post-communist states have constructed democratic civil-military institutional frameworks from scratch,<sup>3</sup> similar reforms

2 The main predecessor of the JDP was the WP, which was founded in 1983 and closed down by the constitutional court in January 1998 on the grounds that it had become a focal point of anti-secular activities. With its closure, a five-year ban on the political activities of its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, and on five other top policy makers was imposed. It was succeeded by the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), founded in 1997, which, like its predecessor, was closed down, on 22 June 2001, for its anti-secular activities and for violating the constitutional stipulation that a permanently dissolved party (the WP) cannot be reconstituted. In August 2001 the movement split into a traditionalist wing, the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, FP), founded in July 2001 and a reformist wing, the JDP.

3 Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Slovenia are typical examples of this. According to Anton Bebler, 'perhaps the most striking feature of civil-military relations in Slovenia today is their lack of salience as a political issue, accompanied by widespread public indifference.'

in Turkey must take place against a backdrop of a deeply rooted tradition of civil–military imbalance. According to that tradition, the military perceives itself as a legitimate actor in political decision making without any meaningful checks and balances, and feels entitled to publicly promote different ideas about democracy and national security than those held by elected representatives.

The ultimate justification for the political predominance of the military rests on its guardianship of Kemalism, the state’s official ideology, of which fundamental components are secularism and territorial unity. TAF’s legitimisation of its dominant role lies in its identification of its ‘interests’ with those of the nation; it sees its mission as a continuing transformation of the country’s values in the direction of Western modernity. Secularism is the pillar, the principle and the proof of this role. It requires the disestablishment of Islam as the state religion and the establishment of a new modality of state control over it; the construction of a homogenous national identity linked with the logic of Westernisation and modernisation; and the creation of a strong state.

On the other hand, the tutelary powers and institutional prerogatives of the TAF also depend on its self-conscious attempts to steer civilian policies in a direction that will not challenge the military’s special position in politics and society. To do so the army resorts to two methods: first, it either threatens to stage another coup or issues public statements, often derogatory, regarding government policies; and second, it constructs the concept of national security in such a way as to legitimise the political role of the military as guardians. Given the external pressures on Turkey to improve its human rights and democracy record in order to join the EU, the crude device of a coup has become increasingly implausible. In addition, the military’s legally and culturally unchallenged position as the whistleblower of politics has made any ‘coup’ redundant. The TAF therefore tends to exert political influence by highlighting threats to national security.

Like its counterparts elsewhere, the Turkish military maintains the Republic’s security, officially defined as ‘the protection and maintenance of the state’s constitutional order, national presence, integrity, all political, social, cultural and economic interests on an international level, and contractual law against any kind of internal and foreign threat’.<sup>4</sup> What is striking about this definition

In practice, civil–military relations in Slovenia have become relations between a civilian sector whose personnel were themselves civilians until only recently’: see Anton Bebler, ‘Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Slovenia, 1990–2000’, paper presented at The Seventh Biennial Conference of ERGOMAS, Prague, 6–10 December 2000, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *White Paper – Defence*, Ministry of National Defence, 1998, p. 12; *Beyaz Kitap 2000* (White Paper 2000), Milli Savunma Bakanlığı (Ministry of National Defence, 2000), part 3, p. 2.

is the broad and complex character of security. It includes not only the traditional national defence framework against external threats, but also non-military objectives pertaining to economic, social, cultural and political goals, fusing purely military missions with political ones. If, as Mary Kaldor argues, ‘the nature of security policy contributes to the design of institutions and the implicit contract with the society’,<sup>5</sup> then in Turkey the definition of national security is crucial in reproducing the TAF’s role as the guardian of the regime and in undermining any civilian input in security policy.<sup>6</sup> When the military monopolises threat perception and security policy formulation, it can then use these threats as justification for relying solely upon military power to guarantee security, just as it can exaggerate the extent of threats to serve its corporate interests. In Turkey, many aspects of national security have since the 1971 intervention been incorporated into laws regulating public order, limiting freedom of expression and association, inhibiting public debate and stifling the opposition and the media.

The record of Republican history shows an interplay between two dynamics of military motivation: while the Turkish military manifests a genuine ideological commitment to upholding the secular framework of politics, it also pursues a rather formidable contest of power with constitutionally elected civilian leaders. Blending the two perspectives enables us to see beyond the straitjacket of cultural–historical legacy that much of the literature on the Turkish military uses to explain the continuity in its mission. More importantly, this merged pattern of motivations can explain why the military’s exercise of power has changed over time. The institutional, attitudinal and ideological behaviour of the Turkish army has varied according to changes in political conditions, which have called for recalibrations of the military’s own interests, societal credibility, hierarchical discipline and political capacity. By shifting the focus to a myriad of factors affecting the military’s proactive and/or habitual policies, this analysis also takes into account the ability of both military and civilian actors to learn from history.

The common thread in this matrix is that both interpretations predict a modern rationale for ‘anti-politics’ in the Turkish military’s self-appointed

White Papers are published by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), but not at regular intervals. The pages of reference to the latter are from its web format in Turkish (the English version not being available on the web).

5 Mary Kaldor, ‘Europe at the Millennium’, *Politics* 20, 2 (2000), p. 61.

6 For instance, on 29 April 1977, the general staff announced a radical change to the country’s National Military Defence Concept (NMDC) without consulting the civilian government. It shifted the priority of the security threat from external to the internal threats of Islamic fundamentalism and Kurdish separatism, in that order.

role as the nation's guardian. This has led military leaders to view diversity and socio-political pluralism as obstacles to the emergence and preservation of a strong, modern state.

### Anti-political reasoning framing the historical role of the Turkish military

Ever since the inception of the Republic, the military has exhibited a tendency to be politicised while claiming to be above or against politics. The formal separation of the military from politics<sup>7</sup> in the early Republic was not intended to establish civilian supremacy in a way commensurate with its Western European and American counterparts; its only aim was to inhibit the military's potential as a rival source of power to the ruling group.<sup>8</sup> Early Republican tradition set by Atatürk, by separating the army from ordinary political affairs,<sup>9</sup> contributed to the army's perception of itself as 'above' political conflict, another anti-political vision, which assigns a sense of self-importance to the institution without requiring it to understand the political world it is situated in.

The anti-political pattern of thought prioritises 'order and progress, the latter being contingent upon the former';<sup>10</sup> an outright rejection of politics, which is perceived as being the source of 'underdevelopment, corruption, and evil';<sup>11</sup> and an instrumental recourse to elections 'in order to give a veneer of democratic legitimacy to authoritarian direction of the state and society'.<sup>12</sup>

7 The Ministry of Religious Affairs was abolished and reduced to a government department in 1924, on the grounds that 'for religion and the military to be interested in politics leads to various negative results': M. Kemal Atatürk quoted in Mahmut Goloğlu, *Devrimler ve tepkileri 1924-1930* (Ankara: Başvur Matbaası, 1972), p. 9.

8 This is the view shared by a number of writers. Examples are Dankwart A. Rustow, 'The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic', *World Politics* 4 (July 1959), p. 549; Daniel Lerner and Richard O. Robinson, 'Swords and Ploughshares: The Turkish Army as a Modernising Force', *World Politics* 13 (1960-1), p. 22; William Hale, 'Transitions to civilian governments in Turkey: the military perspective', in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1988), p. 174.

9 The doctrine of an apolitical army in the early Republic, however, ensured, via the military backgrounds of the leading politicians, that military was incapable of posing a threat to the existing ruling class but remained available for political support when and if needed. See Metin Heper and Frank Tachau, 'The State, Politics and the Military in Turkey', *Comparative Politics* 16, 1 (1983), p. 20.

10 Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, 'Politics of antipolitics', in B. Loveman and T. M. Davies (eds.), *Politics of Antipolitics, the Military in Latin America* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 13.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

This understanding of democracy is marked by a zero-sum perception of conflict and a view of opposition and criticism as threats to the regime. The anti-political perspective reflects an understanding of democracy as a matter of political responsibility and rationality, rather than of responsiveness to society.<sup>13</sup> Professor Heper succinctly points out that in the eyes of the military, the 'foes' of this instrumental rationality are elected politicians, 'who were often suspected of indifference toward the long-term interests of the nation',<sup>14</sup> and 'the masses who had not yet attained a higher level of rationality'.<sup>15</sup>

However, the Turkish military's role as 'guardian of Turkey's ideals' does not lead it to take a praetorian<sup>16</sup> role in politics, as its notion of guardianship incorporates a utopian standard of democracy. The military institution controls the actions of politicians in accordance with its own maxims in order to make sure that Kemalist ideals are fulfilled. Furthermore, the TAF has adopted a refined concept of autonomy, refraining from destroying civilian–military boundaries and wielding executive power directly, whereas praetorian armies ruin the bases of democracy and replace civilian authorities. The Turkish officer corps' conception of their role in politics has always been imbued with the notion that culture and politics should be subordinated to Kemalism as the highest morality of the nation. Meeting any threat to the 'highest' morality of the land becomes an imperative of national security. This understanding is fully internalised within the military institution as a normative 'role belief'.

The anti-political reasoning of the TAF detracts from any consideration of the strictly 'political' determinants that mediate between societal, economic and military powers. It presupposes an excessive degree of consistency and coherence in the Kemalist ideology and dispenses with the effects of 'political' and 'social' changes that can alter the historical and cultural relationship between the civilian forces and the military. It also reduces Turkey's political life to a dichotomy between the modernising and secular state elite, spearheaded by the military bureaucracy and its civilian allies, and the popularly elected and 'traditionally oriented' political class. As a result, this world view masks the profound contradictions and cleavages within the political–

13 Metin Heper, 'The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy, Turkey and Germany Compared', *Comparative Political Studies* 25, 2 (1992), p. 170.

14 Metin Heper, 'Consolidating Turkish Democracy', *Journal of Democracy* 3, 3 (1992), p. 106.

15 Metin Heper, 'The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics', *Journal of International Affairs* 54, 1 (2000), p. 72.

16 Irving Louis Horowitz, 'Military Origins of Third World Dictatorship and Democracy', *Third World Quarterly* 3, 1 (1981), p. 42.

social landscape, pushing actors into simplistic modern–traditional, secular–anti-secular dichotomies.

If we accept that ‘the military policy is always conditioned by political factors outside the civil–military relations’,<sup>17</sup> which specify the proper role of the military and the relationship of civilian and military leaders as seen by the rest of the actors in politics, new coalitions or new ‘thresholds of antagonism’ between the two sides do necessitate a revision of the cardinal principles of Kemalism and the role of the military. As I will show below with regard to the analysis of the interaction between the military and the current government, it may well be that Turkey’s capacity to reset the civil–military balance depends on whether or not the government is politically secure, if not from the threat of a military intervention, then from the threat that the military leaders will publicly contest, criticise or veto their policies. The safer from ‘military threat’ the government feels, ‘the greater is [its] potential margin to attempt reforms even at the cost of antagonizing the armed forces’.<sup>18</sup>

### *Crises and the rationale of coups*

The ultimate form of anti-politics is military intervention to suspend politics and reshape the political situation or system. The moral rationale for Turkey’s coups was the salvation of the Republic, a rationale that in turn hinged on the existence of a ‘crisis’ or ‘maxi-’ and ‘mini-breakdowns’ in a Linzian sense.<sup>19</sup> Restructuring political life in the aftermath of each such crisis involved both dynamics of Turkish military involvement in politics analysed above: while the TAF created continuity in its role as the sole guardian of the national interest, it simultaneously subsumed the Kemalist ideals to its own agenda and strategy, manifesting a proactive role in reproducing its power. Each intervention has created a conservative straitjacket for socio-political life, setting the institutional and moral parameters of politics for the decades to come. The fact that the 1960, 1971 and 1980 coups were also pre-emptive measures, designed to deal with the division between radicals and moderates within the

17 J. Samuel Finch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998), p. 162.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 28–38. In Linz’s schema, the process of breakdown is related to the key leaders manifesting a ‘disloyalty’ and ‘semiloyalty’ to the system. The former embodies a willingness to use force, fraud, asking for the military’s support and other illegal means to obtain and keep power, while the latter involves forming governments and alliances with disloyal groups or to encourage, tolerate or cover up their anti-democratic actions.

TAF itself illustrates that the military also intervened to retain its own position and prerogatives.<sup>20</sup>

In each intervention the TAF relied on and assembled different civilian coalitions. The TAF has justified its interventions by claiming that as the overseer of the modern and secular tenets of the regime, it has smoothed the development of democracy and progress by removing obstacles and crises: authoritarian one-party government in 1960; political disorder and anarchy in 1971 and 1980; and reactionary Islam in 1997.

The 1960 coup was brought about by a number of factors: the government of the day, the Democrat Party (DP), represented the rising frustrations and discontent of the urban intelligentsia, emerging industrialists, professionals and countryside, in the post-war era of more openness, against the repressive single-party regime of 1923–50. It also favoured less *étatisme* and bureaucratism, and a relaxed secularism. This created unease among the old elite. As a party born in the single-party era, the DP shared with the ruling elite a belief in social engineering, a dislike and fear of any dissidence/opposition and the same preference for a system devoid of effective political checks and balances. At the same time the DP leaders also felt a deep sense of distrust towards the civilian and military bureaucracy. The symbiosis between the Republican People's Party (RPP), the country's only party during the Republican era, and the military, was a major source of concern to the DP. Partisan use of the army by the DP government to repress the RPP was met by the same political strategy on the part of the RPP. A vicious circle of politicisation of the military together with a series of authoritarian policies by the DP triggered the seizure of power by the TAF.

Although characterised by some as a 'modernising/reform coup' because the overall framework was to support 'a modernizing and democratizing society under the rule of civilian supremacy',<sup>21</sup> the 1960 coup failed to set a new status quo where the army would return to its normal functions. Delegitimising electoral democracy and politicising the military while expanding democratic rights and freedoms created irreconcilable trends. It is not correct to assume therefore that the 1960 coup left a clear and straightforward legacy regarding any aspect of politics in Turkey, let alone its subscription to the Kemalist tradition, although the coup-makers established their connections with Kemalist principles by promising to oversee a "legal revolution" that would return

20 Semih Vaner, 'The army', in I. Schick and A. Tonak (eds.), *Turkey in Transition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 239.

21 Lerner and Robinson, 'Swords and Ploughshares', p. 40.

the state to the principles of Atatürk'.<sup>22</sup> To the extent that Kemalist reforms of the single-party Republic had been a radical process, changing the face of the country, it also laid the groundwork for the DP to rise as the party of the expectant periphery.

The coup was, then, in this sense backward looking, an attempt to recreate the elitist structure on which the Kemalist revolution had been based. Such a system was fundamentally incompatible with the democratic forms which gave representation to all elements of the population. Thus the Kemalist elite – of which the military played such an important part – could not be reestablished by constitutional fiat unless the franchise were restricted to the point of denying democracy.<sup>23</sup>

In line with the ambiguous nature of 1960 coup's tradition, many adopted the 'easy' perspective that the emergence of left- and right-wing student violence by the 1960s resulted from the expansion of individual liberties and excessive pluralism introduced by the 1961 constitution which destabilised the regime and led to the 1971 intervention. It is more apt to say, however, that the creation of new cleavages and actors – such as the Turkish Labour Party – as a product of socio-economic modernisation of the country in the 1960s, combined with the Cold War dynamic towards ideological contestation, transformed Turkey's politics. Republican statist became social democrats, even flirting with the extreme left, while Turkey's centre-right turned strongly anti-communist, coalescing with extreme nationalist and conservative forces. The centre-right government failed to move against the unrest caused by street violence, which turned into terrorism. On 12 March 1971 the high command of the TAF sent a memorandum to the president of the Republic, threatening to seize power if the parliament did not act to implement socio-economic reforms to end anarchy. The government was forced to resign and a civilian-cum-military government took over until the next elections in 1973.

The 1980 coup and the ensuing military regime (1980–3) led by General Kenan Evren represent the resurrection of the 'guardian' mission of the military to save 'the state and its people from social division, economic breakdown, and the anarchy and violence for which the parties and politicians were responsible'.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, nation-wide polarisation of the left and right and the unprecedented violence between them; intercommunal strife; the pull of the RPP

22 Lucille W. Pevsner, *Turkey's Political Crisis: Background, Perspectives and Prospects* (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. 30.

23 George Harris, 'The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics, Part II', *Middle East Journal* 19 (Spring 1965), p. 176.

24 Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), p. 149.



towards the extreme left and the Justice Party (JP) to the militant right-wing flank; and the breakdown of law, order, parliament and the government prior to the intervention played into the hands of the high command and enhanced its legitimacy. The only counter-assertion comes from the then prime minister, Süleyman Demirel, who claims that the military deliberately refrained from using its martial law powers to quell the anarchy so as to discredit the government and to prepare the ground for the coup.<sup>25</sup> However, the civil-war situation in the country prompted the populace at large to give their full support to military action without worrying about its anti-democratic nature. The military closed down political parties, parliament, professional associations and trade unions, arresting their leaders, declaring a state of emergency throughout the country and reversing the democratic rights and freedoms granted by the 1961 constitution.

The breakdown of Turkey's political, social and economic life before the 1980 coup 'was likened to the war of 1919–1923 by the coup-leaders, when internal and external enemies combined in an attempt to destroy the Turkish state'.<sup>26</sup> The coup-makers regarded the political changes they intended to make as the means by which Turks could return to Kemalist principles – above all populism, nationalism and secularism, in order to end 'fratricidal and separatist' strife. According to Kenal Evren, the chief of staff and leader of the coup, 'the Kemalist pattern of thought and the proper pride in being a Turk lie at the heart of the Turkish Republic'. The military authorities systematically classified the perpetrators of terror and anarchy before the coup in terms of 'degenerate' Kemalism and anti-Kemalism.<sup>27</sup>

*The 1997 intervention: why different?*

The TAF's assertion of its political role through the NSC intensified after the 1995 general election: leading military officials began making pointed public references to the secular nature of the state and brokered a coalition government between the two centre-right parties to block the Islamist WP from power. When the WP finally came to power at the head of a coalition government with Çiller's centre-right True Path Party (TPP) in June 1996 (called Refahyol), the army watched with alarm as the WP promoted religious observance in public and developed closer ties with Islamic countries. The military sent a column of tanks through the Ankara suburb of Sincan after the local

25 Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, *AP-ordu ilişkileri: bir ikilemin anatomisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), pp. 181–205.

26 Pevsner, *Turkey's political crisis*, p. 10.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

WP mayor and the Iranian ambassador to Ankara made speeches in support of the *şeriat*. Finally, the NSC meeting on 28 February 1997 issued the coalition government with a list of demands designed to eliminate the 'creeping Islamisation' of Turkey and to fortify the secular system. The pressure applied by the NSC, in tandem with the civilian component of the secular establishment, led to the resignation of the government, the closure of the party by the constitutional court and the banning of its key leaders from active politics.

On 29 April 1997, the general staff announced a radical change to the country's National Military Defence Concept (NMDC): it shifted the priority of security from external threats to the internal issues of Islamic activism and Kurdish separatism. The TPP's previously harmonious relationship with the military also changed radically after the Refahyol experience. Çiller made a complete U-turn, from a position of regarding the armed forces as the best guarantor of democracy<sup>28</sup> to challenging the military's role in guarding secularism on the basis of popular sovereignty and 'national will'. At some point, she even built up 'her own' civilian security forces within the Ministry of Interior.<sup>29</sup>

It is certainly true that 'no major element of Turkish politics at present can be understood without reference to the February 28 process'.<sup>30</sup> Few analysts would dispute that the choices made and strategies followed since 28 February 1997 have proved fateful for Turkish political and economic life, leadership style, political alignments, civil society and bureaucracy. The military assumed an enlarged and heightened political role. Another difference of the 1997 intervention was the fundamental shift towards the military bureaucracy's involvement in everyday politics, resulting from its deep distrust of civilian authority and the role of Islam in political life. Since then, it has become increasingly commonplace for senior commanders to make oral statements or issue written declarations either individually or jointly to reiterate their position on 'fundamentalism'.

The ousting the Refahyol government signalled the start of the military's plan to refashion Turkey's political landscape along Kemalist lines without

28 In an interview with Mehmet Barlas on TGRT TV Channel on 22 February 1997, she openly stated: 'Our army can do the civilianisation and democratisation very well.' Excerpts from this interview were published the next day in the Istanbul daily *Türkiye*.

29 Ümit Cizre, 'From Ruler to Pariah: The Life and Times of the True Path Party', *Turkish Studies* 3, 1 (2002), p. 94.

30 Cizre and Çınar, 'Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process', *Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey beyond the East – West Divide, South Atlantic Quarterly*, special issue, ed. Sibel Irzik and Güven Güzelde 102 (Spring/Summer 2003), p. 310.

actually having to take over power directly. The term the '28th of February Process' was coined to indicate the re-establishment of the basic assumptions of the Kemalist model without a classical coup and with the help of the civil society. Moreover, the central discourse of the establishment since the late 1990s with regard to pro-Islamic platforms represents a total reversal from the Republican pattern of state-Islam relationship, which had previously allowed for negotiation, compromise and reconciliation between Turkey's political Islamists and the establishment.<sup>31</sup> This earlier mode proves the non-zero-sum game character of the power struggle between the secular state elite and Islamists of various shades. Although the Kemalist leadership's construction of a secular nation-state 'eliminate[d] Islam from their definition of the concept of nation; in practice, . . . they continued to give a certain consideration to religion'.<sup>32</sup>

Since 1997, the high command has been convinced that Islamic reactionism is lying in wait, ready to subvert the secular foundations of the Republic. The secular establishment's natural reflex is therefore a permanent state of alert. Retired General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu, former chief of the general staff, expresses this sentiment: 'Radical Islam may appear gone one day to reemerge the next day . . . it is not possible to say that the danger has vanished.'<sup>33</sup> The high command believes that by sticking to a 'purist interpretation of the Kemalist bases of the republic',<sup>34</sup> the secular establishment can continue restructuring politics on a permanent basis. That is why Kıvrıkoğlu said in a press briefing on 3 September 1999 that 'the 28th of February is a process. It began in 1923 and from [that] date until the present it has kept up the momentum against the threat of *irtica* [reactionary Islam] . . . If necessary, the 28th of February will continue for ten years. If necessary, one hundred years. If necessary, for the period of a thousand years.'<sup>35</sup> Kıvrıkoğlu reiterated this position in April 2002 when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, former mayor of Istanbul and present chairman of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) and current prime minister, made strong criticisms of the TAF's handling of the war in the south-east: 'We don't believe that they [the JDP] have changed . . . We did not say that the 28 of

31 Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, 'Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996).

32 Paul Dumont, 'The origins of Kemalist ideology', in Jacob Landau (ed.), *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 30.

33 'Kıvrıkoğlu: Sinsi irtica', *Radikal*, 14 June 2001.

34 Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), p. 71.

35 Sedat Ergin, 'Askerden 12 mesaj', *Hürriyet*, 4 September 1999.

February will last a thousand years for nothing.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, according to the former admiral Salim Dervişoğlu, who took command of the navy six months after 28 February and played an important role in the process, the 28th of February represents the 'continuity' of the 'reaction against the incidents that violate the principle of secularism since the advent of the republic'.<sup>37</sup>

Historically speaking, the coups have had a conservatising effect on both the military and the civilians. Not only have the highest echelons of the military turned out to be defenders of the status quo, they have become a stifling force compelling political parties and movements to toe a centrist line.<sup>38</sup>

Turkey's coup tradition shows that from the military's vantage point, 'rational democracy' is the key concept underpinning the 'true essence of Kemalism', the military elite's substantive and procedural understanding of politics: on the surface, provided the elected authorities function according to the rational democracy framework, there is no danger of military intervention. But the history of coups shows that military's definition of rational democracy is such that there are limits to party competition, ideologies to be espoused, political bargaining between partners within coalition governments, political mandates, styles of leaderships and strategies. All too often, the military justifies its involvement in major policy decisions on anti-political grounds: that 'too much politics' is to blame for conflict and bad policy decisions.

On the civilian side, the interventions have precipitated a certain 'style of power holding' on the part of politicians, characterised by short-time horizons, lack of self-confidence, reliance on their political base and an unscrupulous use of politics as a means of generating economic benefit for politicians and their friends. A political class threatened by the role of the military, both formal and informal, cannot give up its patronage resources easily, as it has to calculate the political payoff of patronage activities against the benefits of combating ineffective government, corruption and stasis. It is more than likely that the civilian political class will not terminate their personal profiteering by launching reforms that would reduce the prominence of the military in politics as long as the shadow of the 'guardian' role remains. The foremost concern of such a leadership will be to extract short-term gains, rather than risk a costly long-term strategy of reform. Indeed, the fear and insecurity on the part of the DP government between 1950 and 1960 emanating from the

36 'Kıvrıkoğlu Erdoğan'a sert', *Radikal*, 24 April 2002.

37 Hulki Cevizoğlu, *Generalinden 28 Şubat itirafı: 'Postmodern darbe'* (Istanbul: Ceviz Kabuğu Yayınları, 2001), p. 76.

38 Cizre and Çınar, 'Turkey 2002'; Dwight J. Simpson, 'Turkey: A Time of Troubles', *Current History* 62, 365 (1972).

military and the old guard led by İsmet İnönü, the leader of the opposition RPP, played a large part in its determination to cling to power, which hastened the 1960 intervention.<sup>39</sup>

*The Turkish right and the maintenance of the anti-political guardianship role*

Traditional hostility between the successors of the DP and the military, both in emotive terms and also in a genuine struggle for power, should not obscure a major feature of the historical maintenance of the TAF's guardian role: during much of the multi-party era, the military actions of the bureaucracy have not been prompted by fear of a challenge to its guiding role from the political left. Instead, it has acted on the well-founded belief that the principal threat to its prerogatives and privileged position is a centre-right government with strong enough popular support to enable it to challenge the TAF's role and build on a power base that would shift the balance in favour of civilian authority.<sup>40</sup>

However, centre-right, centre-left and ultra-right political ideologies and movements in the Republic have frequently ratified the military's decisions and, to varying degrees, supported the military elite's definition of the 'enemy' and the strategies to fight against it: 'communism' during the Cold War; 'reactionary Islam' and 'Kurdish' separatism in the post-Cold War times. In theory, the only time centre-right forces could have presented a real threat to the 'rules of the game' was in the post-1980 period, when the modernism of the new right articulated a religious dimension to Turkish identity. Some tensions arose between the two sides during the first Gulf War, but on the whole, the military welcomed and supported the new Turkish-Islamic synthesis because it believed that this ideology strengthened national unity and social solidarity, eased the dislocations caused by the full liberalisation of Turkish capitalism and defused potential opposition by the left.<sup>41</sup> The relationship between the neo-conservative civilian elite and the military rested on an open-ended set of arrangements whereby civilians managed politics by technical solutions, worked within the post-1980 institutional framework and implicitly agreed not to question the role of the military.

39 George Harris, 'The Causes of the 1960 Revolution in Turkey', *Middle East Journal* 24 (1970), p. 449.

40 Dankwart Rustow, 'Transition to democracy', in Heper and Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military*.

41 Kemal Karpat, 'Military interventions: army-civilian relations in Turkey before and after 1980', in Heper and Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military*, p. 156.

After the military intervention in 1960 the JP, the successor to the DP, became the dominant party of the centre-right. In the 1960s the JP challenged the military by emphasising political freedoms, demanding an amnesty for the imprisoned and politically banned politicians of the DP, and by continuously stressing the 'national will' over the military's will in order to develop a power base from the ruined image of the DP. However, the military benefited from the fact that neither the DP nor the JP was unambiguously committed to political and economic liberalism. As parties of the rural periphery, their existence depended on the most significant cleavage within the existing power balance, that between the central bureaucratic elite and the rural periphery. The appeal of both parties 'was not ideological but . . . rooted in the social structure of Turkey'.<sup>42</sup> Political and economic liberalism had only limited relevance for this core constituency of small peasants and rising urban commercial groups. They were organically linked to the state by statist subsidies and protections.

More significantly, the tension between the Western/European and other/Islamic facets of Turkish national identity had not yet reached the stage of an open contestation about who was a genuine "Turk". Certainly, the 1960s and 1970s show that 'Europeanisation' and secularism were not limited aspirations during the Cold War, although the anti-communist ideology of the state further reinforced the conservatism of the periphery. Until the 1980s, the rising Turkish bourgeoisie wanted freedom from the straitjacket of state bureaucracy, not necessarily a liberal state per se. In sum, the DP and JP voiced popular resentment against the state in a basically pro-state discourse.<sup>43</sup> As a result, containment and cooptation of peripheral elements through Turkey's centre-right forces within a Westernist/secularist frame reinforced the military's traditional role and prerogatives and the integrative power of the state.

The military has written increasingly authoritarian constitutions after each intervention to alter the formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society in favour of a political system comprising its own values.<sup>44</sup> The liberal character of post-1960 restructuring of political and social life may seem an aberration at first, but it can best be understood if put into perspective: American military aid and the modernisation of the army officer corps fostered a growing interest in social and political affairs, which then surpassed that of the civilian ethos of the DP government.<sup>45</sup> The commander

42 W. B. Sherwood, 'The Rise of the Justice Party in Turkey', *World Politics* 20 (1968), p. 55.

43 Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, 'Liberalism, Democracy and the Turkish Center-Right: The Identity Crisis of the True Path Party', *Middle Eastern Studies* 32 (April 1996).

44 Semih Vaner, 'The army', p. 238.

45 Lerner and Robinson, 'Swords and Ploughshares', p. 41.

of the War College, Talat Aydemir, who made two failed coup attempts in 1962 and 1963, explains the politisation of the military in his memoirs: according to him, while the education system in military schools was archaic and repressive until 1949–50, from that date onwards the staff officers were trained in a more liberal American system, which increased their technical professionalism as well as intellectual capacity. In the 1960s the insecurity and uncertainty of the JP, which suffered from factionalism within the party, rising social turmoil, ideological fragmentation in the system, weak authority and its status as the successor party of the DP, also increased the military's bias against the civilians.

The return to competitive politics after the 1980 intervention, on the other hand, was shaped by the intention to avoid the destructive instability of the past, which, the generals believed, was caused by self-interested political actors. The military rulers (1980–3) and the ruling party from 1983 to 1991, the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, MP), altered the social bases of politics, the institutional framework for party competition<sup>46</sup> and undermined the power of the old parties and political class. Globally induced electoral trends also found their way into Turkey with the increasing personalisation of political representation by individual leaders, expressed by the rise in the 'personal vote' or the 'Americanisation of political competition'. This development put a premium on the personal image of the prime minister, reinforcing the already undemocratic malaise of leader-based parties.

It is also important to underscore that as a result of the depth of the state's crisis in 1970, the armed forces had greater autonomy from social forces in 1980 than had been the case in previous interventions. The shift to economic liberalism was predicated on the creation of a socially disciplined and depoliticised society. In other words, the military and its political successors promoted economic liberalism through a conservative-authoritarian political agenda that narrowed the bases of political participation, banned the existing political leaders, parties and venues, strengthened state institutions and expanded the TAF's political privileges constitutionally. This process entailed a new phase of modernisation and entry into the global economy and politics.

The adoption of the neo-liberal agenda caused a convergence in the political debate and led to a sterility of alternative ideas and values. The 1980 intervention was one fundamental source of today's disconnection between state and society. By the end of the 1980s, the coup had created its own loyal clientele: there was now a sizeable and complex middle class that accepted

46 İlter Turan, 'Political parties and the party system in post-1983 Turkey', in Heper and Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military*.

economic neo-liberalism, opted for an individualistic and hedonistic lifestyle and regarded any form of the social state as pathological. Apart from frowning at overt military intervention, however, the new middle classes were not critical of the political presence and role of the military. This acceptance of the military's role suggests that one reason why civilian governments have consistently acceded to the TAF's definition of the rules of politics is the diminished potential of the public sphere to create alternative ideas, energy and creativity in searching for new ways in which the state–society–citizen nexus can be made responsive to new needs, aspirations and hallmarks of democracy. This complacency, in turn, further contributes to the difficulty of establishing effective civilian actors in politics.

During the 1980s and 1990s, while Turgut Özal, former leader of the MP, emulated the global trend of shifting emphasis from party competition to 'effective governance', the right wing was not able to form a coalition capable of inhibiting the formal or informal political influence of the military. While the ideological background of the left was more democracy friendly, the tradition of the JP and its successor, the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, TPP), was more supportive of a conservative and illiberal state. Therefore, attitudinal and legal shifts in post-1980 Turkey brought to the fore the tensions, limitations, contradictions and fault-lines of the Turkish right, as much as those on the left.

The restrictive provisions of the 1982 constitution, which emphasised 'the consolidation of the democratic authority of the state,' were essentially in tune with the pre-1980 JP line. Until the rise of Tansu Çiller (1993–2002), the successor of Demirel as the leader of the TPP, the JP–TPP tradition adopted a double-discourse policy on civilian–military relations: on the one hand, the leadership basically followed a conciliatory line towards military involvement in politics, but at certain crisis junctures, when civil–military relations were at a low ebb, the leadership made feeble efforts to reassert a discourse of supremacy of the parliament and primacy of the popular will.<sup>47</sup>

Demirel, who since 1964 had seen three interventions, remained prepared to make strategic compromises with the military. His whole career was based on an extremely skilful balancing act between the two dimensions of this historical double-discourse. The best example comes from his days in opposition in the 1980s: in calling for greater democratisation, he emphasised anti-militarist ideas, the rule of law and expansion of political participation. This anti-militarist

47 Ümit Cizre Sakalhoğlu, 'The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy', *Comparative Politics* 29 (January 1997), p. 155.



stance and rhetoric was the most radical any mainstream political party had adopted in Turkey, because it openly questioned the constitutional role of the NSC and expressed concern over the changed power relations between the armed forces and the political class. The party hierarchy demanded the establishment of the principle of civilian control over the military. The MP was portrayed as 'the emanation of the coup . . . using . . . the political influence of the military for furthering its political fortunes'.<sup>48</sup>

In 1990, while he was still in opposition, Demirel demanded a reorganisation of civil–military relations to establish civilian control over the military.<sup>49</sup> But two years later, when he was the prime minister, he permitted a bill placing the chief of general staff under the minister of defence<sup>50</sup> to be defeated by the votes of his party members in the parliamentary committee on defence.<sup>51</sup> The same bill was again defeated eight months later in the same committee by the same deputies.<sup>52</sup>

Tansu Çiller approached the military differently, departing from the traditional line of the party with her adoption of a more consistent discourse.<sup>53</sup> Abandoning any pretence of reasserting civilian supremacy, Çiller praised the armed forces, as she was reluctant to risk the military's reaction and upset the status quo. She also hoped to score a political victory on the Kurdish issue by defeating the uprising by military means. Çiller explained her policy thus: 'We were accused of governing by leaning on to the military . . . Which politician and political party in any country has come to power by bickering with its own army?'<sup>54</sup> Indeed, when in August 1993 and 1994 the question of the appointment of the general chief of staff arose, Çiller refrained from undertaking any

48 Süleyman Demirel, *Türk demokrasisi meydan okuyor: DYP genel başkanı Süleyman Demirel'in 1989 mali yılı bütçesi vesilesi ile TBMM'de yaptığı konuşmalar* (Ankara: DYP Basın ve Propaganda Başkanlığı, n. d.), p. 133.

49 Süleyman Demirel, '12 Eylül vaadleri tutulmadı', *Milliyet*, 28 May 1990. Demirel, in this interview with an Istanbul daily, openly stated: 'In Turkey, the place of the chief of general staff is, in fact, above the minister of defence. Is Turkey a military republic? . . . The place of the chief of general staff should in fact be below the minister of defence . . . In which country in the world does the chief of general staff see [the] president every week and brief him?'

50 The issue of the chief of general staff being accountable to the minister of defence, rather than the prime minister, is of great significance in Turkey for those advocating the establishment of liberal democracy along the lines suggested by the EU and those who see this type of division of authority as indicative of subordination of the military to the civilian authority along Western lines.

51 Cizre, 'Ruler to Pariah', p. 88.

52 See *Hürriyet*, 15 January 1993.

53 Ümit Cizre, 'Tansu Çiller: Lusting for power and undermining democracy', in M. Heper and S. Sayarı (eds.), *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 203.

54 *Ibid.*

initiative that would displease the high command, and endorsed the wishes of the hierarchy on the issue. Doğan Güreş, the chief of staff she chose, and who was later elected as deputy on the TPP ticket in 1995, reiterated the harmony between Çiller and the armed forces: 'The prime minister acted like a tiger, the armed forces liked it. I worked with ease with all the prime ministers, with Özal, Akbulut, Yılmaz and Demirel. But with Çiller I worked with even more ease.'<sup>55</sup>

As a result, critical policy choices and initiatives on fundamental questions such as the Kurdish issue have been hampered by right-wing governments' legacy of legitimising the status quo and therefore reinforcing the skewed equilibrium in civil–military relations in the military's favour.

The military and civilian protagonists of the 1997 intervention saw the roots of reactionary Islam in the 'irresponsible' use of Islam for partisan purposes by the political class. They therefore attempted to marginalise the forces of political Islam by disciplining representative institutions, strengthening the centre-right and centre-left and implementing security-minded policies in the public. They were not interested in the promotion of regime capabilities through more effective governance, political legitimacy and expanded democracy.<sup>56</sup> Their logic was guided by the rationale that structural changes could be introduced without any corresponding transformation in political ideas. However, their restructuring of the political system only served to bring out the state-friendly and state-dependent features of centre-left and centre-right parties and to stifle their vision, creativity and appeal.<sup>57</sup> Both left and right became preoccupied with preserving the status quo and failed to generate any new, forward-looking ideas.<sup>58</sup> The establishment's single-minded concern with securing the country against potential threats originating from Islamism and Kurdish nationalism stifled public debate on key issues, and led the existing political class to subcontract the resolution of crucial problems to the civil–military bureaucracy.<sup>59</sup> In sum, all political persuasions adopted a new rendition of the 'politics of inertia', a politics that was characterised by 'the absence of political synergy or a credible parliamentary alternative, and the officials' abject disregard for the concerns of those they represent'.<sup>60</sup>

55 Cizre, 'Ruler to pariah', p. 92.

56 Cizre and Çınar, 'Turkey 2002', p. 316.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 316–17.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 318.

59 Menderes Çınar, 'Mission Impossible', *Private View* 2, 5 (1997), p. 76.

60 Cizre and Çınar, 'Turkey 2002', p. 318.

The roadmap for Turkey's entry to the EU, drawn at the Helsinki European Council's meeting on 10–11 December 1999, has forced the heirs of the 28th February process to dilute their 'all-or-nothing' mentality towards Islam in politics. Pitting the rhetoric of 'contemporary life', which in Turkey is associated with Western secularism, against the opposite imagery of 'Islamic anachronism' was one way for Ankara to endorse Western values. In the post-Helsinki era, there was also a shift of discourse on the part of the military establishment to an 'argumentative rationality' when engaged with its domestic and international critics over accusations of democracy and human rights violations.<sup>61</sup> Rather than denying the violations of democratic norms, the argumentative discourse affirmed the democratic deficiency in Turkey's political life, but tried to justify the suspension and limitation of democratic rights and norms on the grounds that as part of the military's campaign against internal enemies, particularly Kurdish insurgents, these measures were 'exceptional' and 'corrective'.

However, since the 11 September attacks, the Turkish general staff has moved towards a more conservative-nationalist position with regard to Ankara's fulfilment of the EU's Copenhagen Criteria. The high command is of the opinion that the conditions for fulfilling democracy are 'compromises', and as such they are too high a price to pay for being included in a bloc which displays a negative bias towards Turkey and will therefore create barriers to accession. Tuncer Kılınç, former secretary general of the NSC, told an audience at the Ankara War Academy in early March 2002 that 'the EU will never accept Turkey . . . Thus, Turkey needs new allies, and it would be useful if Turkey engages in a search that would include Russia and Iran.'<sup>62</sup>

*The military and the Justice and Development Party:  
continuing or breaking the modus vivendi with the right*

The moderate Islamist JDP's election victory in November 2002 reaffirmed the military's perception of political Islam as an internal security threat. But the JDP drew a critical lesson from the failed coalitions of the 1990s, and as a result sought to change the status quo via efficient performance on the basis of two positions: first, a discursive denial of its Islamist pedigree and the adoption

61 See Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, 'The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: Introduction', in Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink (eds.), *The Power of Human Rights, International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 2–3.

62 See Jon Gorravett, 'Turkish Military fires warning shot over EU membership,' *The Middle East* 323 (May 2002), p. 33.

of a moderate and non-religious discourse in its place; and second, securing Turkish inclusion in the EU not just as a reform strategy, but also as a way of transforming the domestic power balance.

With the EU accession process in mind, the government's reform packages since November 2002 have included the expansion of freedom of expression; the abolition of the death penalty and anti-terrorism provisions that authorised punishment for verbal propaganda against the unity of state; the provision of retrial rights for citizens whose court decisions are overturned by the European Court of Human Rights; permission for education and broadcasting in the Kurdish language; and some softening of the intransigence of Turkish foreign policy towards the Cyprus question. The sheer volume and speed of the reforms, as well as the consensus of support behind them, have helped change the popular perception of civilian governments as underachieving, unstable and corrupt. More significantly, through a number of deliberate policies, the ruling party has tried to create enough elbow room to make decisions free from the tutelary control of the military. This process, in turn, has increased its ability to initiate pro-civilian reforms in spite of disquiet amongst the secular establishment.

As the JDP government has included in its political reform agenda the alteration of the existing system of civil–military relations, the TAF has been provoked into upholding its 'guardianship' mission, because it has continued to regard the government's discourse and true intentions with deep suspicion. The global reshaping of the world after the Cold War has had two contradictory policy implications for the Turkish military's role in public life: first, the explosion of military-defined internal security threats has encouraged the tendency for more security, less democracy and more vigilance from the TAF. In the 1990s, there was an increase in laws pertaining to internal security, anti-terrorism and the maintenance of public order. These laws criminalise certain political activities, constrain public debate and expand military jurisdiction over civilians. However, second, partly as a backlash to these repressive measures, partly under the firm impetus of the idea of entry into the EU, an impressive movement towards internalisation of European political values has dramatically increased the costs of 'more security'. This development has prompted reform and the scaling down of the TAF's political influence.

Of the democratic reforms that Turkey has undertaken, none are more important and controversial than those related to the Turkish military's power and autonomy in the 2000s. The democratic reform package of July 2003, which was formally put into effect on 7 August 2003, shows that the current military–civil equation in Turkey is characterised by greater dynamism than

expectations of historical–cultural continuity in the civil–military relationship would allow. The package contained an amendment to some articles of the Act on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the NSC that tipped the balance of power in favour of civilian leadership. The August 2003 laws are a distinct legislative accomplishment by historical standards because the political role of the military has been based on the NSC, an institution long considered to be ‘the shadow government’.<sup>63</sup> The reforms not only repealed the NSC’s executive powers and turned it into an advisory body, they also increased the number of civilian members to a majority.

From many perspectives, the August 2003 package of laws, also called the 7th Harmonisation Package, has compelling political and theoretical significance for the civil–military power equation. By converting the NSC into an advisory body that has little effective influence over national policy, the AKP government knowingly took the risk of a confrontation with the military leadership. This step showed that the government now felt itself to be in a secure enough position to establish civilian supremacy. The 8th Harmonisation Package, passed on 21 May 2004, further increased civilian oversight over the defence budget and removed military representatives from the Council on Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, YÖK) and the Supreme Board of Radio and Television (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurumu, RTÜK). It also abolished state security courts, which tried crimes against the state, a legacy of the period after the 1980 military coup.<sup>64</sup> Finally, the amendments narrowed the right of military courts to try civilians for criticising the military. The government is also planning to increase the parliamentary oversight of defence spending in 2006, and has taken some steps in involving itself in the preparation of the latest national security policy document. These developments do not signal a total retreat of the military from politics, even along with the by-law of 8 January 2005 that made the NSC’s operation non-secret. But the most

63 Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül used the term in a speech he made in New York. See ‘MGK Gölge Hükümeti’, *Milliyet*, 29 September 2004.

64 Established in 1982 and commencing operations in 1984, the state security courts have been civilianised since June 1999 after the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 1998 that its composition of one military judge with two civilians was against the European conventions. To prevent criticism of the trial of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, the military judge sitting on the bench was removed and replaced with a civilian one. The EU Commission’s *Regular Reports* have repeatedly specified that the powers and proceedings of these courts be brought more in line with EU standards. The first round of democratisation reforms passed by parliament on 6 February 2002 dealt with the issue only procedurally by reducing the custody period for crimes tried in the state security courts. The scope of its functions is transferred to the criminal courts that are being set up.

important platform through which the military's influence is exercised and reproduced has definitely been curtailed.

The military's partial retreat from the political arena is explained not only by the requirements of the EU membership, but also by the strategic environment that arose in the aftermath of 11 September and the 2003 Iraq war. In this environment, international sympathy and support for the moderate Islam-identified government of Turkey is not at all irreconcilable with the prevailing moral sensibility that characterises international politics. This new state of affairs resonates well with the long-held Turkish aspiration of being European in a region of 'backward' religious beliefs, poverty, underdevelopment and democratic shortfall. As the historian Kemal Karpat puts it, Turkey is probably 'the only nation to have turned modernity into [its] national religion'.<sup>65</sup> Thus the relationship is mutually advantageous, because Turkey is both useful to the West and has 'a vision of the future anchored in the West'.<sup>66</sup> As a result of the situation, the JDP government does not have to try hard to ingratiate itself with the West. The strategic change in the region has accomplished that task.

But what makes this argument complicated is that the Turkish military is not at all amenable to the idea of a secular regime in a culturally Muslim country providing 'a good example for other countries in the region'.<sup>67</sup> The Turkish regime has always taken an ambiguous position with regard to the country's identity and connections to the Islamic world. Indeed, the regime refuses to define Turkish identity in terms of religion or to countenance any public role for Islam. But its definition of a secular identity is also open to debate: those who view Turkey from a critical perspective doubt the country's secular credentials and claim that it has a laicist system of 'domination and control of religion by the state at nearly all levels'.<sup>68</sup>

The factors that enhance Turkey's political value in the eyes of the West are in fact rejected by the military: a former deputy chief of general staff, General İlker Başbuğ, defends a causal link between secularism and democracy, and therefore assumes that since Turkey is secular, it is also democratic. In his mind, it is false to juxtapose Islam and secularism: 'It can be misleading to claim that countries with a predominantly Muslim population could adopt a

65 Kemal Karpat, 'Turkey's long journey to Europe', [newsvote.bbc.co.uk/impapps/pagetools/the](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/impapps/pagetools/the) (4 January 2005), BBC News.

66 Ibid.

67 Commission of the European Communities, 'Commission Staff Working Document, Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective', Brussels, October 2004, p. 11.

68 Graham Fuller, 'Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities', *Washington Quarterly* 27, 3 (2004), p. 52.

democratic structure by following the Turkish model. Countries which have not experienced the process of secularisation, cannot achieve a democratic structure easily.<sup>69</sup> General Başbuğ also rejects the Islamic-democratic model on the grounds that the secular character of the Republic and a 'moderate' Islam are incompatible.<sup>70</sup>

Since 2003, there has been genuine progress on the EU issue in tandem with resolute international support for the JDP. Upon visiting Turkey, EU president Romano Prodi praised the government's adoption of radical reforms and expressed his surprise at the decisiveness and rate of the reform process.<sup>71</sup> Driven by the concern to protect its corporate and political interests in the long run, the TAF has retreated from the prioritisation of its security-first discourse. Cognisant that there is a clear linkage between Turkish EU membership and a solution to the Cyprus problem, hardliners within and outside the military accepted the UN secretary general Kofi Annan's peace plan as the basic point of reference even though they had previously been reluctant to endorse it. One such hardliner, General Hurşit Tolon, the commander of Aegean Army, expressed that view very clearly: 'Some say the military does not favour an agreement on Cyprus, but it does not reflect the truth . . . it is fashionable to spread the lie that the military does not want Turkish entry into the EU . . . This is a total lie.'<sup>72</sup>

General Hilmi Özkök, the chief of general staff, reinforced this new positive approach to the EU in an interview he granted to a Greek journalist four months after Prodi's visit. In keeping with his comparatively more flexible and democratic image, he made a sincere admission of the grounds for the army's volte-face: '70 per cent of the people want the EU membership. Nobody can resist this kind of majority.'<sup>73</sup> Thus, while still reiterating the exceptional characteristics of Turkey to justify the internal security function for the military, Özkök revealed the military's flexibility in reconciling its guardian role with the requirements for entry into the EU: 'We are ready to compromise and undertake risks to harmonize with the EU values.'<sup>74</sup>

On the issue of the Iraq war, the prevention of the emergence of a splinter Kurdish state in northern Iraq has been the predominant consideration shaping the Turkish government's policies. The Turkish parliament's decision

69 See [www.turkishnewslines.com/](http://www.turkishnewslines.com/).

70 'Türkiye'nin yapısı belli', *Milliyet*, 20 March 2004.

71 'AB'ye Çok Yakınsınız' *Milliyet*, 16 January 2004.

72 'Tolon: Çakıl taşı vermeyiz, nöbetteyiz', *Radikal*, 18 January 2004.

73 'Yeter ki AB'li olalım', *Radikal*, 19 October 2003.

74 Ibid.

on 1 March 2003 not to grant US troops access to Iraq via Turkish territory, surprising though it may have been against a backdrop of time-tested strategic and political ties between Washington and Ankara, also reflected the popular reluctance to play an instrumental role in waging war on a Muslim neighbour.

In sum, the combination of internal changes and global opportunities has reduced the choices available to the TAF. The military is caught between two alternatives: either accept a shift in power away from the military as part of the conditions for EU entry, or confront the government and a mostly pro-EU society. The latter path would put the military at risk of losing its credibility as the self-appointed representative of Turkey's intellectual and social elite, responsible for fulfilling Atatürk's dream of 'raising Turkey to the level of civilization' of the West. In order to preserve its power base and corporate interest, without which it cannot preserve its political pre-eminence, it has opted for the first choice.

But it should also be noted that while the era of military interventions is past, the TAF retains a significant degree of political leverage. It has strong civilian allies who protect the officers' vision of democracy and counter any 'internal threats' to the regime. Despite the progress made in aligning Turkey's laws with the EU requirements<sup>75</sup> and despite the fact that Ankara received the green light to start accession talks with the EU on 3 October 2005, the latest Annual Report of 2005 notes that 'since 2002, Turkey has made good progress in reforming CMRS . . . but the armed forces continue to exercise significant political influence . . . and Turkey should work towards greater accountability and transparency in the conduct of security affairs in line with member states' "best practices"<sup>76</sup>.

## Military, society and political class

### *Modalities of interaction with the society*

Historically speaking, the officer corps has been dissociated from Turkish society to a much larger extent than other professional groups. The logic of the situation is that for a group of people to be held responsible for the well-being of the nation, they must be freed from 'ordinary' burdens of public life. In

<sup>75</sup> Through two major constitutional reforms made in 2001 and 2004 and eight legislative packages passed between February 2002 and July 2004 three areas of structural issues of reform as indicated by the EU, except the position of the chief of general staff (he is still responsible to the prime minister rather than the defence minister), have been tackled.

<sup>76</sup> European Commission, 'Turkey 2005 Progress Report', Brussels, 9 November 2005, p. 14.



other words, the conditions causing the semi-isolation of the Republican army from the mainstream of the population were produced by the vanguard role of the military and civilian bureaucracy. As a result of that role, the military identified itself completely with the state and the status quo.

Although Kemalism is perceived in a much less militant and less fetishist manner at the popular level, this position of social autonomy enables the military to sustain it in an undiluted form which becomes relevant for as long as the military bureaucracy retains its social and political power, indicating once more the fusion of ideology and power as motivations. A pattern of self-recruiting the ‘sons of military and civil-servants’<sup>77</sup> into the military also explains the perpetuation of the conditions that reproduce that power. There is a large dose of truth in the claim that Kemalism is a pervasive ideology in the army that is largely reproduced by its distance from the society, including its weak links with capital owners.<sup>78</sup>

The defining organisational characteristics of the TAF are based on the fact that it is a conscript army. This feature is of immense importance in integrating military values firmly into the society. Compulsory military service is an instrument that makes clear to young men who are enlisted at the age of twenty that they do not just have rights but also ‘responsibilities and obligations’ to the state. The implications of a conscript army are also projected into Ankara’s thinking that security is tied to military strength, which, in turn, is to be gained by having a larger army.

As will be seen below, Turkey’s threat perceptions and security thinking have been minimally affected by changing military requirements in the world. Therefore, the dominant military model and trends at work in the world, namely, abolishing compulsory military service; encouraging professionalisation and a smaller and a more technical army; discouraging the army’s involvement in civic and political arenas; contribution to multinational power-generating schemes; and democratic control of the armed forces by civilians have limited – though growing – or no application in Turkish geography. It is no wonder then that, under these conditions, the political and social guardian role persists.

Moreover, there is no reliable research addressing the changes in the outlook and behaviour of the armed forces as a result of their focus on anti-terrorist missions and security-minded outlook in the 1990s and the resultant differences

77 James Brown, ‘The Military and Society: The Turkish Case’, *Middle Eastern Societies* 25, 3 (1989), p. 399.

78 Ahmet Kemal, ‘Military Rule and the Future of Democracy in Turkey’, *MERIP* 122 (March–April 1984), p. 13.

from and similarities with civilian society in terms of values and attitudes. Nor do we have healthy data about the impact of broader societal changes from which the military cannot remain immune. What we can project intuitively and relying on historical data, however, is that the TAF's anti-political thought and style draws strength from the ideological and policy failure of domestic politics. As the lack of a meaningful public accountability and failure of policies of distributional equality have led to the erosion of public confidence in the political system, the military has benefited from a pervasive anti-political discourse which it shares with much of the general public.

Furthermore, a comprehensive process of social control by the state through the 'making of mass meaning' via the education system and mass media have provided crucial means through which the official ideology is diffused through the capillaries of the society and turns into 'microphysics of power'.<sup>79</sup> Kemalist ideology's relationship of power with society is such that in socially defining and structuring individuals, it creates a form of control based on 'consent' which is a seemingly democratic feature. Kemalist ideology turns into the legitimate societal discourse through the manipulation of a public image which becomes effective in the end as the 'self-image' of a society which wants to identify itself as modern and progressive.<sup>80</sup> The societal modernisation project of the state, in other words, is accepted by the society as being in its 'self-interest'.

The classic portrayal of Turkish society in awe of its military bureaucracy may not be illusory, but the real challenge is to understand how such a stance came about. The effectiveness of the military lies not just in the control-oriented discourse of the state, of which the military forms the most important pillar. Rather, it is a function of controlling the self-image of the society through a de-centred and diffused popular discourse. The success of the military's Kemalist values in making inroads into society lies in enabling society to identify its self-image with a 'public' image which is set in a top-down fashion but is perceived as if it is a bottom-up process.

Societal context in Turkey was distinguished in the 1990s by high levels of political conflict brought about by the rise of identity politics. Global changes in the concept of security have been translated into the Turkish context in such

79 Dario Melossi, *The State of Social Control* (Cambridge: Polity Press: 1990), p. 172. For an analysis of power which shifts the emphasis from state power and subjection to where the power produces its effects and where it becomes capillary, see Michel Foucault, 'Power, sovereignty and discipline', in David Held et al. (eds.), *States and Societies* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983).

80 Melossi, *The State of Social Control*, p. 172.

a way that internal political conflict and instability provoked by new global conditions have been reinterpreted as security threats. This development has meant that fundamental policy making is removed from the sphere of the elected representatives and entrusted to the security community, of which the military bureaucracy forms the key component.

Rapid economic and social change, in a context of stark inequality, weak democratic traditions and a propensity for violations of basic rights, soon took a toll on the Turkish military–society relationship, resulting in increasing corruption, especially of the security forces in anti-terrorist operations. The Susurluk scandal revealed the existence of a criminal triangle of politicians, mafia bosses and security forces who were engaged in the war against the PKK.<sup>81</sup> As the public outcry created immense pressure for accountability, transparency and justice in the system, the security forces and the Refahiyol coalition government led by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Çiller opposed a ‘clean hands’ operation to reform the system. Çiller gave unequivocal support to dubious state practices including illegal murders: ‘Those who shoot bullets or those who are the targets of bullets in the name of the state are both honorable. They all are heroes.’<sup>82</sup> Even Turkey’s right-wing forces concurred with broader social pressure, demanding the termination of indiscriminate use of security forces, unchecked privileges and vested interests in intelligence and anti-terrorist operations.

*The military and the political class: patterns of perceptions*

From the perspective of elected representatives, perhaps the most serious factor capable of tilting the balance of the civil–military equation in favour of the latter is the perception of the civilian political class by the military: it is no secret that the Turkish army, like most of its counterparts elsewhere, perceives the civilian world as unstable, inept, careerist, populist, imprudent, corrupt and irresponsible. This anti-political cognitive map of the officer corps is incongruent with even the most flexible assumptions of representative democracy. The

<sup>81</sup> This scandal followed a traffic accident in which Abdullah Çatlı, an ultranationalist involved in political killings in the 1970s and was on the run, a civilian security chief in Istanbul and a young woman taken for a joy ride were killed together. The only survivor was a tribal chief from the south-east who was also a DYP deputy and whose tribe was on the side of the state.

<sup>82</sup> This was, however, hardly a surprising statement as it is now known that she and her then police chief, Mehmet Ağar, were involved in this triangle since 1995, when he agreed to arrange to hunt and eliminate Abdullah Öcalan, then leader of the PKK, so as to enable Çiller to capitalise on the event for the December 1995 elections.

military sees the political parties, most interest groups, political leaders and the civilian presidents – or at least did so until the election of the current president in 2000 – as disruptive and divisive forces. Army takeovers are justified on the basis of the deep void in political authority in conditions of breakdown of public order preceding the coups.

Turkey's political parties do bear a very heavy burden of responsibility for failing to carry out independent policies on major political issues, adapt to changing needs, implement reforms to reverse the disintegration of the political system and democratise the internal workings of their own party structures. Such changes would both help them win public support and overcome their lack of self-confidence with regard to the military. Eric Rouleau, in a sense, underscores the key importance of being able to puncture this vicious circle when he speaks of the 'good statecraft'<sup>83</sup> of the former prime minister Turgut Özal (1983–9), who managed to curtail the political role of the military hierarchy to some extent during his premiership.

However, the political class has at times displayed some initiative and a willingness to strengthen civilian institutions, reshape the political process and question who defines the security threats, sets acceptable risks and determines appropriate responses to them. For example, former Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz, the leader of the MP, a junior partner in the three-party coalition government between 1999 and 2002, suggested in the aftermath of the 28 February process that the generals should abandon the fight against reactionary Islam and focus their attention on external defence. More importantly, he made a speech in his party's convention on 4 August 2001 arguing that Turkish politics was afflicted by a 'national security syndrome', which, he claimed, only served to frustrate the reforms necessary to democratise and integrate the Turkish political system into the EU. The response of the military high command was vehement, suggesting that national security was an issue to be kept out of politics.<sup>84</sup>

The weakness of the constitutionally elected authorities is not directly responsible for the strong political role of the generals. On the contrary, the historical position of the military, that is, its self-assigned *capacity* to guard the regime, has played a major role in detracting further from the ability and responsibility of civilian leaders to assume control over the political environment and to manage the key political problems effectively. The

83 Eric Rouleau, 'Turkey's Dream of Democracy', *Foreign Affairs* (November–December 2000), p. 110.

84 Ümit Cizre, 'Demythologizing the National Security Concept: The Case of Turkey', *Middle East Journal* 57, 2 (2003), p. 223.

most compelling explanation for civilian ‘weakness’ is that frequent military incursions into politics seriously weaken the foundations of democracy, cause a severe crisis of public confidence in the political class and exacerbate the already existing power asymmetry in civil–military relations and the overt political role of the military.

### Reinventing security in the face of post-Cold War renaissance of militaries and changes in security

In many developing countries that, at one time or other, were under military rule, the recent ‘global wave of democratization has prompted important shifts in civil–military relations’<sup>85</sup> which have less to do with postmodern security concerns than with the end of the bipolar tension and the new movement towards decentralisation of state powers. This trend has caused hopes in the direction of a more democratic formulation of civil–military relations: it has ‘unleashed a tendency for civilian governments to try to assert greater influence over the officer corps and for militaries to try to defend their preexisting prerogatives’.<sup>86</sup> Contrary to this trend, however, the political power of the Turkish military has risen sharply in the last decade. The Kurdish issue and the growth of political Islam have enabled the military to reaffirm its central role at a time when faith in armies has given way to downsizing their structures and a reduction of military expenditure in the West.

The perception that Turkey occupies a unique strategic position and faces genuine security risks on her borders is a central factor in shaping the military’s rationale for security considerations with very little debate and civilian input. Turkey’s geo-strategic position is frequently emphasised by military and civilian leaders to show the country’s military and political value to the West and to justify a large military with a big budget. Many foreign observers agree that Turkey faces genuine security risks on her borders and its ‘comparative advantage lies in its ability to influence trans-regional risks and opportunities’.<sup>87</sup> Turkey’s leaders argue that the country has moved from being a secondary member of NATO to a country of primary importance (from a ‘flank country’ to a ‘front country’),<sup>88</sup> a view first expressed by US assistant secretary of state

85 Wendy Hunter, ‘Negotiating Civil–Military Relations in Post-Authoritarian Argentina and Chile’, *International Studies Quarterly* 42, 2 (1998), p. 295.

86 Ibid.

87 Ian O. Lesser, ‘In Search of a Post-Cold War Role’, *Private View* (Autumn 1997), p. 94.

88 Ibid.

Richard Holbrooke in March 1995.<sup>89</sup> The implications of this geo-strategy-based outlook for civilian participation in national security policy is rather bleak: in the words of one researcher, "Turkey's national security conception is predetermined by its geopolitical position and domestic make-up and that such "givens" do not leave much room for discussion . . . the relative lack of debate on Turkey's security conceptualization could partly be explained with reference to the assumption that Turkey's geographical location determines its security policies."<sup>90</sup>

That being said, it is clear that a geo-strategically motivated threat perception is very real for the military. Some countries such as Syria, Iran, Iraq and Armenia, and, to a lesser extent, Russia, hold hostile or potentially hostile stances towards Turkey. The existence of a Kurdish autonomous entity in northern Iraq disturbs Turkey's foreign and security policy makers intensely. To deal with these threats, the military leadership argues that the national security apparatus must be kept ready and capable.<sup>91</sup> When these perceptions of internal and external threats are combined, it seems that, contrary to the global trend, the end of the Cold War has not led to a less security-based domestic agenda in Turkey. On the contrary, it has meant that security is still a 'control' problem rather than a democratic contract with the society built into the culture, environment and everyday routine.

New traumas, insecurities and crises intimately connected with the end of the Cold War reinforce the historical/geographical determinism built into the system for the guardian role of the TAF. Changing security concepts have not led to diminished prerogatives and have reinforced the self-appointed role of the armed forces. Jane Chanaa's portrayal of some military power structures exploring new venues to maintain their political power 'structurally, ideologically and materially' in the new era is an excellent description of the Turkish military. Chanaa argues that the 1990s saw 'security traditions reinventing themselves'<sup>92</sup> in some developing nations. Emergence of internal security threats has been an effective instrument to enable many developing states, including Turkey, to broaden their security agenda.

89 Morton Abramowitz, 'The complexities of American policymaking on Turkey', in Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000), p. 159.

90 Pinar Bilgin, 'Rethinking Turkey's Security Discourse: The Challenge of Globalization', paper presented at the annual meeting of the APSA, Boston, MA, 29 August–1 September 2002, pp. 13–19.

91 Cizre, 'Demythologizing the National Security Concept', p. 216.

92 Jane Chanaa, *Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002, Adelphi Paper 344), p. 42.

## Conclusion

Chanaa's argument that some post-Cold War militaries have been 'resourceful in their invention'<sup>93</sup> of new security priorities lends support to the notion that the Turkish military's power struggle with civilian authority, along with the TAF's genuine commitment to Kemalist ideology, has shaped the military's anti-political interventionism. The idea that 'security is not only to be given or taken; it is also out there to be made'<sup>94</sup> shows the apex of the military's construction of a power base from which it can redefine the standards and course of Kemalist order and progress. Since the end of the Cold War, hopes for a more democratic structure of civil–military relations have emerged. However, the conservative tone of international politics, the revival of Islamism and the escalation of the Kurdish conflict have provided the momentum for a redefinition of national interest, security and the expansion of the guardian role of the TAF.

The TAF's maintenance of a high degree of autonomy in political and institutional realms has generated a host of contradictions for Turkey's democracy. For one thing, it has weakened the bases of representative process. The overbearing weight of the military in the system has tended to inhibit the imagination of the political class, which is confronted with colossal challenges such as massive internal migration and urbanisation connected to the south-east question, yet does not have the political margin to encourage it to develop the necessary willingness, capacity and credibility to solve them.

This pessimistic assessment can be qualified by some positive developments. The EU accession process has generated an important undercurrent for the normalisation of the position of the military in the political system. Moreover, under the impetus of the process, increased governmental leverage over key national security and foreign policy issues such as the EU, Cyprus and Iraq has brought forth the need for the civilian elites to develop alternative choices, strategies and policies that are designed to show up the political character of the internal security problems and make them a matter of public debate. Combined with the international backing for the JDP on the basis that it serves as a 'Muslim democratic model' in the region, this new civilian initiative has undermined the military's ability to challenge a popularly backed government.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

## Kurds and the Turkish state

HAMİT BOZARSLAN

Together with the *irtica* ('religious reaction'), the Kurdish question has constituted the most important challenge to the Turkish Republic since its foundation in 1923. The trajectory of the Kurdish issue has been determined by two features: the state's denial of its existence; and the emergence of its radical challenge to the state. Official state policy either denied the very existence of a distinct group called Kurds, or presented the Kurds as a threat to Turkey and the Turks as a national entity. The Kurdish struggle, on the other hand, has been at the basis of a series of revolts between 1923 and 1938 and, later on, in the 1970s–1990s, of urban violence and guerrilla warfare.

Since the beginning of the Republic, there has always been a close link between Turkey's internal Kurdish issue and the Kurdish conflict in the Middle East. Almost all the Kurdish struggles throughout the twentieth century have in fact had a regional dimension, thus playing a decisive role in the foreign policies of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. With the notable exception of President Turgut Özal (1989–93), the Turkish authorities have always considered the formation of an autonomous Kurdish entity within the neighbouring territory as a potential threat to their own territorial integrity, and thus advocated a system of regional security against 'Kurdish separatism'.

In this chapter I will first underline the importance of the pre-Republican period in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism. I will then comment on the 'years of revolts' that covered almost the entire period of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)'s presidency. In the third section, I will focus on the 'period of silence' (1938–61), which played an indirect role in the formation of a codified Kurdish nationalism and its symbols. The fourth part will be dedicated to the long and problematic renewal of a Kurdish movement in Turkey between 1961 and 1980. The last section will analyse the consequences of the 1980 military coup and the guerrilla warfare conducted by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) between 1984 and 1999, and provide an update concerning the present situation.



## The Kurds in Turkey

I will first provide some brief information concerning the Kurds and the Kurdish regions, also known in the academic literature as Kurdistan of Turkey or Turkish Kurdistan. Most observers estimate the number of Kurds in the Middle East and in the diaspora to be close to 30 million (between 12 and 15 million in Turkey; more than 8 million in Iran; 5 million in Iraq; more than 1 million in Syria; and almost 2 million in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries, the former Soviet Union and Europe). The impact of division along state borders, multiple affiliationist policies such as assimilation, voluntary or forced displacement and mixed marriages, as well as internal religious and linguistic differentiations, make it impossible to postulate that there is one exclusive Kurdish identity. In Turkey, for instance, while most of the Kurds are Sunni Muslims, a notable minority is Alevi. Some Kurds are Zaza speakers, while the others speak Kurmandjî. Moreover, some provinces, such as Elazığ, Malatya and Erzurum, are ethnically and religiously mixed, with various combinations of Turks, Kurds, Sunnis and Alevis. These mixtures lead geographers to think more in terms of Kurdish-inhabited areas than of Kurdistan.<sup>1</sup>

The Kurdish-inhabited areas are among the least developed regions in Turkey. While the eastern provinces' share of GNP was 10.3% in 1965, it did not exceed 7.68% in 1986.<sup>2</sup> By 2000 it had increased to 10.2% (with a population increase rate of 14.5); as Mustafa Sönmez points out, however, this increase can only be explained by the state's massive fund transfer in order to finance its military expenditures due to the war, as well as by the salaries of its increasing number of security personnel.<sup>3</sup> In 1992, while the GNP per capita was \$2,032 in Turkey, it was only \$300 in many eastern provinces.<sup>4</sup> In 2001, the GNP per capita was \$2,941 in Turkey as a whole, and between \$3,000 and \$6,165 in cities such as Istanbul and Kocaeli; but in some eastern cities the amount was seven times lower. In 2004, while the GDP per capita was \$2,146 in Turkey, and \$3,063 in Istanbul, it hardly exceeded \$1,000 in the Kurdish provinces (\$1,008 in Urfa, \$1,312 in Diyarbakır, \$1,216 in Batman, \$1,111 in Siirt, \$963 in Mardin, \$855 in İğdır, \$836 in Hakkari, \$795 in Bingöl, 730 in Ağrı, \$646 in Bitlis, \$578

1 David McDowell, *A Modern history of the Kurds*: I. B. Tauris, (London 1996).

2 Jean-François Peroutz, *La Turquie en marche. Les grandes mutations depuis 1980* (Paris: de la Martinière, 2004).

3 Mustafa Sönmez, *Gelir uçurumu. Türkiye'de gelirin adaletsiz bölüşümü* (Istanbul: OM, 2001), p. 68.

4 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), p. 188. See also Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun hikâyesi* (Istanbul: Arkadaş, 1990).

in Muş, and \$568 in Kars).<sup>5</sup> While the rate of doctors per capita was 888 in Edirne in the end of the twentieth century, it was 2,506 in Bitlis and Hakkari<sup>6</sup> during the same period. According the state's own account, in 1996 a third of the region's population lived below the level of poverty.<sup>7</sup> Given the important gaps between 'west' and 'east', some observers have developed the concept 'under-under-development' to describe the economic situation of the Kurdish provinces.<sup>8</sup>

Until the end of 1970s, most of the Kurdish-inhabited provinces had an overwhelmingly rural population with strong tribal affiliations<sup>9</sup> and weak economic integration with the rest of the country. The serious economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, the violence of the 1970s and the guerrilla warfare and consequent forced or voluntary displacements in the 1980s and 1990s have tremendously accelerated the urbanisation process, undermining the rural economy without replacing it with industrialisation or a viable economy based on services. The gigantic GAP project (covering almost 73,000 km<sup>2</sup>)<sup>10</sup> has increased the country's energy supplies, but has not notably improved the region's economic conditions. The region's economy is nowadays based primarily on trans-border commerce, legal or illegal, and the informal economy.

From the 1960s until today, politicians from the left and right alike have explained the existence of Kurdish unrest as a result of the economic underdevelopment of the 'east', and have proposed integrative measures. Those measures, however, have never been fully planned, let alone implemented. More importantly, although economic concerns were among the major grievances of the Kurdish activists of the 1960s, economic improvements are largely insufficient to resolve this century-long problem, which has developed its own internal and regional dynamics, and given birth to a strong nationalist ideology and subjectivity.

5 Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Türkiye istatistik yıllığı* (Ankara: DİE, 2004), pp. 354–6.

6 Martin Strohmeier and Lale Yalçın-Heckmann, *Die Kurden: Geschichte, Politik, Kultur* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 2000), p. 186.

7 Peroutz, *La Turquie en marche*, p. 109.

8 R. Madjid Jafar, *Under-underdevelopment: A Regional Case Study of the Kurdish Areas in Turkey* (Helsinki: Painoprint, 1976).

9 Lale Yalçın-Heckmann, *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991); Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State* (London: Zed Press, 1992).

10 The South-East Anatolian Project (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi, or GAP) is an 'integrative' project of irrigation and hydro-electric production covering many Kurdish-inhabited areas, including Urfa, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Siirt, Mardin, Batman and Şırnak. It was conceptualised in the 1970s, but gained momentum after 1983. See Ahmet Özer, *Modernleşme ve güneydoğu* (Ankara: İmge, 1999).

## Emergence of Kurdish nationalism and struggle in the late Ottoman Empire

Historically speaking, the origins of the Kurdish issue date back only to the period of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. It is obvious, however, that throughout the Ottoman centuries, the Kurds had developed some degree of self-awareness. In 1514, a coalition of sixteen Kurdish emirates, as threatened by the pro-Shiite uprisings as the Ottomans themselves were, negotiated an alliance and a pact with the Ottoman regime and thereby protected their autonomy. Some officially recognised or de facto autonomous Kurdish structures survived until the middle of the nineteenth century under Ottoman rule. Some of these emirates also had subjects or client groups in the Persian Empire that paid them tribute. In 1596, Şeref Khan, the well-known *mir* of Bidlis, wrote a monumental history that, while emphasising the merits of his own dynasty, interpreted Kurdish history as a unified entity.<sup>11</sup> In 1695, the mystical poet Ehmed-ê Khanî advocated Kurdish unity and defended the idea of a Kurdish state, against the 'Rums, Persians and Arabs'.<sup>12</sup>

As Hakan Özoğlu argues,<sup>13</sup> this heritage and the constitution of a Kurdistan province in 1846 were decisive elements for the development of a Kurdish self-awareness. At the end of the nineteenth century, two events further accelerated this process of self-definition as a distinct group: the formation, by the Ottoman state, of the so-called Hamidiye regiments, primarily consisting of Kurdish tribes (1891); and the foundation, outside the Ottoman Empire, of an opposition journal called *Kurdistan* (1898). The regiments, which consisted of Kurdish tribal soldiers, were mainly charged with combating Armenian revolutionary committees. They were, theoretically at least, also in charge of the protection of the empire's borders. By creating these regiments, Sultan Abdülhamid II intended to overcome the massive disorder and tribal uprisings that had followed the destruction of the Kurdish emirates during the Tanzimat era. The co-optation of some sections of tribal authority did not radically diminish violence in the Kurdish region, but did deprive it of its anti-state potential. Some of these co-opted tribes, keen to preserve their own autonomy rather than defending the state's interests, later became the most fervent supporters of the Kurdish challenge to state authority.

11 Şeref Han, *Şerefname: Kürd tarihi* (Istanbul: Deng, 1998).

12 Ehmed-ê Xanî, *Mem û Zîn*, ed. Mehmed Emin Bozarslan (Uppsala: Deng, 1995).

13 Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

The journal *Kurdistan*, which was edited by Miqdad Midhad Bedirkhan, son of Bedirkhan Paşa, the late *mir* of Botan,<sup>14</sup> seems to have circulated among Kurdish dignitaries and played an important role in the emergence of a cultural nationalism. During the Second Constitutional Period, other initiatives such as the foundation of the Kürd Terakki Cemiyeti (Kurdish Progress Society) and the publication of the *Kürd Terakki ve Teaviün Gazetesi* (Kurdish Progress and Mutual Aid Newspaper, 1908–9),<sup>15</sup> constituted further steps in the development of this nationalism. Nonetheless, in this period Kurdish nationalism still remained Ottomanist in outlook.

The years 1913 and 1914, however, were marked by paradoxical Kurdish contests and a radicalisation of this still fragile nationalism. The violent anti-Armenian feelings that followed the Unionist government's temptation to resolve the dramatic effects of the Armenian agrarian question<sup>16</sup> pushed many Kurdish tribes, including the former Hamidiye regiments, henceforth renamed *aşiret süvari alayları* (tribal regiments), as well as some Kurdish religious men, towards an open revolt against the central government.<sup>17</sup> Quite independently of these anti-Armenian rebellions, the leaders of the Bidlis, Barzan and Baban revolts, which took place in 1914, formulated clearly nationalist demands, including the rights to education in Kurdish and regional autonomy.<sup>18</sup> The First World War and the genocide of the Armenians (1915–16) marked a new shift, pushing many Kurdish tribes and some religious shaykhs and urban notables into alliance with the Unionist government. This alliance was renewed during the War of Independence (1919–22).

In 1919–20, the mainstream Kurdish leaders welcomed Mustafa Kemal's promises concerning the preservation and protection of the caliphate, the liberation of the former *vilayet* of Mosul from British occupation and the Kurdish–Turkish fraternity in the future state to be founded after the war's end. They also opposed any kind of secessionist programme. The fear of Armenian

14 Mehmed Emin Bozarslan (ed.), *Kurdistan*, 2 vols. (Uppsala: Deng, 1991).

15 See Mehmed Emin Bozarslan (ed.), *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi, Kovara Kurdî-Tirkî-Kürdçe-Türkçe Dergi (1908–1909)* (Uppsala: Deng, 1998).

16 During the 1894–6 massacres at least 100,000 Armenians were killed and many Armenian villages occupied by the Kurdish tribes; thus large sections of the Armenian peasantry were displaced. The resolution of this 'Agrarian question' became one of the main concerns of the Armenian revolutionary committees as well as of the European powers. After the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, the new government tried to find an amicable solution to this question: see Hamit Bozarslan, 'Les relations kurdo-arméniennes': 1894–1996', in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Die armenische Frage und die Schweiz* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag).

17 See *ibid.*

18 Celilê Celil, *XIX. yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1992); C. Celil, *13 Rûpelên Balkeş ji Dîroka Gelê Kurd* (Vienna: Institutia Kurdzaniye, 2002), pp. 113–38.

revenge pushed many of them to give priority to the alliance with fellow Muslims. At the same time, however, an independence movement emerged, structured around the Kurdish clubs and the Kürd Teali Cemiyeti (Society for Kurdish Elevation) in Istanbul, which also edited a journal called *Jîn* (Life). The official delegate of the Cemiyet, Şerif Paşa, negotiated with the Armenian delegation to assure the independence of the two countries, and the Sèvres Treaty (1920) opened the way for the future formation of a Kurdish state. This treaty however, was vehemently rejected by most Kurdish dignitaries and became obsolete following the success of the Kemalist forces.

### The period of radicalisation and revolts (1923–38)

The activities of the Kürd Teali Cemiyeti were not the only signs of a possible Kurdish radicalisation. The Koçgiri revolt, which took place in 1921 in the Alevi Dersim area,<sup>19</sup> also threatened the Kemalist–Kurdish alliance. The severe repression of the Kurdish rebels, which led them to fear suffering the same fate as the Armenians, provoked widespread negative reactions, including within the pro-Kemal camp. It is true that this revolt did not mobilise the Sunni Kurds. Following the proclamation of the Republic, however, many Sunni Kurdish dignitaries gradually followed the path of the Kurdish Alevi insurgents. Their path to opposition was not necessarily the result of the coercion of the new Kemalist state. Many documents suggest that in fact the Ankara authorities were largely unaware of the growing Kurdish opposition and did not take seriously the alarming messages sent by their local representatives.

The main reasons for the rupture seem to be linked to three factors. First, it was obvious by the end of 1923 that Turkish nationalism would become the country's official and hegemonic ideology, as the Kemalists considered the Turkish Republic to be the outcome of the victory of the Turks over the other peoples of the former Ottoman Empire. The new ideology defined linguistic difference as a real or potential threat to the country's existence. Many Kurdish dignitaries, including those who had participated in the extermination of the Armenians between 1915 and 1916, came to fear that they might experience the same fate.<sup>20</sup> The second reason was linked to the abolition of the caliphate, one

19 Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Les Kurdes alévis face au nationalisme turc kémaliste: l'alévité du Dersim et son rôle dans le premier soulèvement kurde contre Mustafa Kemal (Koçgiri, 1919–1921)* (Amsterdam: Middle East Research Associates, 1993).

20 Hamit Bozarslan 'The Kurdish nationalism in Turkey: from the tacit contract to rebellion (1919–1925)', in Abbas Vali (ed.), *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2003).

of the main pillars of the Kurdish–Kemalist alliance. Except for the objections of some Turkish intellectuals who considered the caliphate an important symbol of continuity with the Ottoman past, this act did not inflame strong reactions within the Turkish population. Kurdish religious dignitaries, however, reacted vehemently to the abolition of the caliphate, considering it the end of the only remaining common ground between Kurds and Turks. Şeyh Said, the leader of a future revolt, argued that the Kurds should take up the banner of Islam, which had been abandoned by the Turks.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Kurdish leaders were angry that the War of Independence had ended without the liberation of southern Kurdistan, which was left to the British, contrary to Mustafa Kemal's earlier promises. The final status of the *vilayet* of Mosul would not be finalised until 1926; but it was obvious by 1924 that the Kemalist state would not undertake a new phase of the war to fulfil the promises of the Misak-ı Milli (National Pact) of 1920.

The most significant result of the end of the Kurdish alliance with the Kemalist state was a succession of revolts from 1924 to 1936. Three of them, the Şeyh Said revolt in 1925, the Ararat revolt of 1930 and the Dersim revolt of 1936–8, left a deep imprint on both the history of Kurdish nationalism and that of the Turkish Republic. The 1925 revolt was initially organised by the Azadi (Liberty) Committee, whose leadership was composed of Kurdish intellectuals and officers who had been arrested in 1924.<sup>22</sup> The revolt, which was led by a Kurdish religious dignitary – the Naqshbandi Şeyh Said of Piran – seriously threatened the Republic before it was crushed at the gates of Diyarbakir (renamed Diyarbakır). Ankara mobilised some 50,000 soldiers and spent nearly a third of its annual budget, as well as having to negotiate with the French authorities to gain use of the southern railways, in order to suppress the revolt. Although it was mainly – though not exclusively – limited to the Zaza-speaking Sunni areas, the revolt was a clear sign that the appeal of Kurdish nationalism had become attractive well beyond the circles of Kurdish intellectuals and officers.

The Şeyh Said rebellion set a pattern that would dominate almost all the Kurdish uprisings in Turkey and elsewhere in the Middle East until the 1970s. It was initially planned by intellectuals and officers who shared the background and education of the Unionist and Kemalists and considered the tribal chiefs and religious brotherhoods to be *mutegallibiyya* (usurpers) or obstacles preventing the Kurds from accessing 'civilisation'. They rejected the state

21 E. Lindsay to A. Chamberlain, Constantinople, 24 February 1925, no. 154 (FO 424/262).

22 Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1880–1925)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

mainly because it was a Turkish – i.e. non-Kurdish – state. On the other hand, given the weakness of the urban middle classes, they were obliged to rely almost exclusively on rural forces, which initially rejected the state not because it was a Turkish state but simply because it imposed and militarised borders, suppressed the caliphate and abandoned its promises of fraternity. These rural forces found in the leadership of the intellectuals and officers the organisational experience that they sorely lacked, and in Kurdish nationalism a vocabulary that allowed them to describe and legitimise their liberation struggle.

The so-called Ararat revolt, which started in 1927 and culminated in 1930, was only suppressed after a massive military campaign involving the destruction of many villages and their populations,<sup>23</sup> in close cooperation with Iran and the Soviet Union, and also but less so with Iraq, which was under the British mandate. The Ararat revolt further developed the pattern set by the first revolt. It was organised by a well-structured committee, Khoybun (Being One-self), which in 1927 signed a treaty of cooperation with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Tachnaksutyun.<sup>24</sup> Khoybun had two components: a military one, led by the former Ottoman officer İhsan Nuri,<sup>25</sup> and the political one, based in Damascus, with representatives in many Middle Eastern and Western countries, directed mainly by the Bedirkhan brothers.<sup>26</sup> The revolt's forces, however, emanated from rural areas. Among them were former Hamidiyes and the tribes that had collaborated with the Kemalist forces, some of which had supported the state during the Şeyh Said rebellion in 1925.

The final revolt took place in late 1930s in the Dersim area, which had remained calm and enjoyed a de facto autonomy since the 1921 rebellion. The revolt started after the so-called 'Dersim Law' of 1935, which in fact aimed at the extraction of this 'sore' by dispersing the Kurdish Alevi population and replacing it with a Turkish population. Once again, intellectuals such as Nuri Dersimî<sup>27</sup> and rural forces led by a religious dignitary, Seyyid Rıza, played a

23 İsmet İnönü, *İnönü'nün söylev ve demeçleri* (Istanbul: MB, 1946), p. 218.

24 For the document see Bozarслан, 'Les relations kurdo-arméniennes', pp. 337–40.

25 For his memoirs see İhsan Nouri [Nuri], *La révolte de l'Agridagh* (Geneva: Editions Kurdes, 1986).

26 E.g. Khoybun, *Les massacres des Kurdes en Turquie* (Cairo: Khoybun, 1927); Khoybun, *De la question kurde. La loi de déportation et le dispersion des Kurdes* (Cairo: Khoybun, 1928); Sureyya Bedir Khan, *The Case of Kurdistan against Turkey* (Stockholm: Sara Publishing, 1995); see also Martin Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity: Heroes and Patriots, Traitors and Foes* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

27 For his memoirs, see Nuri Dersimî, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim* (Istanbul: Dilan, 1986); Nuri Dersimî, *Dersim ve Kürt milli mücadelesine dair hatıratım*, ed. Mehmet Bayrak (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1992).

decisive role in this revolt, which was suppressed by the massive extermination of both rebels and civilians.<sup>28</sup>

The revolts of this early Republican period presented several common characteristics. First, they showed the state's ability to simultaneously suppress and make use of tribal dynamics, as many tribal leaders were co-opted to lead paramilitary militia forces, at least in the short term. Second, although almost all the Kurdish areas were militarily contested at one time or another during Mustafa Kemal's presidency, the Kurdish resistance was not able to mobilise the entire rural population, and the urban population remained essentially quiescent. Third, although they were contained in one part of the Kurdish provinces, almost all of these uprisings had wide-ranging echoes outside Turkey and mobilised Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Syria. The Kurdish peasantry's refusal to permit militarisation of the borders also played a decisive role in the emergence of a trans-border mobilisation. In contrast to the former imperial borders, the borders of the new state were considered by modern states, including the Turkish state, to be symbols of national sovereignty and honour and boundaries of the national economy, but they divided many tribes and families. Here again we see a pattern that would dominate the Kurdish question throughout the twentieth century, closely binding internal and regional dimensions of this issue. Fourth, thanks to the presence of a Westernised intellectual leadership, the revolts played a decisive role in the codification of the symbols of modern Kurdish nationalism. The Kurdish elite, under the influence of Kemalist and other nationalist inter-war ideologies, used Kurdish history – both mythical, such as the legend of the Medic origins of the Kurds, and factual, such as the image of Selaheddin and the past Kurdish emirates, to challenge Kemalism. While defining the Turks as barbarians, this ideology argued that the history and contributions of the Kurds to world civilisation gave them the right to form an independent state.

The uprisings of the early Republican period had a tremendous impact on the evolution of the Kemalist regime and its Kurdish policy, leading partly to the closing down of the Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası (Progressive Republican Party, henceforth PRP, which had been formed by Mustafa Kemal's opponents) for collusion with the 'reactionary' rebellion of 1925, as well as the adoption of a law called *Takrir-i Sükûn* (Reestablishment of Order), which marked the end of both political pluralism and the free press. Second, the

28 İ. Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve Dersim jenosidi* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990); Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), pp. 67–96.



state publicly categorised the insurgents as *mürteci* (religious reactionaries) and accused them of being manipulated by Great Britain.<sup>29</sup> In the judgment condemning Şeyh Said and his friends to death in 1925, however, the judge focused almost exclusively on the Kurdish threat to Turkish nationalism and Turkishness.<sup>30</sup>

After 1925, the state developed a double discourse towards the Kurds: on the one hand, their existence was denied,<sup>31</sup> while on the other, the state insisted that they certainly existed, but only as an oppressive and feudal ethno-class, whose main aim was to destroy the Turks as an ethnic group *and* as an oppressed class.<sup>32</sup> It was thus important to destroy 'feudal' Kurdishness, thereby allowing the 'assimilated' Turkish peasantry to regain its original Turkishness and purity. Secret documents published in the 1990s by Mehmet Bayrak attest that a third and 'confidential' discourse was also widespread: according to the authors of these reports, the east bank of the Euphrates River was almost entirely Kurdish and Kurdish nationalism was well entrenched in the hearts of the Kurdish population. It was thus necessary to reinforce the Turkish nature of the west bank of this river, and progressively purify and Turkify the east bank. A series of 1934 laws called the *İskân Kanunu* (Law of Settlement) openly aimed at the dispersion of the 'groups which do not possess the Turkish culture' through Anatolia and their replacement with 'groups which are of the Turkish culture'.<sup>33</sup> From a purely administrative point of view, the single party was not represented in the Kurdish regions, having been replaced by three general inspectorates under the direct command of Mustafa Kemal.<sup>34</sup> However, many Turkish nationalist organisations, such as Halkevleri (People's Houses) and Halkodaları (People's Chambers), had local branches in the region. The state started an intense programme of construction of modern schools whose principal aim was to inculcate the spirit of Turkishness in young Kurds.

29 This thesis has been contested both by İsmet İnönü in his memoirs (*Ulus*, 31 March 1969) and by British documents published by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g. Bilal N. Şimşir, *İngiliz belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938)*, vol. IV: *Ekim 1921-Ekim 1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1973)).

30 See *Les massacres des Kurdes*.

31 See Mesut Yegen, *Devlet söyleminde Kürt sorunu* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999).

32 Mehmet Bayrak, *Kürtler ve ulusal demokratik mücadeleleri. Gizli belgeler – araştırmalar – notlar* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1993); Mehmet Bayrak, *Açık-gizli/resmi-gayriresmi Kurdoloji belgeleri* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1994); Osman M. Kansu, 'Ararat Eteklerinde', *Cumhuriyet*, 18–22 July 1930.

33 For the official texts, see İ. Beşikçi, *Kürtlerin mecburi iskânı* (Ankara: Yurt, 1991).

34 The fourth general inspectorate was based in Thrace: see Cemil Koçak, *Umumi müfettişlikler (1927-1952)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

## The period of silence (1938–61)

The 1936–8 Dersim rebellion was followed by almost two decades in which resistance to the central state was absent, to the point that a French observer could write: 'Insofar as one can judge, the Kurdish issue is really one of policing.'<sup>35</sup> This period has yet to be studied in detail. However, at least three factors seem to explain this silence. First, a massive campaign of state coercion had broken the armed resistance, whose main leaders were either killed or exiled. Second, the outbreak of the Second World War, which marked a period of fear in Turkey, also affected the Kurdish areas, as the main Kurdish nationalist groups in Syria and Lebanon became more involved in Allied propaganda and cultural activities than in political activities *stricto sensu*.<sup>36</sup> Kurdish nationalist groups attempted, after the foundation of the United Nations, to draw the attention of the major powers to the fate of the Kurds.<sup>37</sup> Their efforts, however, were in vain. The military crackdown on the Barzani rebellion in 1943 in Iraq and the end of the autonomous experience of the Mahabad Republic in Iran in 1946 further weakened Kurdish resistance in the Middle East and in Turkey.

The third and most important reason seems, however, to be linked to the transition to political pluralism in Turkey itself, which opened new windows of opportunity for the Kurdish rural elite. The Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP), which was founded in 1945 and rose to power in 1950, replaced coercion with an integrative policy. It allowed many Kurdish deportees to return, and closed down the general inspectorates in 1952. It also sought to broaden its constituency among the Kurdish tribes, and co-opted many religious figures. For instance, Abdülmelik Fırat, the grandson of Şeyh Said, who represented in the eyes of the Republic the double threat of *Kürdçülük* ('Kurdism') and *irtica* (obscurantism), was promoted to the position of deputy of the national assembly.<sup>38</sup> Other Kurdish nationalist figures, such as Mustafa Remzi Bucak and Ziya Şerefhanoglu, were elected on the DP ticket and took their seats in the Turkish parliament. Although these representatives had to be very careful in expressing their opinions and accepted some degree of allegiance to Kemalism,

35 P. Gentizon, quoted in Paul Rambeau, *Les Kurdes et le droit* (Paris: Editions du CERF, 1947), p. 37.

36 In contrast, however, Şerif Paşa was close to Italy during the war: see Mirella Galetti, 'Deux lettres de Cheriff Pacha à Benito Mussolini', *Etudes Kurdes* 2 (2000).

37 *Memorandum on the situation of the Kurds and their claims*, summary of the memorandum presented by the Kurdish delegation to Trygve Lie, secretary general of the United Nations, Paris, 1949.

38 Ferzende Kaya, *Mezopotamya sürgünü: Abdülmelik Fırat'ın yaşam öyküsü* (Istanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2005).

which remained the official basis of the state's ideology, they accepted the offer of co-optation that the DP government made them. Finally, one should add that the 1950s saw the much broader economic integration of the Kurdish provinces into the rest of Turkey and the training of many Kurdish students in the country's main two cities, Istanbul and Ankara.

During these decades, openly outspoken Kurdish nationalism became a rare phenomenon. Some leaders of the resistance of the 1920s and 1930s, such as Nuri Dersimî, İhsan Nuri and the Cemilpaşazada brothers,<sup>39</sup> who were dispersed in different Middle Eastern countries, became aware of the impossibility of realising their dreams during their own lifetimes. They had no other choice than to accept their own efforts as simply moments in a long struggle that would be continued after their deaths. They thus turned to writing, either memoirs or history and geography books, largely inspired by the Turkish nationalist models. The written legacy of this period of silence played a decisive role in the codification of Kurdish nationalism (with such accoutrements as a map; a unified historical narration; a flag; an idea of martyrdom and glorification of martyrs; the myth of Kawa, liberator of the Kurds; the notion of Mesopotamia as the cradle of the Kurdishness; and so forth). The period also contributed to the formation of a collective memory and to the integration of the years of revolts during the Kemalist regime into the history of the Kurdish nationalism.

### The period of a problematic renewal: 1961–80

The writings of this generation circulated in Turkey, but only marginally, and primarily among the younger generation at the high schools or in the still-active clandestine *medreses* (religious schools). The Kurdish students abroad, who founded Komala Xwendekaren Kurd li Ewropa (the Society of the Kurdish Students in Europe) in Wiesbaden in 1956, had some contacts among the Kurds in Turkey. Turkish nationalism itself also offered sources of self-awareness to young Kurds. For instance, the third volume of Mustafa Kemal's famous 1927 *Speech*, which contained many of his letters addressed to Kurdish dignitaries during the War of Independence, was widely read among young Kurds during the 1950s.

By the end of the 1950s, signs of a Kurdish revival were becoming apparent. Some Kurdish intellectuals, among them Musa Anter, Mustafa Remzi Bucak, Yusuf Azizoglu, Ziya Şerefhanoglu and Faik Bucak, founded – or at least tried to

39 Cemil Paşa, *Kürdistan kısa tarihi* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1998); Cemil Paşa, *Muhtasar hayatım* (Brussels: Brüksel Kürt Enstitüsü, 1989); Cemil Paşa, *Doza Kurdistan (Kürdistan Davası)* (Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1991).

found – a secret organisation called Kürtleri Kurtarma Cemiyeti (the Society for the Liberation of the Kurds).<sup>40</sup> Kurdish students in Istanbul started to organise group picnics and *doğu geceleri* ('eastern nights'), which were events dedicated to the discussion and appreciation of Kurdish culture. A few journals, such *Şarkın Sesi* (the Voice of the East) and *İleri Yurt* (Progressive Land), were published and exerted some influence among the generations born after the Republic. A Kurdish member of parliament, Mustafa Remzi Bucak, expressed criticism of the official Turkish positions concerning the Kurdish issue.<sup>41</sup> In 1959, some Kurdish militants, both middle-aged intellectuals and students, known as the 49s, were arrested after openly speaking out for the rights of the Kurds.<sup>42</sup>

But the real revival of the Kurdish nationalism took place only after the 1960 military coup. The 1961 constitution, which expanded civil liberties, was certainly one of the reasons behind this revival. But there were two other important factors, the first one being the 1958 military coup in Iraq, which allowed Mustafa Barzani to return from his decade-long exile in the Soviet Union, and the Kurdish revolt that he started in 1961. The presence of some Kurds from Turkey among the Barzani forces, the programmes transmitted by the Kurdish insurgent radio and the news of the revolt in the Turkish press had a tremendous effect among the Kurds in Turkey, especially the youth. The revolt led them to re-envision their forbidden language as an existing and cherished one, and to conceive of Barzani as the father of their own nation, thereby challenging the moral and historical authority of Mustafa Kemal.

If this source of Kurdish renewal was largely external to Turkey, the second factor was initially external to the Kurdish provinces: the development of a robust left-wing movement in Turkey, which attracted Kurdish young people and, later on, large sectors of Kurdish urban society. There are at least three reasons for this Kurdish attraction to left-wing politics. First, the left advocated social justice and equality, therefore becoming the main channel for challenging the prevailing political order and demanding social and economic development in the underdeveloped and marginalised Kurdish towns. Second, although it did not disown Kemalism, and even to some extent tried to rehabilitate it, the left constituted an open challenge to the state and, ultimately, to state-sponsored Turkish nationalism. Finally, the 'Marxist-Leninist' left offered new universal perspectives for the Kurds. Under the influence of

40 Musa Anter, *Hatıralarım* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1990), pp. 60–1.

41 For the documents, see Remzi Bucak, *Bir Kürt aydınından İsmet İnönü'ye Mektup* (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1991).

42 Naci Kutlay, *49'lar dosyası* (Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1994).

Lenin and Stalin, whose works were now being translated into Turkish, the left in Turkey accepted the legitimacy of the 'national question' (which became a synonym for the Kurdish question), and 'the rights of the oppressed peoples to determine their own fate'. Moreover, it also renewed a sense of Turkish-Kurdish fraternity, i.e. the fraternity of 'oppressed classes and oppressed peoples'. Marxism-Leninism played much the same role as the discourse of Islamic fraternity had done during the War of Independence.

During the 1960s the tribal leaders and shaykhs of the religious brotherhoods continued to be the main forces of Kurdish political life. Both the right-wing Adalet Partisi (Justice Party, JP), the main offspring of the DP that had ruled the country between 1950 and 1960, and the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party, RPP), which took a slightly left-wing orientation, had a solid support base in the Kurdish provinces. Some Kurdish nationalists were elected either as local or national representatives. But the centre of gravity of political life in the Kurdish urban areas swung increasingly towards the Türkiye İşçi Partisi (Workers' Party of Turkey, WPT), which officially accepted the existence of the Kurdish problem in 1970, or the Türkiye Kurdistan Demokrat Partisi (Democratic Party of Kurdistan-Turkey, DPK-T), supported by the Barzani movement. Non-organised forms of opposition were also common among the youth and urban elite. Mehdi Zana, a tailor who would later become mayor of Diyarbakır, explains in his memoirs that his workshop in the town of Silvan functioned as a true university, where youth, intellectuals and 'Kurdish' artisans<sup>43</sup> could gather and read available books and articles about the Kurds, and study the first Kurdish alphabet, published in Turkey in 1968. The 1967 mass demonstrations against social inequalities, the domination of the landlords and the fate of the Kurds (calling for an 'end to the oppression in the east') further accelerated political mobilisation of the Kurdish urban centres.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of its outspoken support for the Barzani rebellion, this mobilisation was not, initially, synonymous with radicalisation. The main Kurdish demands were economic development, respect for the constitution and recognition of the existence of the Kurds and their rights, as well as state-sponsored radio and education in Kurdish.<sup>45</sup> The radicalisation took place only after 1968, and was partly due to state coercion which included the arrest of Kurdish intellectuals and large-scale military manoeuvres in the Kurdish areas,<sup>46</sup> and partly to the growing independence of the Kurdish youth from both the Barzani rebellion

43 See his memoirs, Mehdi Zana, *Bekle Diyarbakır* (Istanbul: Doz, 1991).

44 İ. Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolu mitingleri'nin analizi* (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1992 [1967]).

45 M. Emin Bozarlan, *Doğu'nun sorunları* (Ankara: Toplum Yayınları, 1966).

46 See İsmail Cem's reportages in his *Türkiye üzerine araştırmalar* (Istanbul: Cem, 1971).

and the Turkish left. The Barzani rebellion had been the main reference point for the Kurdish movement in Turkey throughout the 1960s. Towards the end of this decade, however, Kurdish left-wing militants started to think of Kurdistan as a colonised country and argued that they could no longer accept being passive supporters of the 'Kurdish national liberation movement' of Iraq. In the mean time, the Turkish left had started its own urban guerrilla warfare against the state, which meant that for the Kurdish youth the liberation of Kurdistan had become both a revolutionary task in itself, and a condition of fraternity with the Turkish left. Although many Kurdish militants refused to abandon the Turkey-wide radical left-wing organisations, some split in 1970 and formed a new organization called the Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları (Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths, RECH).

The RECH, which rejected clandestine action, insisted on the existence of a distinct Kurdish cultural and linguistic entity within Turkey.<sup>47</sup> Although young people constituted the main force of the RECH, they remained under the moral authority of older, experienced intellectuals, who were very suspicious of violent modes of action. But in the situation of extreme radicalisation that pushed the Turkish left towards military action against the state, the RECH could not avoid the radicalisation of sections of its own membership. For instance, by the end of the decade, Dr Said Kırmızıtoprak, a militant who quit the DPK-T to form his own party,<sup>48</sup> severely criticised the 'chauvinist-minded' Turkish left and advocated an armed struggle within Turkish Kurdistan.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of this general radicalisation of Kurdish activists, the majority of the Kurdish movement in Turkey could still remain within a legal framework and give birth to a robust political opposition. Nonetheless, it turned to violence in the 1970s. The first reason for this change lay in the 12 March 1971 military coup in Turkey. The Kurdish movement did not suffer under military rule as much as the radical Turkish left, which lost many of its leaders. Nevertheless, hundreds of Kurdish intellectuals and militants were arrested and tortured, and a widespread repression targeted all kinds of manifestations of Kurdishness. Most Kurdish prisoners were released by 1974; but in prison many of them had gone through a further process of radicalisation and had formed the kernels of new organisations. Most importantly, almost all Kurdish activists lost their faith in the constitutional and legal framework, and came to regard underground

47 For documents, see Komal, *DDKO Dava Dosyası*, vol. I (Ankara: Komal Yayınları, 1975).

48 Türkiye'de Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi (Kurdistan Democratic Party in Turkey).

49 Sait Kırmızıtoprak, *Kürt millet hareketleri ve Irak'ta Kürdistan ihtilali* (Stockholm: Apec Yayınları, 1997).

structures (though not necessarily violence) as the only proactive means for the survival of their movement.

Immediately after the general amnesty in 1974 that released Kurdish activists from prison, the Kurdish movement faced a major challenge with the sudden end of the Barzani rebellion in 1975. The decline of the Barzani movement, mainly the result of massive Soviet support of Ba'athist Iraq and the withdrawal of the American and Israeli military and logistical support to the Kurds, dampened Kurdish aspirations throughout the Middle East. While many guerrilla movements throughout Africa and Asia were achieving victories in 1975–6, the catastrophic failure of the Kurdish liberation struggle only reinforced the belief of young Kurds that 'the mountains were their only friends'. Many of them came to feel that they were now at the frontline of the struggle for the liberation of Kurdistan, and should therefore undertake action in order to save their honour at any cost. Those who had been only eleven or twelve in 1971 had turned fifteen or sixteen by 1975, and rapidly became the agents of a generational fissure, holding not only Barzani and his 'feudal clique', but also their own elder brothers, responsible for this national tragedy. They would provide the sociological basis for the violent struggles of the late 1970s. Finally, the impact of Turkey-wide violence, which left almost 5,750 dead from 1975 until the 12 September 1980 military coup, was the outcome of a widespread process of fragmentation and polarisation of Turkish society, and created a tragic sense of impending civil war in the entire country.

At least until 1977, the mainstream Kurdish left-wing organisations, among them Devrimci Doğu Kültür Dernekleri (the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Associations, henceforth RECA), created by the followers of Dr Said Kırmızıtoprak, and Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan-Türkiye (Kurdistan Socialist Party-Turkey, KSP-T), founded by Kemal Burkay, were able to eschew violence and retain control over Kurdish youth. While remaining partly underground, they could also take political and civil action, such as participating in elections. For instance, the 1977 local elections permitted Mehdi Zana, a supporter of KSP-T rather than a militant, to win the mayoralty of the major Kurdish city of Diyarbakır. Other Kurdish activists were elected in Silvan and Lice. These strong signs of the emergence of a distinctive Kurdish political space were somewhat misleading. At the very moment these victories were registered, in fact, the generational fissure mentioned above was about to give birth to two new organizations: Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları (National Liberators of Kurdistan, NLK) and Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party, widely known by its Kurdish acronym PKK).

The NLK and the PKK, founded by Abdullah Öcalan in 1978, shared a similar sociological basis and somewhat similar programmes.<sup>50</sup> While their leaders came from the generation socialised during the late 1960s, their followers were often teenagers. Both parties defined themselves as Marxist-Leninist and refused to take part in the Soviet–Chinese conflict that was dramatically dividing both the Kurdish and the Turkish left. Both saw violence as the only means to end Turkish colonialism, achieve the national liberation of Kurdistan as a unified country and bring about socialist revolution. Similarly, they both considered armed struggle to be the main method for eliminating the ‘Kurdish collaborators of the Turkish colonialism’. They targeted some Kurdish tribal leaders known for their close links with Ankara and the JP. One such family, the Bucaks, were attacked in Siverek by PKK militants in 1978. The two organisations also experienced considerable internal fighting, which, according to some non-confirmed estimates, caused several hundred casualties between 1978 and 1980. Along with the inter-ethnic and inter-sectarian violence in the mixed (Alevi and Sunni, Turkish and Kurdish) provinces, the NLK and PKK conflict considerably worsened the security conditions in all the Kurdish regions.

### The *coup d'état* of 1980 and the era of guerrilla warfare

By the beginning of the 1980s, Kurdish political life was dominated by three camps. The majority of politicians were still members of mainstream political parties, such as the JP, the RPP and the Islamist Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party, NSP). Many of these politicians, such as Şerafettin Elçi, Nurettin Yılmaz and Abdülmelik Fırat, presented themselves openly as Kurds, if not as defenders of the Kurdish case and people. The last of these parties, the NSP, succeeded in integrating Kurdish notables and religious figures in the Zaza-speaking regions, thus rehabilitating Islam as a ground of coexistence for the Kurds and the Turks. The second group was that of the ‘newcomers’, the followers of the RECA and KSP-T, who had a much more openly asserted Kurdish identity in places such as Diyarbakır, where they maintained local power. By their very existence, they testified that commitment to the Kurdish cause was becoming the main prerequisite of politics in the Kurdish provinces.

<sup>50</sup> Hamit Bozarslan, ‘Türkiye’de Kürt Sol Hareketi’, in *Modern Türkiye’de siyasi düşünce*, vol. VIII (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006).



The last category was that of the much younger generation, which dominated the street. These activists emanated primarily from the plebian strata of Kurdish society. Many of them belonged either to recently urbanised families or hailed from the rural areas. Economically, they were in a very precarious situation – and often had low levels of education. By becoming affiliated with the NLK or the PKK, these militants formed a parallel world of socialisation and action through violence, and challenged the domination of the older generations. While enjoying, like Turkish left- and right-wing militants, a ‘socio-psychological moratorium’,<sup>51</sup> these young militants also provoked astonishment and anger among the urban population.

It is no wonder, then, that, like the Turkish population, the Kurdish population initially welcomed the 12 September 1980 *coup d'état*, seeing it as a chance to stop the widespread violence. The military did effectively suppress the violence, but at a very high cost, both in Turkey and in the Kurdish regions. The new authorities considered Kurdishness, like left-wing ideologies, to be a pathology that needed to be cured by an overdose of Kemalism and Turkishness. All forms of expression of Kurdishness were banned, legally elected mayors were dismissed (and some of them, like Mehdi Zana, imprisoned and severely tortured) and thousands of people, mainly KUK and the PKK members, were arrested. Thousands of young militants were tortured, some of them killed, and others immolated themselves in order to ‘maintain the flames of the *Newroz*’ (Kurdish new year), which had become a symbol of political mobilisation among Kurds.

Members of some Kurdish organisations, such the RECA, the KSP-T, Kawa and the NLK, escaped the repression and sought asylum first in Syria, and later in Europe.<sup>52</sup> Many militants of the PKK, including its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who had left Turkey before the coup, remained in Syria. Most of them subsequently moved to Lebanon and participated in the war against Israeli occupation (1982), before receiving their own military bases and sophisticated training. The decades-long Turkish–Syrian crisis helped Öcalan, who also received some support from Iraqi Kurds and Iran in the early 1980s. These involvements in regional conflicts attested that, like many other non-state actors during this period, the PKK had become part of a regional system of instability and drew material and logistical benefits from it. Drawing on this broadened field of action, after having silenced any internal opposition with

51 For this concept, meaning that the older generations are obliged to accept the legitimacy of otherwise ‘deviant’ behaviours of the youth, see H. Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968).

52 Except for the KSP-T, none of these organisations has survived exile.

exile or execution,<sup>53</sup> Öcalan launched his guerrilla campaign on 15 August 1984. With some interruptions, the PKK's guerrilla warfare continued until 1999, when Öcalan was captured, and has shown signs of revival since the second half of 2005.

The Syrian and other external support, however, can only marginally explain the success of this armed struggle. Much of Öcalan's effectiveness can be attributed to the suffering of the Kurdish population under the military regime. As Ömer Laçiner and Philip Robins emphasised<sup>54</sup> (and many PKK leaders acknowledged), Kurdish urban centres were truly traumatised by military repression, and as a result welcomed the previously rejected PKK's 1984 offensive as Kurdish revenge against the military regime and, increasingly, against a Turkish state pejoratively nicknamed the 'RT State' or the 'Roma State' (*TC Devleti/dewleta Romî*). A young generation of teenagers, who had been raised with the accounts of the sufferings of their elder brothers and sisters in prisons, welcomed guerrilla action as an honour-restoring means of revenge and as an end to their silent and largely introverted socialisation. The guerrilla war offered them the possibility of gaining collective prestige and, at the same time, a venue for individual commitment and emancipation.

The second reason for Öcalan's success derived from the tremendous changes that his party had gone through during its short period in exile. Before 1980, Öcalan was still a *primus inter pares* in the PKK. During the Syrian and Lebanese years, however, and along the lines of Atatürk in Turkey, and those of other Middle Eastern 'leaders', he remodelled the PKK into a party dominated by a single man. Öcalan henceforth represented the party, and the party represented the whole Kurdish nation. Together with the 'martyrs', he constituted the 'leadership' and was accountable only to the martyrs and the nation. Absolute obedience to this 'leadership' replaced any form of comradeship. The name of Öcalan allowed the Kurdish youth to follow a sacralised figure in place of Mustafa Kemal. Other symbols of Turkish nationalism were also Kurdified. For instance, the idea of Mesopotamian roots and a Golden Age of Kurdishness, keeping in its purest virtues the promise of a glorious future, was to a large extent the Kurdish equivalent of the myths of Turkish Ergenekon, the mythical homeland of the Turkish nationalist discourse. The imagination of the Kurdish nation as destined for national emancipation through an armed struggle, and the belief that the territory could become 'national' only 'at the

53 Martin van Bruinessen, 'Between Guerilla War and Political Murder: The Workers' Party of Kurdistan', *MERIP* 432 (1988).

54 Ömer Laçiner, *Kürt sorunu. Henüz vakit varken* (Istanbul: Birikim, 1991); Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East* (New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991).

cost of martyrs' blood', were other elements also strongly present in Kemalist (and modern Middle Eastern) political language. Thanks to this nationalist vocabulary, the PKK could respond, almost point for point, to the vocabulary and symbols of Turkish nationalism. The omnipresence of these themes in the party's organs, memoirs and texts, and their deep impact on the minds of Kurdish youth, were the reasons Öcalan could enjoy such an unprecedented form of charisma, qualitatively very different from that of all the other Kurdish leaders of the twentieth century.<sup>55</sup>

The PKK was influenced by the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric and the theories of guerrilla warfare developed by the leaders of the radical Turkish left (especially İbrahim Kaypakkaya) during the 1970s. The movement's success among Kurdish youth, who had been traumatised by the end of the Barzani rebellion in 1975 and the repression of the 1980 military coup, can be attributed to a world view that can be described as Fanonian. Like Franz Fanon, Öcalan considered violent struggle to be not simply a means of national liberation, but the very condition of personal emancipation. This emancipation required the destruction of the individual's own identity and the building, through following the example of the leader and displaying devotion to him, of a new identity. The constant fear of betraying the leader, and therefore the nation, went hand-in-hand with the hope of achieving personal, and therefore national, salvation. Such a reinterpretation of identity created a truly sectarian universe and an almost religious outlook, which explained the willingness of many militants to submit to Öcalan, and their astonishing acts of self-sacrifice under emotional pressure.<sup>56</sup> It also explains why, in spite of many criticisms of Öcalan and the PKK from others in Kurdish society, the man and his party became inevitable reference points for the Kurdish issue.

The guerrilla campaign, the coercive response of the state and the counter-insurgency policy adopted in the beginning of the 1990s had tremendous effects both on Kurdish society and on Turkey as a whole. An estimated 40,000 people, among them 5,000 civilians and 5,000 members of the security forces, lost their lives, while the military and security forces spent more than \$100 billion.<sup>57</sup> Almost 3 million people were also displaced. In 1987, Olağanüstü

55 On Öcalan's charisma, see Paul J. White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers? The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey* (London: Zed Books, 2000).

56 Bozarслан, 'Türkiye'de Kürt Sol Hareketi'.

57 There is no reliable figure concerning the total cost of the war. According to Tansu Çiller, Turkish prime minister 1993–5, the total cost was evaluated to DM 95 billion from 1984 to 1993: see M. Şahin, '1993'ün Kürdistan panoraması', *Deng* 27 (1994). After the full implementation of the 'low-intensity conflict' doctrine by the military, this cost increased to \$8–10 billion per annum (A. E. Bilgin, 'Kirli savaş ve krizdeki ekonomi', *Özgür Gündem*,

Hal (a military regime of 'exceptional administration' (covering almost the entire Kurdish region) was established, and under the framework of Law 413 (1989), many basic freedoms, including freedom of expression and residence, were either restricted or suspended. A parallel army, called the Village Guards and recruited mainly from members of the pro-government tribes, was formed. The unity of this army, whose troops reached some 100,000 in the 1990s, depended not on the army's hierarchy but on the de facto autonomy of tribal chiefs. More than 3,500 villages and hamlets, as well as some small cities (such as Şırnak, Kulp and Lice) were targets of massive military attacks and were either totally or partially destroyed. In the wake of the expansion of the security and intelligence agencies during the 1990s, ultra-nationalist far-right militants, and some pro-state tribal leaders, formed death squads. According to official accounts,<sup>58</sup> these squads, as well as the militants of the Hizballahi group)<sup>59</sup> tolerated by the state, killed some 2,000 people, mainly Kurdish intellectuals. The PKK also committed many atrocities, including the killing of civilians (most notably in 1987) and teachers, as well as the summary executions of Village Guards and many of the PKK fighters. Some of the PKK commanders also developed privatised forms of violence and became genuine warlords.

Parallel to the guerrilla war, a political and legal Kurdish movement also emerged during these years and, thanks to its short-lived alliance with the SHP of Erdal İnönü, achieved important results in the 1991 elections. The new Kurdish party, called Halkın Emek Partisi (People's Labour Party, PLP), was quickly banned, as were the other parties that succeeded it. Many members of Demokrasi Partisi (Democracy Party, DEP) and one of its deputies were killed by the officially 'unknown killers', who were in fact members of the death squads, and other deputies were dismissed from parliament.<sup>60</sup> Some of them, including the well-known Leyla Zana, wife of former Diyarbakır mayor Mehdi Zana, and winner of the European Parliament's Shakarov Prize, were imprisoned from 1994 to 2004. Halkın Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party, PDP) and Demokratik Halk Partisi (Democratic People's Party, DPP), the successors to the DEP, were unable to obtain more than between 5 and

17 January 1994). According to some sources, the 1995 spring operations against the PKK bases in the Iraqi Kurdistan alone required \$1 billion 200 million (*Hürriyet*, 4 April 1995).

58 Savaş Kutlu, *Başbakanlığa Sunulan*, vol. II: *Susurluk raporu* (Istanbul: Bir & Yöre, 1998) Veli Özdemir, *IBMM Susurluk araştırma Komisyonu ifade tutanakları* (Istanbul: SCALA, 1997); Veli Özdemir, *TBMM tutanakları, Susurluk belgeleri, TBMM Komisyon Raporu'na muhalefet şerhleri ile birlikte* (Istanbul: SCALA, 1997).

59 Ruşen Çakır, *Derin Hizballah. İslamcı şiddetin geleceği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2001).

60 Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*.

6.4% of the votes, therefore failing to win any seats in parliament. However, these parties have rapidly conquered most of the Kurdish municipalities.

This legal movement, which ended the influence of most traditional Turkish political parties in the Kurdish region – with the notable exception of the Islamist ones<sup>61</sup> – brought together different generations of Kurdish politicians: those who had been active in the 1960s and 1970s, including in the mainstream Turkish political parties (such as Ahmet Türk, Abdülmelik Fırat); those who in the 1970s were close to the Kurdish organisations (such as Feridun Yazar); and finally those who were propelled towards the political sphere in the wake of the guerrilla war (such as Orhan Doğan, Hatip Dicle and Leyla Zana). The majority of these politicians were not linked to the guerrilla campaign, and many of them were in fact publicly opposed to any use of violence. However, they were unable to become completely independent of the PKK.

Finally, during the years of the guerrilla war, many scenarios to resolve the Kurdish question were elaborated by politicians, civil society organisations and lawyers. Some of them insisted on the necessity of a ‘constitutional citizenship’, authorising the individual expression of the non-Turkish ethnic identities, while others suggested the adoption of the ‘Basque model’, i.e. the adoption of regional decentralisation and cultural autonomy for the Kurdish regions. The most ambitious plan was advocated by President Özal shortly before his death in 1993, when he proposed increasing the autonomy of local authorities in Turkey, broadening legal Kurdish representation and giving amnesty to PKK members to allow them to participate in the political arena. None of these scenarios, however, has been realised. In the long run, the coercive logic of the army and, for a time, the PKK’s logic of armed struggle, prevailed.

### The current situation

In 1998 Turkey threatened Syria with military intervention if Öcalan was not expelled. Fearing the consequences of such a scenario, and under pressure from Egypt and the United States, Damascus expelled Öcalan, who tried to obtain political asylum – first in Russia, then in Italy. He was eventually arrested in Nairobi, Kenya, where he had been offered hospitality in the Greek embassy, and with American help was handed over to Turkey on 16 February 1999. He was condemned to death by a Turkish court but, shortly after, the death penalty was abolished. Öcalan apologised to the Turkish people and ordered an end to the armed struggle and the mobilisation of fighters outside Turkey. From

61 Fehmi Çalmuk, *Erbakan’ın Kürtleri* (Istanbul: Metis, 2000).

1999 to 2005, he also proposed a series of (sometimes contradictory) political programmes to end the conflict, including the establishment of a democratic republic that would recognise the cultural rights of the Kurds; a re-negotiation of the Kurdish–Kemalist Pact of the 1920s; and the transformation of several Middle Eastern countries into federal entities, both protecting the integrity of the states and satisfying Kurdish aspirations towards self-rule.

It is quite difficult to comment on the current period, and even more difficult to speculate about a scenario for the future. However, four complementary points are clear. First, in spite of Öcalan's misleading pro-Kemalist statements and the internal splits of the PKK (including the emergence of a branch led by Öcalan's brother Osman), the PKK has remained an active force and was able to start a second phase of its guerrilla war between June 2004 and August 2005. At the time of writing (the end of 2005), the PKK's place as the primary Kurdish nationalist actor both inside and outside Turkey seems to be intact.

Second, following the 2003 Iraq war, the regional context has dramatically changed: the Kurds in Iraq have become a decisive regional actor, and the de facto allies of the Anglo-American forces in the country. Turkey's attempts to prevent this process, whether by military force or by diplomacy, have not been successful. Furthermore, from 2003 to 2005, the Kurds have engaged in large demonstrations and fought with the security forces in two other countries designated by the United States as its potential enemies, namely Iran and Syria. The impact of this radically transformed Middle Eastern Kurdish sphere has important ramifications for the Kurds in Turkey. This evolution has also affected Turkish–American relations: Turkey's rapprochement with Syria and Iran at the expense of the Kurds can only provoke new tensions with the United States, and any direct American action will cost the US its credibility among the Kurds in the entire Middle East.

Third, the Iraq war and the acceleration of anti-American feelings have created a new situation in Turkey. Certain concerns are now shared between nationalist groups and many left-wing intellectuals and political forces. While the post-Kemalist nationalist discourse either denied the existence of the Kurds or explained the Kurdish question by relying on conspiracy theories or foreign meddling, the new Turkish nationalism defines the Kurds as internal and external enemies of Turkish *ethnicity*. For the defenders of this version of nationalism, the Middle Eastern regional powers, including Turkey, are the future targets of an 'American–Israeli' plan to dominate the Middle East. The Kurds, therefore, are seen as a springboard for the creation of 'a second Israel' in a fragmented Middle East. The growing impact of this nationalism among the military and civil establishment, as well as among the members of the Kemalist

intelligentsia, darkens the prospects for a peaceful solution to the century-long Kurdish question. In response to this reinvigorated Turkish nationalism, an aggressive, anti-Turkish nationalism may also emerge among the Kurdish intelligentsia and youth both in Turkey and in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Finally, one should not underestimate the positive, albeit limited, impact of the process of Turkey's integration into Europe on the Kurdish issue. In order to bolster its chances of EU candidacy, Turkey has freed Leyla Zana and accepted the broadcasting of limited radio and television programmes in Kurdish. These measures, however, have strictly avoided defining the Kurds as a minority. A successful European integration, though, might deepen the process of democratisation, lead to radical changes in the country's power structures and, consequently, allow a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue through integrative mechanisms that are yet to be imagined.

# Islam and politics in contemporary Turkey

JENNY B. WHITE

## Introduction

The role of Islam in the public and political spheres has been a matter of contestation throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. After its founding in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the state institutionalised the acquisition of Western cultural habits and the banishment of Islam from public and political arenas, although movement in this direction had begun a century earlier. It was not until the 1950s that Islam regained a foothold in the political arena, and only in the 1980s did the first Islamist political parties become popular. Since the 1980s, the re-emergence of religiously identified parties has reshaped the Turkish political scene, both challenging and accommodating official state secularism.

The Turkish state's position on religion (*laiklik*) is more accurately translated as 'laicism', the subordination of religion to the state, than secularism, a separation of church and state. The term 'secular' is used here to refer to a non-religious identity or one that consigns religious beliefs to the private, rather than public, realm. The laic state controls the education of religious professionals and their assignment to mosques, controls the content of religious education, and enforces laws about the wearing of religious symbols and clothing in public spaces and institutions. In the early Republican period, the state established control of religious affairs and institutions, although independent religious brotherhoods continued clandestinely.

Supporters of Mustafa Kemal's laicist reforms are called Kemalists, as distinguished from Islamists, self-ascriptive terms referring to groups of people polarised around certain issues and representing extremes on a continuum of beliefs about the proper role of religion in society and politics. Generally speaking, the Kemalist position combines a kind of authoritarian democracy with a westernised secular lifestyle. Kemalists are concerned about safeguarding laicism and its guarantees of free choice of lifestyle, particularly for women,



but to do so are willing to limit choice in the realm of religious expression. Kemalists have tried to ensure a laic state and secular Turkish society through the government, judiciary and education system.

As a political doctrine, Kemalism cohered loosely around certain early Republican principles, of which three concern us here: laicism, discussed above; statism; and populism. Under statism, the state intervened in the economy and, in principle, guarded the economic well-being of the people through development and social programmes. Reference to the populist basis of the state expressed an ideal of national solidarity that, in principle, put the interest of the nation (and 'the people') before any group or class. Indeed, the populist principle denied social class altogether and, when these principles were formalised in the 1931 programme of Atatürk's Republican People's Party (RPP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*), political activity based on class interests was forbidden. The denial of class differences in the face of great disparities in distribution of the benefits of economic development and a widening chasm between rich and poor has been an important spur to the development of social movements in Turkey in general and, since the 1980s, to Islamist populism.

Islamists are Muslims who, rather than accept an inherited Muslim tradition, have developed their own self-conscious vision of Islam, which is then brought to bear on social and political events. This vision can involve liberal, modernist interpretations of the Qur'an or more restrictive positions on the characteristics of a proper Muslim life. Central components of an ideal Muslim society in Islamist thought – obligation to authority, communal solidarity and social justice – are contested among Muslims as to what they entail in practice. In Turkey, education does not grant direct access to theological literature, which is still memorised and recited in Arabic, since the Qur'an was dictated by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad in that language. Translated, the Qur'an would no longer be 'the word of God'. Most Turks have no knowledge of the Arabic language and rely for Qur'anic interpretation on the sermons, lessons, or published Turkish-language works of their teachers. There are lively debates among Islamist intellectuals who either are able to read and understand the Qur'an or have access to internationally circulated interpretations. Turkish Islamist intellectuals also have brought into their debates wide-ranging literatures from Western social and political sciences.

Despite state suppression of the public expression of Islam, religion has remained a powerful part of most people's lives. Turkey's population today is almost entirely Muslim, with small minorities of Jews and Christians (including Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and other

denominations). About four-fifths of the Muslim population are orthodox Sunni Muslims; the rest are Alevis, a non-Sunni syncretistic Muslim minority that cross-cuts Kurdish and Turkish ethnic designations. The Bektaşî order is a similar, but less widespread, religious order. A 1999 survey showed a high level of religious practice, with nine of ten adults fasting during the holy month of Ramadan and almost half praying five times a day.<sup>1</sup> The extremes on the scale of religiosity roughly reflected a Kemalist/Islamist split, with supporters of the secularist RPP least likely to rate themselves as very religious (2 per cent, compared to 14 per cent for supporters of the Islamist Virtue Party) and most likely to claim to be not at all religious (8 per cent, compared to below 3 per cent for all other parties). Between 40 and 60 per cent of all respondents rated themselves as religious, and 40 per cent would define themselves as Muslims or Muslim Turks before Turkish citizens.<sup>2</sup>

### The early Republican state

Mustafa Kemal's plan for a secular, Westernised Turkey led him to distance the nation from what he perceived to be the corrupt, religion-bound traditions and institutions of the old regime. Under his leadership, the Republican government de-emphasised the legacy of the multi-denominational and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and its Muslim leadership. The regime changed the language of state from Ottoman, written in Arabic script, to a reformed, modernised Turkish, written in the Latin alphabet, cutting younger generations off from pre-Republican documents and literature. A new Turkish national history, taught in schools and honoured in monuments and museums, replaced the Ottoman past with a history rooted in the pre-Islamic civilisations of the Hittites, who inhabited the Anatolian plateau in the second millennium BCE, and the Turkic tribes that had migrated to Anatolia from Central Asia starting in the eleventh century. These reforms provided ideological support for the new secular national identity and legitimised a Turkish form of Islam supposedly influenced by Central Asian Turkic practices that were more gender-egalitarian and democratic than those of Arab Islam. This notion of a special, Turkish form of Islam was suggested by the late Ottoman nationalist scholar Ziya Gökalp, whose ideas were influential in the development of Turkish nationalist thought, and the idea later found new adherents in the 1990s.

1 A. Çarıkoğlu, and B. Toprak, *Türkiye'de din, toplum ve siyaset* (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, 2000), p. 45.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 27.

The new Republican state abolished first the sultanate, then the caliphate, a venerable institution encompassing leadership of the entire Muslim world that had been vested in the Ottoman sultan. The state also outlawed religious brotherhoods. The religious expression of Islam was to be a private affair. Thus, the state took religion out of the classroom and all public functions. Under Turkish law, religiously symbolic clothing is forbidden in public and civic spaces; religious specialists are not allowed to wear insignia of their office in the street; civil servants and university students are not allowed to cover their heads. In a bow to custom, the veil was not outlawed, but it was strongly discouraged. Women who covered their heads found no place in the banks, hospitals, schools and civil service of the new nation. While urban women increasingly dressed in European fashion, in the dense artisanal and working-class neighbourhoods and in smaller cities and the countryside, most women continued to cover their heads and wear the loose, enveloping clothing called for by customary concepts of modesty.

Religious leaders who were angered by the erosion of their judicial and administrative powers, the abolition of the caliphate and the secular nature of the reforms challenged the new Republican government, some organising revolts. In the eastern part of the country, religious sentiment overlapped with Kurdish aspirations for an autonomous Kurdistan and resistance to the Republic's repression of Kurdish identity. In its effort to establish a new national consciousness, the government prohibited the public use and teaching of Kurdish and forcibly resettled influential Kurdish landowners and tribal chiefs in the western part of the country. In February 1925, Şeyh Said, an influential member of the Nakşibendi dervish order, led an ill-fated rebellion. The rebels were motivated by a variety of goals ranging from Kurdish independence to restoring the caliphate and Islamic law. The rebellion failed in part because the Sunni Kurds under Şeyh Said were attacked by Kurds belonging to the heterodox Alevi community, which supported the secularist republic because it offered protection from Sunni persecution. Şeyh Said was captured and executed by government forces in April, effectively ending the rebellion.

As a result of the Şeyh Said rebellion, the government's policies towards religion and the Kurds hardened. Kurdish leaders were executed or forcibly resettled and Kurdish identity was officially denied. Kemal used a new Law on the Maintenance of Order to suppress the press and to close down an opposition political party, the Progressive Republican Party, on the grounds that its members had supported the rebellion and tried to exploit religion for political purposes. This move left Mustafa Kemal and the RPP in complete control of the political arena, allowing them to push through their reforms.

### The development of party politics

The Republican state under the RPP monopolised all legitimate political expression until the introduction of multi-party politics in 1945. In order to court the Muslim vote, both the RPP and the new Democrat Party (DP, Demokrat Parti) became more tolerant of religion. After 1947, the RPP allowed elective religious education in schools and opened institutions to train preachers. In 1949 Ankara University established a faculty of Divinity to teach religion with a scientific methodology. That same year, shrines and tombs of saints were allowed to reopen. To safeguard the secular nature of the state's modernisation project, however, the RPP enacted article 163 of the penal code, which prohibited attacks on the secular character of the state.

The RPP was defeated, and for the first time an opposition party, the DP, came to power in the 1950 elections. In the period before and after the election, rural areas were galvanised by extensive grassroots organisation and political participation. DP representatives were drawn not from bureaucratic or military circles, as had been the case in previous governments, but from a sector of Turkey's elite with backgrounds in commerce and law and with local roots in their constituencies. Unlike the RPP, the DP had a populist approach to politics. It aimed to transform the country through free-market economic policies, and by bringing electricity, roads and other services to hitherto-isolated villages. Thus began a mutual transformation of country and city, as villagers migrated to work in cities, and as new ideas and ways of doing business transformed village life. The DP's attitude towards Atatürk's secular modernisation project did not differ appreciably from that of the RPP. The DP government continued the absorption of religious institutions into the Directorate of Religious Affairs. However, the party also courted the Muslim vote by expanding religious education and making it compulsory unless parents opted out, expanding the number of preacher training schools, and allowing the sale of religious literature. The call to prayer, which the early Republican regime had restricted to Turkish, was again allowed to be broadcast in Arabic. The number of mosques built nationwide increased. The DP tacitly allowed the existence of officially banned religious organisations, such the Nurcu brotherhoods, by accepting their support in the 1954 and 1957 elections. Religious brotherhoods were able to deliver blocks of votes from their followers. The RPP and the military, which saw its role as the keeper of Atatürk's legacy, reacted strongly to what they perceived to be the Islamisation of the country. This perception was magnified by the migration of masses of peasants to the cities after the 1950s, bringing their conservative cultural practices with them. In other words,

this renewed visibility of religion was not a resurgence of Islam or political Islam, but rather a reassertion of a mass culture that contradicted, in many ways, the secularist world vision of the Kemalist state.<sup>3</sup> The military used this and other charges to justify overthrowing the DP government in a coup on 27 May 1960.

In the 1970s, the RPP became the biggest political party, claiming up to 42 per cent of the national vote and twice ruling as the leading party in government. The RPP appealed to the new social groups that arose as a result of the mechanisation of agriculture, industrialisation and urbanisation: the working class, organised into unions; agriculturalists in developed regions; and an educated middle class. Politics in the 1960s and 1970s were dominated by sometimes violent disputes between leftist and rightist nationalist forces. Islam played only a minor role in these ideological disputes. The first overtly Islam-identified political party, the National Order Party (NOP, *Millî Nizam Partisi*), was founded in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan to represent small independent businessmen, merchants and craftsmen who felt threatened by industrialisation. The NOP took a firm stand against pro-West big business. Shortly after the military coup in 1971, the constitutional court closed the NOP down for violating the constitutional separation of politics and religion. Erbakan fled to Switzerland, but returned in 1972 to restart the party under a new name, the National Salvation Party (NSP, *Millî Selâmet Partisi*).

The NSP was a conservative party with a marginal following among provincial businesspeople and adherents of religious orders. Erbakan led what became known as the National View Movement (NVM, *Millî Görüş Hareketi*), which was critical of Turkey's Westernisation programme. The NVM proposed an alternative and ostensibly more authentic 'national order' that revived traditional (that is, Islamic) values and Ottoman institutions, albeit ambiguously defined ones. It advocated economic integration with the Islamic world to balance the power of the West. This stance did not entail a rejection of technology or industry. Rather, the party proposed that state-led industry be supported by large numbers of small capitalists, each owning no more than a 5 per cent share, thus giving small business a stake in industrialisation.<sup>4</sup>

More radical than its predecessor, the NSP organised rallies that attacked the laicist system and even Atatürk himself, and called for the restoration of *şeriat* (Islamic law). The party did not do well in elections in the 1970s, however, suggesting that religion was an insufficient factor for mobilising political support.

3 E. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 2nd edn. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), pp. 243–5.

4 H. Gülalp, 'Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party', *The Muslim World* 89, 1 (January 1999), p. 27.

The RPP, which had become a social democratic party drawing support from workers and urban intellectuals, won the 1973 election with about one-third of the vote. Lacking a majority, it formed a coalition with the NSP, which had polled over a tenth of the vote. In the 1977 elections the RPP won two-fifths of the vote, meaning that the balance of power in the Grand National Assembly was again held by the smaller parties. A sharp rise in world oil prices and a fall in remittances from Turkish workers abroad increased political instability. A series of ineffective coalition governments were unable to deal with rapidly rising inflation, unemployment, the trade deficit and political violence. The NSP was part of three coalition governments in this period, until the 1980 coup.

On 12 September 1980, the army carried out a bloodless coup that was generally supported by an increasingly frayed public. A five-member National Security Council (NSC) took control and declared martial law throughout Turkey to quell political violence. The coup was followed by executions and thousands of arrests, with most of the repression falling on the political left. The junta also arrested leading politicians and dissolved parliament, political parties and trade unions. A new constitution, approved by referendum in 1982, created a stronger central government. In an effort to reduce the influence of smaller parties, no party polling less than 10 per cent of the votes cast was to receive seats in parliament. Political parties, the press and trade unions came under increased government surveillance. New parties were formed, as the pre-coup parties remained banned. The new centre-right Motherland Party (MP, *Anavatan Partisi*), a coalition of liberal, social democratic, nationalist and Islamic groups, won the first post-coup election in 1983. The party's leader, Turgut Özal, had designed the previous government's economic reform package and headed the successful post-coup economic stabilisation programme.

In a bid to counter the appeal of leftist ideologies, the military and government encouraged a new model of nationalist religion that came to be known as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. The military intended Islam to be a socially unifying force that would heal the societal rifts that had precipitated the 1980 coup and replace the left-wing ideas of Turkey's youth with a more cohesive religious culture. With the support of the military, the Özal government encouraged the building of mosques and the expansion of religious education. In the 1980s, about 1,500 new mosques were built every year, until by 1988 there was a mosque for every 857 people.<sup>5</sup> The Özal government also gave religious conservatives positions in ministries and state bureaucracies.

5 F. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 221.

Under Özal's leadership, the MP ruled Turkey until 1991. Its economic policies were based on free-market principles, removing state controls and encouraging foreign trade. The state began to privatise its industries and to dismantle the entitlements and protections that had been a central aspect of its relationship with the population, thereby abandoning its role as guarantor of economic security. Instead, it encouraged and subsidised businesses producing for export. Products also flowed the other way, creating a globalised consumer economy. Television and radio were effectively deregulated in the 1980s as cable and satellite television made them impossible to control. By 1991, 90 per cent of Turkey's households owned colour televisions.<sup>6</sup> There also was an explosion of new publications and other forms of communication. The number of telephone subscribers increased from 1 million in 1979 to 6 million in 1989, and the number of villages connected to the telephone grid increased during that period from 6,000 to 38,000.<sup>7</sup> The widespread use of cellphones has further increased that number.

After 1987, a global recession and Turkey's rising budget deficit caused a downturn in the economy, as inflation and unemployment rose. Different social groups carried disproportionate shares of the burden and benefits of the new economy. The new economy created great wealth for some, while the lives of industrial and agricultural workers, retirees, public-sector workers and other people on fixed incomes became more precarious. Urban living conditions declined under the pressure of population growth and lack of investment in infrastructure. Amid the economic boom and expansion of the export and service sectors, the economic decline of the average family continued through the 1990s. As a result of this and accusations of corruption, the popularity of the MP fell rapidly after 1987 and it was defeated in the 1991 elections, replaced by a centre-right–centre-left coalition.

Since the 1940s, Turkey has undergone tremendous economic and political changes that have substantially rewritten the balance of power between the secularist urban elite and the largely culturally and religiously conservative masses. Large-scale migration from the countryside to the cities has changed the nature and aspirations of the masses. Political organisation, civic activism and deregulated media have broadened the nature of political tools at their disposal. Government inability to protect the economic interests of the masses and state repression of social movements has changed the relations between

6 A. Öncü, 'Packaging Islam: Cultural Politics on the Landscape of Turkish Commercial Television', *Public Culture* 8, 1 (Fall 1995), p. 58.

7 B. Toprak, 'Civil society in Turkey', in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 102.

the masses and the state. This renegotiation of power has been accompanied by a polarisation of economic status and a sharpening of the perception of social differences. These conditions and other political and social factors contributed to the rise of explicitly Islamic political parties and an Islamist movement.

### The Islamist movement

The Islamist phenomenon has been studied as a political ideology focusing on the role played by Islam-inspired political parties or organisations in Turkish political life;<sup>8</sup> as a social and political transformation fuelled in part by differences in social class and culture;<sup>9</sup> through the ideas, backgrounds and intellectual histories of its leading figures;<sup>10</sup> and as a form of cultural politics in which Muslim elites struggle to attribute social status to Islamic symbols and lifestyle by developing high Islamic clothing styles and Muslim popular culture.<sup>11</sup> The characteristics associated with Kemalism and Islamism, however, overlap these categories in Turkish society, which varies along a continuum of lifestyle, social practices and ideological thought. While Islam has long played an important role in Turkish society and been used by political parties to gain votes, a truly Islamist movement did not come into being until the 1980s.

The Islamist movement of the 1980s encompassed a variety of ideological positions. There was a liberal, pro-democratic movement composed of conservative pragmatists willing to work within the system. There also were a small number of Islamic activists who aimed to replace the secular state with one based on Islamic law. One example was the Hizbullah group, held responsible for killing pro-Kurdish and secularist businessmen, journalists and educators in the 1990s. Hizbullah is more accurately described as a political terror group than as a religious order. The Ticani, a minor group, were known mainly

8 Gülalp, 'Political Islam in Turkey'; Hakan M. Yavuz, 'Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey', *Comparative Politics* 30, 1 (October 1997).

9 J. B. White, *Islamist mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002).

10 Ş. Mardin (ed.), *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); Michael Meeker, 'The new Muslim intellectuals in the Republic of Turkey', in Richard Tapper (ed.), *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991); Hakan M. Yavuz, 'Nationalism and Islam: Yusuf Akçura and Üç Tarz-i Siyaset', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, 2 (July 1993); Hakan M. Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hakan M. Yavuz and John L. Esposito (eds.), *Turkish Islam and the Secular State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

11 N. Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Yael Navaro-Yashin, 'The market for identities: Secularism, Islamism, commodities', in Deniz Kandiyoti (ed.), *The Everyday of Modern Turkey* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002).



for their periodic attacks on statues of Atatürk, which they condemned as idols. The majority of Islamist activists, however, were interested in instituting change within the existing democratic system.

### The Welfare Party

In 1983, Necmettin Erbakan founded a new Islamic party, the Welfare Party (WP, Refah Partisi). While the NSP had drawn its main support from towns in the underdeveloped eastern and central Anatolian provinces and did not do well in the cities, the WP's voter base included the urban poor living at the margins of cities, particularly small shopkeepers and urban migrants, many of whom had previously voted for the centre-left social democrats. Erbakan's proposal for a 'Just Economic Order' called for the elimination of social inequality and corruption, state withdrawal from economic activities and the promotion of individual small enterprise. In the 1987 election, the WP failed to obtain 10 per cent of the vote and thus was not represented in parliament. However, throughout the rest of the 1980s the WP added to its supporters, including members of an expanding Islamist business and professional community that did business explicitly within a framework of Islamic principles. They provided a stable economic underpinning for various aspects of an emerging Islamist movement, whether in the form of contributions to political parties, support for charitable organisations, scholarships or the building of schools and gender-segregated dormitories.

In nationwide municipal elections held in 1994, the WP doubled its votes from the 1989 elections, winning twenty-eight of seventy-six mayoral seats in provincial capitals, including six of Turkey's largest fifteen cities. Istanbul and Ankara both elected Islamist mayors. The election results shocked Kemalists, who organised to counter 'the fundamentalist threat'. Middle-class urban women's groups were particularly active, since they felt they had the most to lose in the restrictive *şeriat*-based state that they feared was the WP's ultimate aim.

Erbakan invoked National View principles, speaking out against laicism, Westernisation and Turkey's military cooperation agreement with Israel. He pledged to withdraw Turkey from NATO and the European Union Customs Union signed in 1996, in favour of political and economic alliances with other Muslim countries. He planned to pursue a brotherhood of Muslims around the world, replacing Turkey's ties with and reliance on the West. After the 1994 elections, several attacks were reported on women in Western dress in downtown Istanbul, and attempts were made to separate women from

men on public transport. Some WP mayors had statues of nudes removed from parks and tried to close or restrict restaurants and nightclubs that served alcohol. On the anniversary of the founding of the Republic, WP mayors found reasons not to attend the festivities, which featured Kemalist symbolism, or made disparaging remarks about the events. Party zealots proposed building a mosque in Istanbul's Taksim Square, a direct affront to the institutional legacy of Kemalist secularism. The square is dominated by the Atatürk Cultural Centre, home to opera, ballet and a classical symphony, cultural traditions imported by Atatürk as part of his Westernisation programme. The Taksim mosque was never built, but other icons of Kemalism were transformed. When the WP won the 1994 municipal elections in Ankara, the new mayor changed the official city symbol from a Hittite sun to a symbol containing elements of a mosque. However, most WP mayors improved city services, an achievement that encouraged even secularist voters to favour the WP in 1995, when two-fifths of those voting for it identified themselves as secularist.

In the 1995 national election, the WP emerged as the largest party with 21% of the vote (compared to the True Path Party's (TPP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) 19 per cent and the MP's 20 per cent) and 158 of 550 seats in parliament. Called upon to form a government, the WP was unable to do so because the two leading centre-right parties refused to join it in a coalition government and thereby concede power to the Islamists. Yet due in large part to the personal enmity between their leaders, Tansu Çiller and Mesut Yılmaz, the two centre-right parties were unable to agree to a coalition themselves. Ultimately, Erbakan became prime minister in a coalition with the TPP's Çiller in the summer of 1996. This deal was remarkable, since for many years TPP had represented itself as pro-Western, laicist and a bulwark against Islamism. In exchange for Çiller's support, Erbakan agreed to shield her from parliamentary investigation for corruption. In the 1996 municipal elections, the WP received a third of the vote in forty-one districts.

As prime minister, Erbakan tried to implement some of his ideas about reorienting Turkey towards the Muslim world. At an assembly of diplomats, he praised the Iranian revolution. In February 1996, he dined with Louis Farrakhan, the American Nation of Islam leader who was visiting Muslim countries. However, Erbakan's efforts met with little success. Turkey's control of the water of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers through its massive South-East Anatolian Project of over twenty dams had already strained relations with downriver countries Iraq and Syria. On Erbakan's state visit to Libya, its leader, Muammar el-Qaddafi, criticised Turkey before the Libyan and Turkish press for its treatment of the Kurds.

The more radical and confrontational elements within the WP heightened public anxiety. WP radicals within the state bureaucracy tried to move hundreds of secular-minded judges to posts in rural districts and replace them with Islamist judges who would stretch the interpretation of Turkey's secular legal code, especially in the area of family law. This prompted a public outcry, and the move was blocked by a government supervisory council. The press kept a watchful eye on the WP's actions, and public and civic organisations were quick to mobilise and demonstrate their displeasure. After winning municipal elections, the WP closed some community libraries and educational centres for women by withdrawing funds and rooms, sometimes replacing them with Qur'an courses. Many of the party radicals' attempts to undermine the political and cultural dominance of secularism were ultimately unsuccessful, but the pressure for systemic change remained strong.

The activities of the WP came under intense scrutiny from the military. Islamist officers were expelled from the army in December 1996. Early in 1997, the mayor of the small town of Sincan outside Ankara came under fire for hosting the Iranian ambassador, who gave a speech in which he called for an Islamic state. (The military responded by 'coincidentally' routing a column of tanks through the town.) Giving in to the military's demands, conveyed through the NSC, Erbakan eventually broadened Turkey's agreements with Israel. His party's radicalism, however, led to Erbakan's ouster and ultimately the party's demise. In June 1997, the army engineered what has become known as a 'soft coup', edging Erbakan out of power without actually taking over the government itself. In 1998 the constitutional court closed the WP for allegedly threatening the secularist nature of the state, and banned Erbakan from political activity for five years.

The reasons for the WP's success in elections in the 1990s were multifold. Polls showed a lack of popular support for a mix of religion and politics,<sup>12</sup> and voters have proven this sentiment by moving their support to parties across the political spectrum – for instance, first voting for the left-of-centre RPP, then the WP. However, the laic state's continued repression of religious expression occasioned great social upheaval, leading to public demonstrations and political activism, particularly among the conservative sector of the population that aspired to education and economic upward mobility. Islamists often railed against the headscarf ban at universities as an attempt to keep conservative young women from getting an education and entering the professions. Issues

<sup>12</sup> Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Türkiye'de din*, p. 58.

of poverty and social class fuelled what appeared on the surface to be a purely religious issue.

The Turkish-Islamic synthesis of the 1980s meant that the government allowed a great variety of Islamic ideas and material to be published and broadcast. The newly opened economy of the 1980s brought wealth to conservative and provincial entrepreneurs. The Özal government brought them into the bureaucracy. All of these things led to the development of a new Islamist public culture. Almost immediately, it came into conflict with official public culture, as young women developed a popular, chic style of veiling, and headscarved women began to appear in middle-class areas that had formerly been the exclusive realm of secularists, and as Islamic ideas were debated in the media.

The platforms of the WP and its successor, the Virtue Party, were influenced by a new generation of Islamist intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> Their ideas attracted members of the professional middle class, students and intellectuals who were questioning Kemalism, nationalism, and even the modern, centralised nation-state, which some saw as totalitarian. The decisive imprint on the Islamist movement was the translation in the 1970s of works by Fazlur Rahman and, later, the works of Muhammed Abduh and other Arab Islamist thinkers. Islamist intellectuals were writing in the context of a global rethinking of the basic tenets of the Enlightenment: rationalism, universalism, modernity and the inevitability of human progress along a normative trajectory set by the West. This questioning gave impetus and credence to attempts to develop models for a non-Western political order, the principles of which were based on Islamic philosophy rather than secular rationalism. Many Turkish Islamist intellectuals had graduated from secular universities, and buttressed their radical ideas with references to Western thinkers. Some rejected Western solutions, despite reference to Western authors in making this argument. The views expressed in Islamic publications covered a wide range from pro-*shariat* views to articulations of a feminist and modernist, some say postmodernist, Islam.<sup>14</sup>

What accounted for the WP's appeal to non-religious voters? Since the 1991 elections, the WP's advertising campaigns, designed by a professional marketing agency, avoided religious language and presented the WP as a forward-looking party with a vision that encompassed all strata of society, regardless of their views about political Islam.<sup>15</sup> WP advertisements referred to

<sup>13</sup> Meeker, 'The new Muslim intellectuals'.

<sup>14</sup> H. Güllalp, 'Globalizing Postmodernism: Islamist and Western Social Theory', *Economy and Society* 26, 3 (August 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Öncü, 'Packaging Islam', pp. 60–2.

issues such as pensions, affordable housing, health care, and the environment. Istanbul mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's efforts to protect the city's endangered green areas won sympathy and support from the public. WP municipalities brought some order to municipal services and seemed, on the surface at least, to be less corrupt than previous administrations. Streets were cleaner, buses ran more often and the rubbish was collected in a timely manner.

The WP also had a face-to-face, personalised political style that mobilised informal 'cells' of activists as well as formal organisations. The metaphor of family and its associated responsibility and obligations was carried over to the neighbourhood, where it meshed with cultural and religious norms giving fellow human beings (in the form of neighbours, employees, etc.) rights to assistance and just treatment. Human rights and citizens' rights were made personal obligations. People were asked, as their religious duty, to take personal responsibility for their neighbours. Unlike the top-down, highly centralised parties that brought their projects to the voters for support, the WP built on local solidarities and wedded local needs to the party's overall project. The involvement of grassroots organisations lent flexibility and endurance to the Islamist political project, even in the face of the banning of the WP in January 1998 and the jailing of some of its politicians.

The WP also profited from widespread disenchantment with other parties tainted by corruption, inter-personal feuds and ineffectualness. The party was not immune from corruption charges, however. A WP official was accused of embezzling funds that had been collected for relief aid in Bosnia. Nevertheless, the corruption accusations against the WP paled in comparison to accusations of gun-running, assassinations, unaccounted funds and self-enrichment that clung to several other leading parties.

The party also had the advantage of a strong ideological message that appealed to people across class, ethnic and gender divides. In previous decades, the Turkish left had carried the ideological banner of resistance to economic injustice, but it had fallen victim to the post-coup military crackdown and the global decline of socialism. Islamists took up their role as champions of economic justice, although the Islamist conception differed quite substantially from the class-based ideas of the left. Erbakan's notion of a 'Just Economic Order' appealed to the working class and to marginal people in the squatter areas, as well as to small businessmen and entrepreneurs. The opening of the Turkish economy to the world market in the 1980s, and the state's abandonment of a controlled economy, created enormous economic dislocations. Despite improvement in the economy, unemployment and income differentials increased. The segment of the population left behind by the economic

transformation found a voice in the WP, which emphasised issues such as social justice, unemployment, poverty and social security, while respecting the more conservative lifestyle of the masses.

Islamists also came up with controversial new designs for dealing with Turkey's ethnic diversity. One much-discussed proposal was that of a 'confederation of faiths', a decentralised, pluralist political system of 'multiple legal orders' under which each community of believers could live under laws corresponding to their religious beliefs. The state's role in the confederation would be to guarantee each community's autonomy. This proposal, modelled on the Ottoman *millet* system, was part of a still-developing set of ideas called neo-Ottomanism. This system was proposed as a multiculturalist alternative to hierarchical and bureaucratic Western political models. It would respect the rights of both majority and minorities by replacing 'democracy', which Islamists tended to define as the rule of the majority over the minority, with 'pluralism'.<sup>16</sup> Some Kurds were attracted to this model and by the party's openness to ethnic diversity. In a 1999 national poll of the Turkish electorate, 47 per cent of Kurdish speakers expressed support for the Virtue Party, compared with 40 per cent of non-Kurdish speakers.<sup>17</sup>

In the late 1980s, conservative and religious women for the first time became important actors in urban political and civic networks. They canvassed for votes, organised and participated in demonstrations, and attended rallies. Female WP activists, many from working-class neighbourhoods and conservative families, were responsible for getting out a large part of the vote for the WP in the 1994 and 1995 elections. In the month before the 1995 elections, in Istanbul alone, the WP's women's commission worked with 18,000 women and met face-to-face with 200,000 women.<sup>18</sup> Women made up a third of WP membership in Istanbul in 1997.<sup>19</sup> However, women were not administrative or financial decision makers within the WP, except within the autonomous women's commission. Nevertheless, as activists, women were visible at rallies and in the streets in their distinctive *tesettür* clothing, a fashionable form of veiling that developed in the late 1980s. In June 1998, hundreds of women in *tesettür* demonstrated in front of universities and marched on Ankara to demand the right to wear headscarves at university.

16 H. Güllalp, 'The Poverty of Democracy in Turkey: The Refah Party Episode', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 21 (Fall 1999).

17 Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Türkiye'de din*, p. 65.

18 Y. Arat, 'Islamist women challenge the boundaries of citizenship', *Human Development Report: Turkey* (Ankara: United Nations Human Development Programme, 1997), p. 67.

19 Y. Arat, *Political Islam in Turkey and women's organizations* (Istanbul: TESEV, 1999), p. 23.

In sum, the political success of the WP from 1983 until its demise in 1998 reflected the increasing role of Islam in Turkish public life, as evidenced by the growth of Islamic schools and banks, Islamic businesses and a politicised Islamist movement with its own organisations, publications and distinctive dress. State repression of religious expression had galvanised Islamist activism. The WP's success also expressed voter dissatisfaction with the performance of the centrist parties and revelations about government corruption, cronyism and inefficiency. Support for the WP came not only from the smaller towns in its traditional strongholds of central and eastern Anatolia, but also from major cities, where the WP drew support from the secular left parties. The WP expanded its voter base from conservative rural people and small businessmen to include big business owners, young urban professionals, women, intellectuals and crossovers from the left. It presented itself not as a religious party, but as a modern party with a vision that encompassed issues of concern to all strata of society. Campaign advertisements depicted people such as pensioners, civil servants and unveiled women. The party's approach to organising took advantage of local grassroots organisations that brought it closer to the people. The WP promised support for Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights, protection of the environment, and the elimination of social inequality and corruption.

### The Virtue Party

The WP was succeeded by the Virtue Party (VP, Fazilet Partisi), which had been founded pre-emptively by Erbakan's lawyer, İsmail Alptekin, in preparation for a negative outcome in the constitutional court case against WP. The WP's experience of persecution pushed the VP's platform and rhetoric in the direction of democracy and human rights, political freedom and pluralism. While the WP was a political party defined by its relation to Islam, the VP represented itself as a Muslim party defined by its relation to politics. It claimed to be a moderate, modern meritocracy, took populist, environmentalist stances, and proclaimed itself open to women and minorities in its organisation. Kemalists were cynical about the party's sudden discovery of democratic principles, and saw its positioning simply as *takiyye*, a practice of hiding one's true purpose in the interest of achieving one's ultimate goal, which they presumed to be making the Turkish state a religious one.

Banned from politics, Erbakan tried to run the VP from behind the scenes through the figurehead party leader, Recai Kutan, but power moved inexorably into the hands of younger, populist, charismatic leaders such as Istanbul mayor

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Erdoğan appealed to the new Islamist constituencies – young, middle-class professionals, students and intellectuals, who were radical in their ideas, but moderate in approach. The younger Islamist generation was invested in current political issues, not loyalty to regional patrons or religious brotherhoods. Many were urban youth in their twenties and thirties, educated in secular institutions or theological schools, desiring upward mobility and economic security, but with few opportunities to participate in the global economy and booming service sector. They were open to new ideas and models of society that would incorporate these aspirations, while retaining an Islamic lifestyle and moral values. Erdoğan's populism bridged the gap between conservative religious culture, the rising aspirations of disenfranchised youth and the new ideas and ideologies of educated Islamists. News reports in spring 2000 began to refer to the split within VP as the Renewers (*Yenilikçi*) versus Erbakan's Traditionalists (*Gelenekçi*). Although Erdoğan entertained Islamist ideas, he pulled the party further away from religion and towards politics as its engine.

Erdoğan's political orientation did not mean he was uninterested in systemic change. For instance, he favoured a secular system 'like the American system' instead of Kemalist laicism. Kemalism, he argued, was a form of religion. Secularism, on the other hand, would give people the freedom to do things such as found an Islamic university or wear a headscarf in parliament. He expressed moderate views on a variety of issues ranging from women working outside the home (which he supported) to Islamic law (which he believed to be a metaphor for a just society). He had no interest, he insisted, in changing Turkey's laws, just in making sure that the laws already on the books were actually enforced.

Although Erbakan found himself more and more isolated within the VP, he continued to try to manoeuvre party activities and policy from behind the scenes, including what some in the VP saw as badly timed confrontational tactics. For instance, in 1999, the female deputy Merve Kavakçı, newly elected on the VP ticket, tried to take her seat in parliament while wearing her headscarf, causing pandemonium in the chamber. When she refused to unveil, she was not allowed to take the oath of office and was escorted out. She was later stripped of her Turkish citizenship when it was discovered that she had taken out United States citizenship without informing the Turkish authorities.

In January 1998, Erdoğan was banned from politics and charged with violating article 312 of the Turkish constitution, which refers to the crime of 'inciting people to hatred and enmity on the basis of ethnic, religious, regional, and sectarian differences'. The national security court, a military-backed tribunal



that tried cases related to subversion, accused him of having ‘provoked religious hatred’ and of having called for religious insurrection when, during a campaign speech in 1997, he read a verse from a poem written in the 1920s by the nationalist hero Ziya Gökalp: ‘The mosques are our barracks, the minarets are our spears, their domes are our helmets and the faithful are our army.’ His supporters demonstrated and signed petitions, to no avail. Sentenced to a ten-month jail term and banned from politics for life, Erdoğan continued to manage party affairs from his jail cell. The leadership of the reformist faction was taken up by Abdullah Gül, a forty-nine-year-old former economics professor from Kayseri. Gül was a leading figure in restructuring the VP, moving it further away from an ‘Islam-referenced’ party to what he called a ‘new politics’ based on democracy and freedom of belief.

In April 1999, the constitutional court opened a case against the VP on charges of anti-laic activities. In the 1999 elections, many of the VP’s supporters moved to the Nationalist Action Party (NAP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*). The VP’s share of the vote dropped from 21% to 15%. The VP platform shared some characteristics with that of the NAP, but the NAP was traditionally far right, strongly pan-Turkist and nationalist. The deciding factor in its showing may well have been that the election took place in a highly charged nationalist atmosphere after the capture of the Kurdish separatist PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. The secular nationalist Democratic Left Party (DLP), led by Bülent Ecevit, also did well in the 1999 elections, and Ecevit became prime minister.

The VP was banned in June 2001, with the conservative faction, under Necmettin Erbakan, and the reformists, under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, going their separate ways, each founding a new party. Under the figurehead leadership of Recai Kutan, the conservatives founded the Felicity Party (FP, *Saadet Partisi*). This party continued the strong, centralised leadership and religious rhetoric that had characterised previous Islamist parties and did not do well in subsequent elections, unable to pass the 10% vote threshold to take a seat in parliament.

### The Justice and Development Party

In August 2001, Erdoğan founded the Justice and Development Party (JDP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*), whose acronym in Turkish is AK (‘white, unblemished’), with a lightbulb as its symbol. Its seventy-one founders included twelve women. The party platform avoided reference to Islam and expressed support for laicism as a fundamental requirement for democracy and freedom. Laicism, however, was defined in the party principles as state impartiality

towards religion, rather than state control of religious affairs. Shortly after the party was founded, the state prosecutor warned the party it was in violation of the law on two counts: founding members of a political party may not wear headscarves, but half the female founders of JDP did; and Erdoğan's previous conviction made him ineligible to found or lead a political party. Erdoğan was unable to formally assume leadership of JDP and become prime minister until the law was changed.

Turkish Islamists reacted in a variety of ways to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The more radical and confrontational newspapers and politicians, including some from the FP, claimed there was insufficient proof to implicate Osama bin Laden and repeated conspiracy theories positing Israeli involvement in the attacks. Moderate politicians in the JDP spoke out against terrorism in general and the al-Qa'eda terror network in particular, and tried to delink the incidents of 11 September from Islam.

On 3 November 2002, the JDP won Turkey's national elections, sweeping away all other established parties, with the exception of the RPP, which remained in weak opposition. The JDP government faced a number of immediate challenges. Protocol dilemmas created tension with the state and the military, as conflict arose over the illegality of JDP politicians' wives appearing with headscarves at official functions. The party's refusal to allow US troops to deploy into Iraq from Turkish territory was based less on Islamic identity than on the Turkish population's widespread opposition to the war and its civilian casualties, concern about its possible spread to neighbouring states including Turkey, fear of a catastrophic effect on the already weak Turkish economy, and a reluctance to commit Turkish soldiers' lives to a project opposed by both devout and secular Turks.

The JDP began to assert that it no longer made policy decisions on the basis of Islamic philosophy, that its platform was secular and that it had no intention of changing the secular nature of the state it governed. Rather, it presented itself as a conservative democratic party running a secular government apparatus. Government officials took pains to point out, however, that they retained their Muslim ethical values. Despite its disavowal by party leaders, Islam remains a motivating rationale for at least some of its supporters. One indication is that the issue of veiling remains one of the most important domestic issues on the party's agenda.

Some prominent JDP members, such as theology professor and minister of state Mehmet Aydın, are influenced by a Turkish brand of Islamic philosophy developed by group of reformist intellectuals at Ankara University's school of theology. It entails a rejection of Arab reformist Islam and links between Islamic

law and the state. Instead, it views religion as human nature or an internal state and the secular state as an administrative mechanism, thus positing that there is no contradiction in political leaders of a democratic secular government holding personal Muslim values. While these scholars faced criticism from more orthodox Muslims and radical Islamist intellectuals, their influence in the JDP brought their ideas into the mainstream.

### The Alevi and religious brotherhoods

The political affiliations of the heterodox Alevi minority and Sunni religious brotherhoods have also affected the relationship between religion and the state. The Alevi, of both Turkish and Kurdish background, are the largest non-Sunni religious group in Turkey. Alevi collective rituals differ from Sunni rituals particularly in the incorporation of music and mysticism, and the participation of both men and women. Alevis do not subscribe to the Sunni requirements regarding prayer and fasting, and their ceremonies (*cem*), in which music plays a prominent role, are not gender segregated. Alevi society is based on inherited religious leadership. Some Alevi customs and beliefs share similarities with Shiite Islam, and others are believed to be pre-Islamic in origin. For centuries, the Alevis were marginalised and sometimes persecuted by the Sunni majority for their beliefs, which some considered heretical.

Although traditionally socially liberal and politically to the left of centre, the Alevi are often overlooked in discussions of moderate Islam in Turkey. This omission may be due to their association with leftist activities in the turbulent 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, however, the Alevis were perceived to be allies of the state in countering the supposed threat of Sunni Islamism. They were granted permission to reopen their lodges, which had been closed along with other Islamic institutions after the founding of the Republic, and were allowed to hold their *cem* ceremonies openly. These reforms led to what some have called an Alevi revival or re-politicisation, including the founding of numerous Alevi associations and foundations and local and national radio stations. Participation in Alevi activities increased, particularly in cities. Like the Sunni Islamist movement, Alevi presence in the public sphere took the form of mass demonstrations, civic organisations and media publications – books, periodicals and newspapers. This process created a crisis in authority within the Alevi community, as the new, civic and culture-oriented Alevi identity challenged traditional leaders whose authority is based on membership in holy lineages.

Several powerful Sunni religious brotherhoods (*tarikât*) exist in Turkey, among them the Nakşibendi, Süleymancı and Nurcu. Although religious brotherhoods and dervish orders were banned shortly after the founding of the Turkish Republic and their lodges closed, they continued to operate clandestinely. They reappeared in political life after 1945 when multi-party politics were introduced and politicians realised the potential for religious leaders to deliver votes. Religious groups vary across the political spectrum from the conservative to left of centre. Fundamentalist orders such as the Nakşibendi and Süleymancı have tended to support Islamist or conservative centrist parties, while philosophically left-of-centre sufi orders such as the Bektaşî and Mevlevî and the socially and politically liberal Alevî tended to ally themselves with secularist parties such as the RPP.

Similarly, a more moderate Turkish Islam also is advocated by the Gülen Movement, an offspring of the Nurcu movement, based on the *Risale-i Nur*, the writings of Said Nursî (1877–1960). Said Nursî argued that there was no contradiction between religion and science. The Nurcu movement spread throughout Turkey in the 1950s and held particular appeal for those who had been educated in the secular school system. An offspring of the Nurcu developed around the religious ideas of the charismatic preacher Fethullah Gülen. The Gülen Movement is organised as a web of associations in Turkey's major cities, runs a large publishing industry to disseminate Gülen's teachings, and is noted for opening high-quality schools in Turkey and Central Asia. Gülen teaches that there is an 'Anatolian Islam' that differs from Arab Islam in its tolerance and openness to dialogue with other religions and sects. He promotes a liberal interpretation of Islam and an Islamised Turkish nationalism with links to the Turkic republics of Central Asia. In his writings, Gülen emphasises that religion is a private matter and its requirements should not be imposed on anyone. He believes that it is important to seek knowledge and to integrate with the modern world, even if that includes incorporating Western technology, clothing and, to some extent, lifestyle. To spread Gülen's message, his followers have sponsored educational and cultural facilities, student dormitories, summer camps and media organisations. The movement has attracted businessmen and educated members of society.

Its success raised suspicions among secularists, however, that behind its liberal front, the movement aimed to impose an Islamic state. Relations between the Gülen Movement and the state ranged from tacit support by individual politicians in the 1980s to repression in the 1990s to ideological influence in the 2000s. In the 1980s, the Turkish military and government encouraged the Turkish–Islamic synthesis in a bid to counter the appeal of leftist ideologies.

Gülen's brand of Turkish Islam, emphasis on Islamic education and belief in the compatibility of religious ethics and modern state institutions seemed ideal and initially was supported. As Islamist parties won power at the polls in the 1990s, however, relations with the state and military cooled. At the time of writing, Gülen is living in the United States, where he initially came for medical treatment, and is unable to return to Turkey under threat of arrest. Some of his followers are in influential government posts.

### The issue of veiling

Most visible among the symbols of political Islam was a distinctive form of Islamic dress called *tesettür* that became emblematic of the 'new Islamic woman' and was claimed as a central symbol by the Islamist movement. A long, loosely tailored coat was paired with a matching extra-large silk headscarf decorated with abstract motifs that varied with each fashion season. The scarf entirely hid the hair, forehead and neck, and usually, though not always, covered the shoulders and bosom. These carefully composed ensembles with their own fashion houses and a global market differed from earlier, less elaborate and locally produced forms of covering. *Tesettür* emerged as a fashion in the 1980s. By the 2000s, the headscarf could be seen paired with jeans and form-fitting skirts. Less common was the all-enveloping black or dark blue cloak (*çarşaf*) worn by followers of conservative religious sects.

The spread of *tesettür* veiling and its legitimisation as a political symbol allowed conservative Muslim women to redefine the spheres of activity available to them. The Islamist movement provided an avenue for conservative, veiled women to become politically active. Islamic corporations established professional training centres and issued certificates for men and women. They funded segregated dormitories and scholarships that allowed women to attend universities (although they were hindered by variable enforcement of laws banning veiling on campus). This effort allowed some women to establish professional footholds, however precarious, and provided the foundation for the development of the concept of 'the new Islamic woman'. Islamist intellectual discourse described the Islamist project as introducing 'real Islam' to social groups with lower levels of education and culture who otherwise experienced 'folk Islam'.<sup>20</sup> The Islamist top-down approach relied, as did Kemalism, on the leadership of educated elites and their modelling of elite styles and lifestyles.

<sup>20</sup> Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*, p. 113.

One consequence of the commercialisation and media popularisation of an Islamist identity and its symbols has been the development of a self-consciously Islamist bourgeois lifestyle based on Islamic commodities. In the 1990s, developers built Islamist luxury gated communities. Islamist fashion shows displayed fashionable new veiled designs that clearly identified the wearer as middle class.<sup>21</sup> This reflected the changing economic make-up of sectors of society and the strength of self-identified devout Muslim businesses (known as 'Islamic capital' or 'green capital') in the post-1980s economy.

The JDP government promised to further open the door to religious women's participation in the public sphere by changing the laws that ban veiled women from universities and parliament, but the male-dominated make-up of the party hierarchy and resistance by Kemalist elements in the military, government and judicial system make this unlikely. While the role of women in the success of Islamist parties since the 1980s has been undeniably important, they have not been at the forefront of shaping the parties' agendas. Islamist women were given public voices in magazines and newspaper columns, but these generally were limited to an audience of other women.<sup>22</sup> In the 1980s the Islamists did not field female parliamentary candidates (blaming state laws that would not have allowed a veiled woman to be elected), female mayors, municipal councillors or provincial governors. No women led or spoke publicly for Islamic brotherhoods. When women were needed for public presentation or debates, instead of using women from their own ranks, the Islamists often put forward women who had come to the movement from outside and who did not veil. Public conversations and conferences about the role of Islam in the Turkish state and society rarely included women speakers. In the 1990s, the JDP incorporated more women into the party administration, although still not in the numbers or positions of authority one might expect given women's important role in mobilising party support. Thus, while veiling as a cause did present an opportunity for women to play a central role in the movement, it also presented a dilemma related to the veil's cultural and symbolic dimensions, in which it is still linked to patriarchy and exclusion from the public sphere.

After the founding of the Turkish Republic in the early twentieth century, Kemalism redefined public space as appropriate for women, encouraging them to become educated and to enter politics and the professions. Similarly, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Islamist movement redefined public space as an

21 Navaro-Yashin, 'The market for identities'.

22 R. Çakır, 'Dindar kadının serüveni', *Birikim* 137 (September 2000).

appropriate space for veiled women. The Islamist, like the Kemalist, ideal, however, applies primarily to women of the middle classes and elites, and has opened the door only marginally to the public participation of working-class, poor or rural women. In conjunction with the market and media, elite Islamist women continue to develop a commodified Islamist private sphere, including exclusive forms of veiling and lifestyle, that marks them as middle class. While new public spaces are opened up to women and private space is redefined, lower-class women are less likely to be able to take advantage of these openings, despite their activism.

### Conclusion

Islamist politics in Turkey are the result of a complex history of state suppression, control and deregulation of Islam. This history, combined with other economic and political factors, brought about a proliferation of institutional bases for Islamic engagement in the political arena in the 1980s. Despite Kemalist state controls, Islam remained an important element of Turkish social and political life. Beginning in the 1980s, there was an increase in political activism centred on Islamic principles and that drew new social groups into the political process across social class and, to some extent, ethnic lines, including large numbers of conservative women. Opposition to the Kemalist platform centred on certain issues and symbols, such as the veiling ban. A series of Islamist political parties were sequentially closed down and re-emerged with different constituencies and platforms. Within these parties, power struggles played out between younger Islamists, committed to a populist style with a power base in urban networks, and older leaders, whose political style lay within the centralised, authoritarian, top-down political mould of Turkish political culture.

In contemporary Turkey, Islamist understandings of Islam and the role of Islam in national political life exist along a broad range, from radical to moderate, and are linked with both nationalism and pluralism. Islamist intellectuals have put forth a variety of positions on women's roles, the rights of ethnic minorities and economic practice. Since the 1990s, Turkish Islamist politics have displayed a general movement away from Arab modernist-inspired radical Islam. The result has been the articulation of a more moderate Turkish political Islam, which does not envision a secular government run by devout Muslim politicians as a contradiction.

## Sufism and Islamic groups in contemporary Turkey

AHMET YÜKLEYEN

Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, is based on the pursuit of spiritual truth by transcending (not necessarily refuting) Islamic law through ascetic and esoteric practices. Sufi orders believe that the Qu'ran has two levels of meaning: an outer (*zahir*) and an inner (*batın*) level. The outer level is accessible to all, but is less valuable, while the inner level is accessible only to initiated disciples of the mystical orders.

Each sufi order (*tarikât*) formulates a distinctive way of seeking divine love and truth, based on the teachings of a spiritual master, or şeyh. The *mürîd*, or initiated member of a sufi order, forms a personal relationship with the şeyh, who assigns disciplinary practices of asceticism, self-humiliation, and *zikir* (repeating the names of God) in order to purify his/her carnal desires. In the Ottoman period, sufi orders such as the Nakşibendi, Kadiri and Mevlevi respected Sunni orthodoxy, while favouring mystical experience over legalistic formalism. They perpetuated orthodox Sunni Islam through their large network of sufi lodges (*tekke*). There also were heterodox sufi orders such as the Bektaşî that combined Shiite beliefs with pre-Islamic folk beliefs.

There also are religious communities (*cemaat*) that originate in the sufi tradition, but have moved away from personal spirituality towards a more institutionalised social or political project intended to increase Islamic consciousness in society. These communities value social and religious activism more highly than individual spiritual advancement through mystical experience. Followers emphasise the religious teachings and activities of the collectivity rather than characteristics of the leader for spiritual guidance. Instead, leaders develop social, religious, educational and philanthropic projects and followers are religiously motivated and mobilised to support them. Some examples of *cemaat* are the Süleymanlı and Nurcu communities, which are described below.

Islamic organisations and their religious practices were transformed by the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. In 1924, Atatürk established the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyânet İşleri Başkanlığı) under the control of



the Prime Minister's office. The Directorate is the only institution authorised to run mosques and religious schools and courses, but independent sufi orders continue to exist and play an important role in Turkish society and politics. In January 2005, there were 77,151 mosques and 4,221 Qur'anic schools with 155,285 students under the control of the Directorate.<sup>1</sup>

The state officially dissolved the sufi orders in 1925, although many continued to practise underground. Orders that relied on conspicuous rituals, distinctive clothing, special buildings and ceremonies, such as the Mevlevi, experienced more difficulty in carrying out their religious ceremonies because their visibility made them easier to locate and control. The Nakşibendi order, however, survived both the legal ban of 1925 and persecution in the 1930s partly because it does not require a *tekke* and one of its central rituals is a silent and relatively inconspicuous *zikir*. All sufi orders went underground and organised their meetings secretly until the 1960s, when the state eased its secularist strictures.

### Sufi orders

The spiritual genealogy of the Nakşibendi order goes back to Abu Bakr, the first caliph of Islam. Its founder was Bahaeddin Nakşibendi of Türkistan (1318–89). The most significant contributor to the order was Ahmad Sirhindi of India (1536–1625) who redefined the Nakşibendi tradition and came to be known as the Renewer (*Müceddid*). He did not separate the material world from the spiritual hereafter, and preached that being active in social and political life would earn spiritual rewards. During the time of Şeyh Mevlana Halid-i Bağdadi (1776–1827), the Nakşibendi order stressed Sunni orthodoxy over religious innovations and persecuted heterodox groups such as the Bektāşi order in Ottoman territories. This display of conformity won them the support of Ottoman rulers.

The Nakşibendi order supported the Turkish War of Liberation, but along with the other orders, it was banned in 1925. Nevertheless, the Nakşibendi continued their activities covertly, in mosques and in the private homes of followers. After the 1960s, the order increased its power in government and society, particularly through the two branches led by Şeyhs Mehmed Zahid Kotku (1897–1980) and Muhammed Raşid Erol (1929–96). The charismatic Şeyh Kotku reached out to urban and educated middle classes at the İskenderpaşa mosque in Istanbul. His circle included future president Turgut Özal and Prime

1 See [www.diyenet.gov.tr/turkish/default.asp](http://www.diyenet.gov.tr/turkish/default.asp).

Ministers Necmettin Erbakan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He emphasised the compatibility between Islam and modernity, including Islamic explanations for economic development. Şeyh Raşid Erol established his sufi lodge in Menzil, a village in south-eastern Turkey, and kept a distance from politics.

Other sufi orders, such as the Mevlevi and Kadiri, are not as widespread in contemporary Turkey as the Nakşibendi. The Mevlevi order was founded by Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's followers after his death in 1273, and was initially led by his son, Sultan Veled Çelebi. The Mevlevi are popularly known as 'the Whirling Dervishes' because they perform their *zikir* in the form of a ritual whirling ceremony accompanied by music, called the *sema*. The Mevlevi were a well-established sufi order in the Ottoman Empire that spread into the Balkans, Syria and Egypt. The order was outlawed in Turkey in 1925, but in the 1950s the Turkish government realized that the Whirling Dervishes had value as a tourist attraction. The state began allowing them to perform annually in public in Konya on 17 December, the anniversary of Rumi's death, and such performances for tourists are now common.

The Kadiri *tarikât* is an old order founded on the teachings of scholar and mystic Abdulkadir Geylani (1077–1166), a native of the Iranian province of Geylan. Kadiri *tekkes* can be found in India, Pakistan, Turkey, the Balkans and much of East and West Africa. The order has not developed any distinctive doctrines or teachings outside orthodox Sunni Islam, but interprets the faith through mystical experience. The spiritual chain of the Kadiri begins with Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law. In the nineteenth century, the Kadiri was one of the dominant orders in Turkey. However, its activities were banned between 1925 and 1953, and today there is only one *tekke*, with fifty disciples, located in Tophane, Istanbul.<sup>2</sup>

The Bektaşî order was founded in the thirteenth century by Hacı Bektaş Veli. It reached its present form in the sixteenth century when it acquired a more organised structure. The Bektaşî combine beliefs of Shiite Islam and sufi concepts. They venerate Ali and the Twelve Shiite Imams. They celebrate the old Persian holiday of Nevruz as Imam Ali's birthday.

### Islamic communities

There are also a number of Islamic communities in Turkey that have evolved out of the sufi orders. The largest Islamic community (*cemaat*) is the Süleymanlı (or Süleymancı), named after its founder Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan

2 See [www.tempodergisi.com.tr/toplum-politika/06497/?printerfriendly=yes](http://www.tempodergisi.com.tr/toplum-politika/06497/?printerfriendly=yes).

(1888–1959), a religious scholar in the late Ottoman period. The Süleymanlı are one of the largest Islamic communities in Turkey, with 4 million followers.<sup>3</sup> The community has a hierarchical and highly centralised social organisation that ensures internal discipline. Tunahan's followers believe him to be the thirty-third and last piece of the Golden Chain (*Altın Silsile*), the spiritual chain of sufi masters in the Nakşibendi order. When the government changed the alphabet from Arabic to Latin in the early Republican period, Tunahan launched a mission of teaching Qur'anic recitation in Arabic. He recruited new disciples and trained them as preachers to spread Sunni orthodoxy in opposition to the severe secularisation project of the early Republic. He also established an underground religious education system that remained uncontrolled by the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

The Süleymanlı retain elements of sufi tradition such as collective *zikir* and ritual initiation, but their main impact on society is through the Qur'an courses that are their central activity. The graduates of Süleymanlı religious seminaries work both for the Directorate of Religious Affairs as well as in independent (and thus unsanctioned) community Qur'anic seminaries. The state has pursued an ambivalent approach to the Süleymanlı, persecuting and favouring them at different times. Tunahan was jailed three times but released without any charge. With the introduction of multi-party politics in 1949, the Süleymanlı institutionalised as the Association of Qur'anic Seminaries, which the state recognised. The Süleymanlı in turn preached a pro-state and nationalist position in the 1950s and 1960s. They lost some of their Qur'anic seminaries to the Directorate of Religious Affairs after the 1971 coup, when all private Qur'anic seminaries were nationalised. The state supported the Süleymanlı after the 1980 coup because the order served the official policy of promoting a 'Turkish–Islamic synthesis' to counter the leftist movement. By 1966, the number of Süleymanlı Qur'anic seminaries had reached 3,000.<sup>4</sup> Tunahan did not appoint a spiritual leader to take his place after his death, so in 1971 his son-in-law Kemal Kaçar took over leadership of the organisation. After Kaçar's death in 2002, Tunahan's grandson Ahmet Arif Denizolgun became the leader, after some rivalry with his brother.

The Nur (or Nurcu) Movement is the leading Islamic movement in Turkey, comprising about a dozen communities with followers estimated to number between 2 and 6 million. Nurcu networks in politics, media and education

3 Hakan M. Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 145.

4 Mustafa Aydın, 'Süleymanlılık', in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık*, vol. VI (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004).

empower the community in public life. The Nur movement is based on Said Nursi's (1876–1960) Qur'anic exegesis called *Risale-i Nur* (Epistles of Light). Nursi was never a member of a sufi order, although he was influenced by the Nakşibendi order. He focused on strengthening faith through reasoning and contemplation to fight materialism and positivism. His point of philosophical originality was the argument that nature is the manifestation of the various names of God. Thus, there can be no contradiction between religion and science because the former is based on Qur'an, the Word of God, and the latter is the study of nature, God's creation. He argued that even the smallest particle is a perfect design, which makes it a sign and proof of the masterwork of God. Nursi founded the Nur community, in which the central form of religious activity is reading and reproducing the ideas in *Risale-i Nur*.

After Nursi's death in 1960, his followers divided into subgroups and have developed various forms of Islamic activism in politics, publishing, education and media. Some Nur communities focus only on publishing or reading *Risale-i Nur*. Others, such as those organised around *Yeni Asya* newspaper, have supported centre-right parties such as the Democratic Party and True Path Party.

After the 1980s, the followers of the charismatic preacher Fethullah Gülen (b. 1938) became the leading group among Nur communities. The Gülen Community focuses on educational activism by founding summer camps, student dorms, high schools and universities. There are more than 500 high schools, with more than 100,000 students in 91 countries around the world, associated with the Gülen Community.<sup>5</sup> One-fifth of these schools are in the Newly Independent States of Central Asia. This educational institutionalisation is accompanied by a growing media network, which includes STV, a satellite broadcasting television station; *Zaman*, a daily newspaper; and weekly and monthly publications. In the 1990s, Gülen began to emphasise tolerance and interreligious dialogue, meeting with leaders of Christian and Jewish communities, including Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in 1998. Although he preaches a moderate, patriotic and liberal Islamic message, the Turkish state considers his growing national and international influence a threat to secularism, and has pursued legal charges against him. He lives in de facto political asylum in the United States, where he originally travelled due to health problems in 1999.

Milli Görüş (National Vision) forms the ideological basis for the political Islamist movement founded by Necmettin Erbakan, who pursued an Islamist

5 Hakan Yüksel, 'Gülen'in eğitim imparatorluğu', *Yeni Aktüel* 13 (2005).

agenda through a number of political parties, beginning with the National Order Party in 1970 and the National Salvation Party (NSP) in 1972. The NSP and subsequent Islamist parties led by Erbakan (Welfare Party and Virtue Party) were able to get the support of the majority of Islamic circles including the İskenderpaşa branch of the Nakşibendi order and politically active Nur communities, and continued the Milli Görüş political Islamist line. A split developed within the Milli Görüş movement between first-generation leaders loyal to Erbakan, who moved to the newly founded Felicity Party, and a younger generation, with leaders such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, who founded the Justice and Development Party (JDP). The JDP claims to have abandoned the mission of Milli Görüş and has become a conservative democratic party.

Alevi comprise the largest non-Sunni sect in Turkey and are estimated to make up around 15 per cent of the Turkish population. They follow a syncretistic belief combining elements of Shiite Islam, Bektaşî sufism and Turkish shamanism. They are known for religious ceremonies that take place in meeting houses (*cemevi*), accompanied by music, called *semah*. They emphasise gender equality in their rituals as well as their beliefs. Alevi beliefs vary because they are transmitted orally through lineages of holy men (*dede*). Alevi recognise only Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, as the legitimate caliph. They do not adhere to orthodox Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting and pilgrimage. Alevi accept the humanistic and mystical message of the sufi master Hacı Bektaş Veli, who lived in thirteenth-century Anatolia, as the basis of their religious message. Sunni Ottoman rulers suppressed Alevi revolts, and persecuted them in the sixteenth century during the power struggle between the Sunni Ottoman Empire and the Shiite Safavids of Persia. In the 1920s, the Alevi supported the establishment of a secular Turkish Republic in order to acquire religious freedom. In the 1960s and 1970s, many Alevi became active in left-wing politics. The 1980s saw a revival of Alevi identity, but with a variety of definitions. Some Alevi consider their faith to be a Turkish branch of Shiite Islam; others see it as a form of folk Islam, or a sufi order. The Bektaşî order and Alevi community are closely related, in terms of both beliefs and practices. However, one is initiated into a Bektaşî order, while being an Alevi is a status acquired by birth. In contemporary Turkey, Alevi communities are generally regarded as parts of an integrated Alevi–Bektaşî culture.

Despite the retreat of sufi tradition to the private sphere with the establishment of Republican Turkey and its secularisation policies, sufi orders and Islamic communities have made a strong comeback in Turkish civil life. The state both favours and persecutes these orders and communities, depending

on the political circumstances at hand. The Directorate of Religious Affairs is designed to counterbalance their influence in the public arena. However, the strongest ally of secular state is the Alevi community, which is not represented by the Directorate, but debates to include them continue. In this way, Republican Turkey maintains and cautiously controls the Ottoman heritage of religious diversity.

## Contestation and collaboration: women's struggles for empowerment in Turkey

YEŞİM ARAT

Women's struggles for empowerment in Turkey have been intimately linked to the state-initiated modernisation process. In their struggle to expand their opportunities, women have contested and collaborated with one another as well as the modernising state. Women's strategies for ameliorating their predicament evolved in their conflictual relationships both with the state and among themselves. Confrontation alternated with cooperation. Women succeeded in changing laws and perceptions through this dynamic process of conflict and collaboration in a context of globalisation. During this process, they helped transform the relationship of the legendary 'strong Turkish state' to civil society, and pushed the state to cooperate with its constituents.

In this chapter I shall trace the evolution of women's struggles for empowerment with a focus on their relationship to the state. I shall first present an overview of the historical development of the women's movement in Turkey since the Young Turk era, and then will highlight prominent issues, groups and organisations through which women mobilised in the 1980s. My focus will be on the emergence of an organised and oppositional feminist movement since the 1980s and will include the mobilisation of Islamist and Kurdish women's groups in recent decades. The discussion will aim to examine how women's demands coincided or conflicted with and ultimately precipitated the Turkish state's claim to modernity. If modernity requires respect for human rights and democratisation, women have pressured the state to ensure that these values are upheld, and this chapter hopes to throw light on this process.

### Precursors of the Republic

Women's opposition to the state as active political subjects in pursuit of their rights goes back to pre-Republican times. Particularly during the last decade of

I would like to thank the Women's Library and Information Centre in Istanbul for allowing me to use photographs from their archives.

the Ottoman Empire, female advocates, including women from various ethnic groups and religions, played a visible role in public life, demanding new rights and exercising those that they had. They expanded the public space that had opened during the Young Turk era and promoted modernist values, including respect for the individual, that the Republic of Turkey later endorsed.

The issues women articulated in this period played a role in shaping the Republic and continue to resonate in contemporary times. The recovery of this past in new detail and the emphasis of its significance from a feminist perspective were important steps in the construction of contemporary feminist consciousness. Feminists of the 1980s reworked their relationship to the state as political subjects, while exploring the experiences of Muslim women who had initiated a similar challenge in a prior era. The process continues as contemporary researchers explore the histories of feminists from different religious nationalities. Armenian feminists of the early twentieth century recently began receiving due attention. The first generation of feminists protested through journals and cultivated their solidarity through associations, and feminists of later generations followed suit. *Demet* (Istanbul, 1908), *Mehasin* (Istanbul, 1908–9), *Kadın* (Salonica, 1908–9), *Kadın* (Istanbul, 1911–12), *Kadınlık* (Istanbul, 1913) and *Kadımlar Dünyası* (Istanbul, 1913–21 with an interval during the 1914–18 war years) were among the prominent publications that channelled Muslim women's issues and demands in the early twentieth century. *Kadımlar Dünyası* was the publication of a feminist association, Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan (Ottoman Association for the Protection of the Rights of Women) and the most striking among these women's journals, both because of its longevity and its feminist content.

Through their journals and publications, Muslim women demanded legal reforms that would alleviate the prevailing institutions of Islamic marriage, opportunities for education and economic power. They criticised the status of women in their society, much as the feminists of later generations would do. Feminism was a concept they grappled with. Writing in *Kadımlar Dünyası* in 1921, Nimet Cemil welcomed the word 'feminism'. She argued:

There are many important things in every country even though their exact names or the translations do not exist in the national language (like telegraph or automobile or ship). Therefore we do not need terms like 'nisailik' or 'nisaiyyun' [both referring to womanhood in Ottoman]. We prefer to use the word feminism. Let a new word get into our vocabulary, what harm would it bring. The existence and necessity of feminism is undeniable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cited in *Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı 2000 Ajandası* (Istanbul: n. p., 2000) p. 36, from *Kadımlar Dünyası*, 19 February (1921).



These women were feminists to the extent that they believed in the need to expand opportunities for women, and worked to propagate this consciousness.

Women's associations helped cultivate these demands, just as they do today. Some were founded to deliver social services, others organised to help women seek employment in the public realm, others aimed to educate women, still others were affiliated with the political parties of the time. Like feminists of later generations, the women of Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan had connections to feminists abroad, who supported the organisation by contributing articles to *Kadınlar Dünyası* and writing about Ottoman women in their own publications.

The novelist Halide Edip Adivar founded a women's organisation named Teali-i Nisvan (Advancement of Women), which aimed to improve women's status by providing them access to lectures, conferences and concerts, and by teaching them English. The women's rights advocate Nezihe Muhittin was one of the founders of Esirgeme Derneği (Association for Protection), which primarily aimed to help poor women and orphaned girls by teaching them basic skills in sewing and embroidery. The Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan mentioned above was founded in 1913 and was notable both in its aims and activities because of its feminism and its feminist publication *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan primarily aimed to integrate women into social, economic and public life. The programme of the organisation was intended to improve conditions of marriage for women, modernise women's dress, encourage women's employment outside the home and promote the education of women.<sup>2</sup> In line with the programme, some of the members of the organisation opened workplaces to employ women, for example as dressmakers. Another member opened a school for women. The organisation lobbied for women's employment in public institutions and succeeded in getting two women hired by the Istanbul telephone company, where one worked as a company inspector.

In an attempt to modernise the country, in 1917 the Young Turks passed a progressive Family Code that introduced provisions to improve the conditions of the marriage contract for women. This law was a secularising initiative and curbed the extent of religious jurisdiction over women's lives. It allowed the state to oversee marriage and divorce. Even though the Ottoman state was ultimately based on religion, it had a secular authority as well, which would register and dissolve the marriage contract. With this new code, polygamy was legally discouraged; a woman could make it a condition of her marriage contract that her husband could not take other wives.

2 Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı kadın hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994), p. 59.

## Women's struggles for empowerment in Turkey

During the War of Independence (1919–23), Turkish women collaborated with the nascent nationalist cadres. When Izmir was occupied by the Greeks in May 1919, prominent women of the day, such as Halide Edip Adivar and Münevver Saime, addressed the crowds in Istanbul that gathered in mass protests against the occupation. In these public gatherings, women began share the spotlight with men. They delivered fervent speeches and spoke in the name of women, inspiring feelings of nationalism. With these public speeches, they carved a new role for themselves as comrades in arms to the men, and made themselves men's equals in rejecting foreign occupation. They proved their ability to shape public opinion, showing that neither their oratorical skill nor their determination to defend the country was any less formidable than that of their male counterparts. It was in this context that the novelist Halide Edip Adivar actively took part in the War of Independence on the side of the nationalists in defiance of the Ottoman state, attaining the rank of corporal, and later sergeant.

Yet women's collaboration did not mean a lack of critical attention to the problem of patriarchal leadership. Halide Edip was not only the sole woman in the upper circle of the leaders of the War of Independence, but also a rare public figure willing to oppose Mustafa Kemal after the war, and criticise him via her memoirs. In the volume of her memoir named *The Turkish Ordeal*, which covers her experiences in the War of Independence, she wrote her own story of the war as a testimony in opposition to the story that Mustafa Kemal propagated as official history. She had the temerity to portray him as an authoritarian figure with narcissistic tendencies.<sup>3</sup> Though this view was not shared by most women of her generation, Halide Edip's memoirs served as a tribute to women's agency and resistance to subjection. She was not a typical woman of her day, but instead a role model willing to oppose the state, as a dissident engaged in the debate about how her country should be ruled.

### The Republican reforms (1923–80)

With the declaration of the new Republic in 1923, a new phase of women's struggles began. The state undertook reforms that promoted its modernising goals and at the same time radically extended women's opportunities. The reforms responded to many of the demands women had made during the Young Turk era, and initiated a period of women's active collaboration with the state. Kemal and the Republican founding fathers envisioned a secular,

3 Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal* (New York: The Century Co., 1928), pp. 297–8.

and eventually a democratic, Turkish nation-state. In 1926, they dismantled the Islamic legal code and introduced a civil code that was adapted from the Swiss civil code. The introduction of a secular code organising family life in a predominantly Muslim country was revolutionary. Despite some patriarchal biases, the new code recognised equal rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance, which meant that it abolished polygamy, unilateral divorce and unequal inheritance rights for women.

When the civil code was accepted in the parliament, Justice Minister Mahmut Esat explained in detail the state's reasons for seeking it. His argument was radical and daring: 'Laws that derive their principles from religions . . . constitute one of the major factors and reasons impeding progress . . . As a matter of fact, the stipulations of the religious Ottoman code are doubtlessly irreconcilable with contemporary civilization. But it is also obvious that the Ottoman code and similar other religious regulations are not reconcilable with Turkish national life.'<sup>4</sup> In the Muslim context of the day, the leaders of the Turkish Republic aspired to attain the heights of 'contemporary civilisation', namely Western-style modernity. They believed that religion would make this goal unrealisable, and so they restricted its domain.

In this milieu, the Turkish nationalism espoused by the state was not necessarily harmonious with the dictates of a universal religion. This tension was another reason to discard religious law. The nationalist ideologue of Republican Turkey, Ziya Gökalp, constructed history with a most women-friendly view of the pre-Islamic Turks of Central Asia. He helped create a myth claiming that ancient Turkic society had been feminist by tradition. Turkish women, he wrote, had been considered equal to husbands, and had engaged in all aspects of public life along with men. They had ruled fortresses, carried on business transactions, and rode horses on their own. It followed that to be truly national or Turkish modern Turks had to grant equal rights to women. If this meant restricting Islam's arena, then secular law would replace Islamic law. Secularism and nationalism necessitated this move. The state's project of 'reaching the level of contemporary civilisation' happily coincided with women's demands for gender equality.

In 1930, the Kemalist leaders granted women the right to partake in municipal elections. In 1934, they gained the right to elect and be elected to the national assembly. The Republican elite had nationalist reasons for granting suffrage. The prime minister, İsmet İnönü, introduced the amendment

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 197–9.

that would recognise suffrage with the following words: 'Whenever Turkish woman could assume her rightful place and esteem in history, show her influence on the future of the nation, work hand in hand with men in complicated and hard national tasks, only then could the great Turkish nation, with its strength and civilization [be] spread to the world.'<sup>5</sup> He elaborated that as men who had closely witnessed all the needs of the nation, Turkey's leaders believed they had profited from Turkish women's engagement in national affairs and would continue to do so. He argued that women's suffrage would empower the nation and that it was in line with Turkish tradition. Once again nationalist considerations overlapped with women's needs. The prioritisation of the nation-state's communal needs defined women's predicament in public life, and hampered them from seeking rights in their own name.

The Kemalist leaders granted rights to women in a context where the institutionalisation of a secular nation-state was predicated upon a concept of homogeneous national community. This conception was accepted as a dictate of survival. The state viewed demands for group rights – whether from Kurds or Greeks or women – as a threat to the unity of the Republic, and sought to pre-empt them in a nationalist melting pot. The opinion maker Mümtaz Faik greeted female suffrage with a response emblematic of the unitary nationalist vision prevailing at the time:

In Turkey, there is no place for feminist or anti-feminist ideas that only differentiate men and women physically without taking into consideration differences in intelligence, discretion, and capabilities any more. Turkey has not acted with these ideas (i.e. feminist) when it accepted this law (suffrage). We do not recognize a distinction of feminism. We want to have the whole nation benefit from and we will benefit from the capabilities, abilities, intelligence and discretion of all citizens whether they be women or men. In Turkey, the 18 million-strong Turkish nation is moving with only one thought and that is Turkishness.<sup>6</sup>

Thus suffrage was granted to serve the Turkish nation-state, not the interests of women. When those interests ceased to overlap, those of the nation-state would prevail.

The extension of suffrage to women was also instrumental in the construction of Mustafa Kemal's leadership cult. When the International Women's Association decided to have its Twelfth International Women's Congress in

5 *Zabıt Ceridesi* (Parliamentary Records), term IV, December 1934, p. 82.

6 Quoted in Aysen Doyran, 'Kadınlar milletvekili seçilirken', *Toplumsal Tarih* (March 1997), p. 31.

Istanbul to celebrate Turkish women's suffrage, the state issued a set of commemorative stamps for the occasion. The stamp with Mustafa Kemal's picture was accompanied by the phrase 'Liberator of Turkish women'.<sup>7</sup> The title reflected an attitude shared by the men who had issued the stamps and the women who gained the right.

A most prominent woman promoting the leadership cult was Afet İnan, one of Kemal's adopted daughters. She wrote prolifically highlighting his achievements, particularly those relating to women's liberation. In her writing, she depicted Kemal as the leader who had single-handedly won the War of Independence, established a new nation, founded a new state and pioneered a series of radical reforms liberating women. She wrote that the 'progressive and revolutionary ideas of Atatürk' were behind women's suffrage and that Turkish women were indebted to him.<sup>8</sup> Afet İnan's role was important because she helped establish the official ideology and history of the Republic, and through her work she precipitated the discourse of the veneration of Atatürk. In the following decades, women were allies of the state and, until the 1980s, did not challenge the remaining restrictions to which they were subject.

The formal, laudatory style of the day contributed to the reification of Mustafa Kemal. In its magazine issued on the tenth anniversary of the Republic, the Turkish Women's Association declared that 'Turkish Womanhood, which owes the eternal honour of Turkishness and history to her Gazi, sincerely wishes that the Great Leader not depart from this world and remembers her Great Liberator who gave her life with long-lasting love'.<sup>9</sup> Writing in the same issue, Halide Nusret claimed: 'Mustafa Kemal, just as he saved and gave life to the Turkish nation that was sentenced to death with the Sèvres Treaty, just as he reinstalled its liberty, sovereignty and honour, reinstalled the rights, liberty and honour of the Turkish woman by saving her from degradation and slavery.'<sup>10</sup> Even the famous Turkish feminist Nezihe Muhittin, whose attempts to found the Women's Republican Party in 1923 were thwarted by the state elites, dedicated her book *Turkish Woman*, with self-effacing words, to the 'Great Guide', Mustafa Kemal.<sup>11</sup>

7 Aslı Davaz, '24 Nisan 1933, 1 Kongre 15 Pul', *Pazartesi* (May 2005), p. 16.

8 Afetinan, *Herkesin bir dünyası var* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1958,) pp. 62, 50.

9 *Kadın Sesi*, 29 October 1933, p. 3.

10 Halide Nusret, 'Kadın: inkılapın evvel ve sonra', *Kadın Sesi*, 29 October 1933, p. 7.

11 Nezihe Muhittin, *Türk kadını* (Istanbul: Nümune Matbaası 1931), p. 4; Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız inkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, kadınlar halk fırkası, kadın birliği* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003).

Public veneration of Atatürk as the person who liberated women underplayed women's agency. He had indeed been a critical figure in the political realisation of women's rights, but women had also been fighting for their rights, writing and organising to have their voices heard. They had fought along with men in the wars that led to the establishment of the new Republic. When the Republic was founded, women's attempts to speak in their own names and demand civil as well as political rights for themselves were foiled. The political leaders obstructed Nezihe Muhittin's attempt to establish a women's party, which sought to integrate women into the public and political life of the country in 1923. Instead, she was asked to organise a women's association. The Woman's Association hosted the International Women's Congress that met in Istanbul in 1935. After the meeting, the regime closed down the association, most likely because, in an independent move, it allied itself with Britain and France in opposition to Germany prior to the Second World War. The political elite, who preferred to adopt a more cautious stance, did not approve.<sup>12</sup> A pact had been made between the Republican state and women: in return for docile allegiance to the state, women received opportunities to expand their role in society.

Under this Republican pact, women's status improved. They benefited from the secular legal codes as well as the opportunities the Republic offered, particularly in the areas of education and employment. The female literacy rate, about 10 per cent in 1935, was 25 per cent by 1955 and about 55 per cent in 1980.<sup>13</sup> Women moved into professions that required higher education, such as medicine, law and teaching, and formed a striking critical mass. By the 1970s, about one-third of scientific workers and professionals were women. At the time these figures compared very favourably not only with the rest of the Middle East, but with Europe and the United States as well.

Yet many other indicators revealed that women remained second-class citizens in the Republic. Even though the literacy rate had improved compared to the early years of the Republic, almost half of Turkey's women were still illiterate in the late 1970s. While one-third of doctors or lawyers in Istanbul were women, there were gender discrepancies both in secondary and higher education, and these were exacerbated by urban-rural differences. As late as 1980, 9.5% of the male and 6.8% of the female population had graduated from

12 Zafer Toprak, '1935 İstanbul Uluslararası Feminizm Kongresi ve barış', *Toplum-Düşün* 24 (1986).

13 State Institute of Statistics, [www.die.gov.tr/ist\\_gostergeler.pdf](http://www.die.gov.tr/ist_gostergeler.pdf).

junior high school, and those graduating from senior high school were 8% of men and 6.7% of women in Turkey. Only 4% of males and 2% of females were university graduates.<sup>14</sup> In 1980, 36 per cent of the economically active population was female. However, about 88% of this group worked in the agricultural sector as unpaid family labourers, with 4.6% working in industry and 7.5% in services; 46% of women were housewives. Only 4.5% of registered property was in women's names.<sup>15</sup> The percentage of women in parliament had not risen beyond 4.5%, a level reached when Atatürk had appointed eighteen women to the parliament back in 1935.

Despite this grim disparity, women did not wage a serious protest against state discourse and practice towards women until the early 1980s. The three or four decades following the granting of suffrage were a period of containment in women's struggles for empowerment. Women who could do so explored the new opportunities and struggled to normalise the new roles they eagerly adopted. In the context of internal migration, urbanisation and social transformation, the first generation of educated women became successful professionals, serving as role models and entrenching the roles they carved out for their gender. In their struggle, those who were vocal and public used a language of 'othering', which underlined that they were liberated by the Kemalist reforms while those who could not benefit from the reforms were not. The second generation of women in the Republic began to be critical of the state of affairs, but their criticism was channelled through a leftist political activism that dismissed any feminist inclination. Women who could not access these opportunities struggled with their own predicaments individually.

Within the leftist ranks, in 1975, women organised around the İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Progressive Women's Association, İKD), but the members of this organisation did not assume a feminist ideology. They worked within a Marxist paradigm, where class struggle was assumed to be the cause of women's deprivation.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the İKD signalled the emergence of the awareness that women had problems that required separate organising. After the military coup of 1980, the state closed the organisation. Feminists began to organise independently and many former İKD members joined the feminist ranks as committed activists.

14 Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Temel Kadın Göstergeleri 1978–1993* (Ankara: DİE, 1994), p. 27.

15 DİE, 1955–90 Genel Nüfus Sayımları, in TC Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, *Türkiye'de Kadın*: (Ankara n. p. 2001), pp. 77, 81.

16 Emel Akal Aslan, 'Kadın ve siyaset aykırı bir örnek: İKD', in Aynur İlyasoğlu and Necla Akgökçe (eds.), *Yerli bir feminizme doğru* (Istanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2001), pp. 455–84.

### Resurgence of feminist contestation (1980–2005)

The 1980 military coup cracked down on both leftist and rightist movements in an attempt to depoliticise Turkish society. In the context of this ideological vacuum, the second-wave feminism of the West began to penetrate Turkey's borders. Women began to redefine their relationship to the state, challenging the notion that they had been liberated by the founding fathers of the Republic. In the early 1980s, some professional middle-class, middle-aged women, most of whom had been associated with leftist activism prior to the coup, began reading feminist writings from the West and gathered together in what they would later term 'consciousness-raising' groups. The primary aim of this new wave of feminist organising was to foster acceptance of women as individuals in control of their lives, not as mere members of communal groups in which men had higher status and more rights.

The feminist activism of the 1980s distanced itself from the state. Feminist pioneers were sceptical of the 'strong Turkish state', fearing that it would muffle women's voices and co-opt their challenge. They aimed to enhance their feminist consciousness and propagate it independently of the state. They located themselves in relation to different feminist ideologies such as radical feminism or socialist feminism, shared their experiences through journals such as the radical feminist *feminist* and socialist feminist *Kaktüs*, and made themselves publicly visible through political statements and street demonstrations. Ideological debates kindled feminist commitments, as women carved different feminist identities for themselves. In addition to cleavages among feminists on the left, women who were traditionally allies with the state positioned themselves as 'Kemalist feminists', in opposition to radical and socialist feminists, and began criticising the state for failing to improve women's status. Kemalist feminists were inclined to collaborate with the state to improve women's conditions, whereas the more radical feminists were deeply suspicious of statist measures.

In 1986, feminists organised a petition campaign to have the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Turkey had signed in 1985, implemented. They began criticising the Turkish legal framework, particularly the civil code and the penal code, and thus made a radical departure from the entrenched assumption that Turkish women had achieved equal rights under the law. Feminists of diverse persuasions united over their dissatisfaction with the legal framework.

Radical feminists brought the issues of women's sexuality, sexual harassment and domestic violence towards women, which had been taboos in public





Fig. 15.1 Demonstration against article 438 of the penal code, which reduced sentence if a victim of rape were a prostitute  
[courtesy of the Women's Library and Information Centre Archive]

discourse, into public debate. In 1987, they took to the streets for the first time in an unprecedented protest to condemn domestic violence. The protest politicised a major problem that the Turkish public had ignored, and defined a critical issue around which women in Turkey would continue to organise. Violence towards women, and particularly domestic violence, was to become a priority issue for feminists in Turkey.

In their attempts to intervene in public debate and make themselves visible, they experimented with new forms of protests besides mass demonstrations. After the protest against domestic violence in 1987, feminist activists organised an open-air festival in Kariye, in front of a Byzantine church in Istanbul. In 1988, they put together a temporary museum exhibiting women's subjugation in daily life. In 1989, they held a purple needle campaign, in which feminists sold needles for women to protest and protect themselves against sexual harassment.

The scepticism that characterised the relationship between feminists and the state reached a climax when, in 1990, the government established the Directorate of Women's Status and Problems in the context of CEDAW obligations. Even though there were divisions among them, and some were more



Fig. 15.2 The banner reads: 'Our bodies are ours, our labour is ours, our identity is ours' [courtesy of the Women's Library and Information Centre Archive]

sceptical than others, most feminists opposed the Directorate because they were concerned that it would co-opt independent feminist activism. The Directorate was supposed to gather all independent women's organisations under its umbrella, which feminists found unacceptable.<sup>17</sup> After the establishment of the Directorate, the relationship between feminists and the state evolved into a more conciliatory one, mostly due to feminist bureaucrats who filled the Directorate's ranks and worked within the state to improve women's conditions.

The changing relationship between the state and feminists in the 1990s and beyond allowed women to extract resources from the state and push back its patriarchal frontiers. Even the more radical feminists collaborated with as well as challenged the state. They realised that, to help themselves, they had to begin by changing the laws and the policies of the state. Under conditions of scarce resources, they tried to channel state funds for women's issues.

Feminists gained the self-confidence and acquired the skills to institutionalise their activities. The unconventional, radical protests of the 1980s, such as the needle campaign and the temporary museum, gave way to the

17 Selma Acuner, '90'lı yıllar ve resmi düzeyde kurumsallaşmanın doğuş aşamaları', in Aksu Bora and Asena Günel (eds.), *90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).

establishment of more conventional civil society organisations, such as foundations, associations and even firms. Women's organisations, which had been about 10 in number between 1973 and 1982 and 64 between 1983 and 1992, multiplied, reaching more than 350 by 2004.<sup>18</sup> They encompassed different professional and community affiliations, including women's groups in bar associations, neighbourhood organisations away from the cities of Istanbul or Ankara, and gay and lesbian groups.

As the movement grew, the cleavages between women's groups became layered along religious and ethnic lines. Women associated not merely as Turkish women of different secular feminist persuasions, but also as Islamist women or Kurdish women of different feminist and non-feminist persuasions. This diversification led to further confrontation as well as collaboration between different groups of women on various issues.

Many of the new organisations began acquiring funds from abroad. These included the women's library, associations to fight against violence towards women, the women's journal *Pazartesi*, the association to promote women in politics KA-DER, and the women's communication network Uçan Süpürge. Local embassies and consulates of countries where feminist politics had left their imprint on socio-political life helped women organise, by offering their services and limited funds to feminists who wanted to convene conferences, bring feminist experts from abroad and publish booklets to propagate their ideas.

Feminist research and findings proliferated in the 1990s. Women's studies centres and academic programmes opened in universities, generating new information and studies on women. The Istanbul University Women's Research and Education Centre, established in 1990, the Ankara University Women's Studies Centre (KASAUM), established in 1993, and the Middle East Technical University Gender and Women's Studies Centre, established in 1994, all became important loci of feminist activism. These centres did not merely open women's studies programmes for students, but also undertook education programmes for women in political parties, trade unions and voluntary women's associations to educate women about their rights and raise feminist consciousness. The centres educated the laywomen of women's associations and provided professional advice for their activities. Women's studies centres opened not merely in large metropolitan universities but also in universities of peripheral regions such as Çukurova and Van. Individual academics and feminists began receiving foreign funds to pursue projects on women and their

18 *Türkiye'de Kadın Örgütleri Rehberi* (Ankara: Uçan Süpürge Yayınları, 2003).

problems. Those who were members of civil society organisations used these projects to strengthen their respective organisations. The Directorate that feminists had initially opposed helped coordinate fund giving and information gathering under the direction of feminist bureaucrats who were sensitive to women's needs. Feminist knowledge spread within the media and infiltrated into government structures and political parties.

As the feminist movement diversified, became organised in multiple groups and infiltrated the state, international pressure on the state to improve women's status increased. Both the CEDAW framework and Turkey's application for accession to the European Union (EU) precipitated state responses to women's demands. The regular reports Turkey submitted to the CEDAW committee for review exposed the country's record on women's rights to the critical evaluation of the international community. The election of a Turkish feminist professor, Feride Acar, to the presidency of the Expert Members Committee of CEDAW cultivated Turkey's organic links to the group. The process educated not only the bureaucrats, but also ministers responsible for women's issues, who then lobbied for change.

Turkey has also had to meet the requirements regarding male–female equality that are part of the political criteria established in Copenhagen as a necessary, if not sufficient, condition of membership in the EU. The yearly reports on gender equality prepared by the European Parliament or the European Commission explicitly stated that candidate states had to achieve gender equality to be eligible for membership. Women in Turkey benefited from this requirement and referred to it in their local lobbying activities. After Turkey became a candidate country for membership to the EU in 1999, the Turkish state committed itself to improve women's status in the National Plan and prepared to meet the European accession plan.

To maximise benefits from this development, women in Turkey made alliances with the European Women's Lobby, an umbrella organisation bringing together about four thousand women's organisations from twenty-five European countries.<sup>19</sup> In 2004, women's organisations in Turkey joined the European women's lobby. A Turkish feminist bureaucrat/academic, Selma Acuner, was elected to its executive committee. The Turkish women's movement has thus been able to strengthen its international links, and in turn use this strength to ameliorate women's position at home. This development has empowered women against the state, and allowed them to benefit from the

19 Lydia la Riviere-Zijdel, 'From Turkey to Belgium and Back', paper presented at the conference Raising Mutual Understanding: Women in Turkey and the European Union, Istanbul, 13 September 2004, p. 1.

leverage of the EU. The internet greatly facilitated this process of empowerment by allowing feminist activists in Turkey to link with one another as well as with feminists in different countries. I shall now focus on issues on which women collaborated most extensively and that resonated most in society.

### The civil code

The 1926 civil code, despite being radical for its time and for the Muslim context in which it was introduced, nevertheless reflected the patriarchal underpinnings of its day. The main criticism feminists levelled against it was the secondary role that women were expected to assume in the marriage union. According to the 1926 law, the husband was the head of the family. The code stated that men would earn for the family, decide on the place of family residence, represent the marriage and expect their wives to be helpers. In cases of divorce, the law recognised separate ownership of property, which in practice left divorced women in dire poverty since most had been housewives whose unremunerated labour at home subsidised men's earnings outside the family and the property men could buy in their own names.

There had been some attempts to amend the civil code since the 1950s, but it was during the early 1980s that feminists in Turkey began criticising the code from a feminist perspective. Different groups of feminists, radical as well as liberal, as well as some women who did not identify as feminists, converged on the need to amend the civil code. The Association of Women Jurists (Türk Hukukçu Kadınlar Derneği) crafted a draft to ground the law on egalitarian terms. Women used multiple channels to make their demands heard by the state. The demand for amendment gained momentum with the petition campaign of the Istanbul University Centre for Research and Implementation of Women's Issues in 1993. The Women's Library and Information Centre and the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation collaborated to support the campaign, which gathered more than 120,000 signatures for presentation to the president of the Grand National Assembly. In 1994, the government formed a commission to have a draft law prepared. The organisation Women for Women's Human Rights adopted the cause and mobilised international support. Over time, different groups picked up the issue to keep it in the public agenda and to shape public opinion on the subject. Women demonstrated when it was time to commemorate the civil code, they brought it up during the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March, they wrote about it, gave interviews about it to televisions and newspapers and organised panels on it. The women's association KA-DER, established in 1997 to

promote women in politics, endorsed the cause of reforming the code as well. The Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems also supported this campaign, organising forums and symposiums to generate public support.

The international context precipitated the amendment. Turkey had put reservations on certain articles of CEDAW because they contradicted the patriarchal clauses of the 1926 civil code. By the year 2000, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had reviewed progress reports from Turkey and reiterated its criticisms of the inegalitarian clauses in the Turkish civil code. After the Beijing World Conference on Women, Turkey prepared a National Action Plan to bring its legislative framework in line with CEDAW recommendations and promised to withdraw its reservations on those articles of the convention that contradicted Turkish civil code.

Along with the CEDAW framework, Turkey's bid for EU membership facilitated the amendment. To be able to meet the political criteria for membership, Turkey presented a National Programme in 2001. The National Programme recognised the amendment of the civil code as a short-term obligation and explicitly stated that the concept of a family head would be removed from the civil code.

By 2000, local feminist groups were organised and connected with one another through the internet to oversee the passage of the amendments. The question of property in the civil code caused much controversy. Feminists wanted to replace the separation of property regime found in the original document with a new one based on the sharing of property. In cases of divorce, women would be able to share the property acquired during marriage. Thus, even when they were homemakers without pay, their unremunerated labour would be recognised. When the Justice Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly rejected the proposed change in March 2001, feminists organised a national coalition to reverse this development. More than a hundred independent women's groups and associations, covering a range of women from different regions, professions, classes and priorities, were involved in the campaign.<sup>20</sup> Connected through the internet, the women's platform resorted to conventional lobbying tactics, most of them quite new for the women involved, issuing press statements and visiting the members of the Justice Commission. The amendment was accepted in parliament with the new shared property regime at the end of 2001. Feminists continue to protest

20 Ela Anıl et al., *Turkish Civil and Penal Code Reforms from a Gender Perspective: The Success of Two Nationwide Campaigns* (Istanbul: Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways, Stampa, 2005), p. 7.

because the new property regime applies only to marriages that take place after the amendment passed, and are working to have the law cover marriages conducted before the amendment.

### Violence against women and institution building

In the 1980s, feminists prioritised the fight against domestic violence and in the 1990s they began building institutions around this cause. A group of feminist women founded the Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınma Vakfı) in Istanbul in 1990. The foundation was established with the explicit aim of opening a women's shelter that would be run by feminists and operate on feminist principles. Mor Çatı made several unsuccessful attempts to secure funding from local municipalities with the condition that feminists be free to run the shelter, and finally turned to the state. Despite funding from the state, the shelter could be kept open only for about five years. In September 2005, the Beyoğlu district administration provided a shelter for Mor Çatı to run, which they accepted quite willingly.

Independent of the shelter itself, Mor Çatı was crucial because it was a symbol of feminist opposition to domestic violence and a major voice in feminist organising in the country. The foundation provided counselling services to women affected by domestic violence. Particularly in the early 1990s when it led the struggle against violence towards women, members of Mor Çatı participated in conferences and panel discussions, and gave interviews in television channels and newspapers, carving out a space for feminist concerns in public life at a time when feminism did not have the legitimacy that it has more recently gained.

Feminists in Ankara founded Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı (Women's Solidarity Foundation) and Altındağ Kadın Danışma Merkezi (Altındağ Women's Consulting Centre) a year after Mor Çatı with the similar purpose of opening a shelter. Their shelter likewise ran for about seven years before closing down due to financial difficulties, and they too disseminated a consciousness about domestic violence and feminist values at large.

The fight against violence was not confined to the western regions of Turkey. Feminist projects undertaken in the west generated a synergy. In 1997, a group of women led by Nebahat Akkoç founded Ka-Mer (Women's Centre) in the primarily Kurdish city of Diyarbakır. Members of this group had participated in a research project on women in east and south-east Anatolia initiated by the feminist advocacy group the Women's Human Rights Project, and realised through the interviews they conducted that they could do something to fight

the oppression of women in their own region.<sup>21</sup> At its inception, the centre received help from Mor Çatı Women's Centre Foundation in Istanbul, which sent representatives to Diyarbakır to relate their activities, and later brought women from Diyarbakır to a short training course in Istanbul at Mor Çatı.

Ka-Mer was strikingly successful in responding to local needs. To make women conscious of their rights in a context where violence of many kinds was omnipresent, the centre organised feminist consciousness-raising groups that lasted about thirteen weeks. The women of Ka-Mer initiated an emergency aid line to reach women exposed to violence, provided women with psychological counselling and helped them find jobs. They recognised the need to foster a milieu where women could have lives outside their families and opened a social centre for women to socialise and attend conferences. They saw the need to offer non-sexist child-care that cultivated non-violent behaviour, and opened a child centre.<sup>22</sup>

Ka-Mer soon grew beyond its Diyarbakır limits and opened centres in other provinces of the region. In 2003, Ka-Mer women developed the Project to Develop Methods in the Struggle against Killings Committed in the Name of 'Honor' in the South-east and East Anatolia Regions. With this project they aimed to reach 'women who are likely to lose their lives as a result of killings committed in the name of "honor"'.<sup>23</sup> The project was carried out in thirteen provinces of the region: Diyarbakır, Mardin, Urfa, Bingöl, Batman, Hakkari, Muş, Van, Siirt, Bitlis, Adıyaman, Malatya and Şırnak, all in the eastern periphery of the country.

In 1998, a national network of women's organisations against violence was established through the Assembly of Women's Shelters and Solidarity Centres. The 2004 meeting of the assembly brought together about seventy organisations that worked against violence. The assembly allowed women to express demands for the prevention of different types of violence, including rape, incest, sexual assault and honour killings, as well as domestic violence. The annual conventions became a medium of communication and networking among women.

Feminist efforts to create shelters met with obstacles, but their example led the state to recognise the need to protect victims of domestic violence. The Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu (Institution of Social Services

21 Nebahat Akkoç, 'Diyarbakır Ka-Mer'in kuruluş hikayesi ve yürüttüğü çalışmalar', in Bora and Günel (eds.), *90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm*, p. 206.

22 Ibid., pp. 207–15.

23 KA-MER, *Keşke dememek için: no more 'if only's'* (Diyarbakır: Berdan Matbaası, 2004), p. 112.



and Protection of Children) opened houses for women exposed to violence, which numbered only thirteen by 2004, yet pointed to the public recognition of a problem that had long been ignored. In 2004, a law was passed that required municipalities with over fifty thousand residents to open shelters for women and children who needed to be protected from domestic violence. In 2004, mainstream organisations and politicians launched two major campaigns to fight violence towards women: one named End to Domestic Violence organised by the major daily *Hürriyet*, the television channel CNN Turk, Foundation for Contemporary Education (Çağdaş Eğitim Vakfı) and the Governorship of Istanbul; and the other named End to Violence towards Women, organised by the United Nations Population Fund and the Directorate of Women's Status. These campaigns were significant because they showed that the issue has become a priority not only for feminists or the state, but for major media and civil society groups, and these groups are able to form coalitions to fight violence against women.

### Violence against women and the penal code

In fighting against violence towards women, feminists challenged the state because of its legislative structure. After much lobbying of the minister of state responsible for women and family, and under criticisms levied against the state at CEDAW committee reviews, the government passed the Law for the Protection of the Family in 1998. This law allowed the courts to protect the spouse exposed to domestic violence by giving the public prosecutor the right to file a suit against the guilty partner and prevent further harassment of the victim at home or in the workplace.

However, the legal framework in general was far from effective at deterring violence against women. Until its amendment in 2005, the Turkish criminal code considered sexual crimes committed against women as crimes against public morality and social order, rather than as direct violations of individual women's rights. In cases of rape and sexual attacks on women or honour killings, punishments were not prohibitive. When rapists married their victims, their punishments were deferred. The law allowed extenuating circumstances of tradition and undue provocation to reduce the punishments given in cases of 'custom' or honour killings. Women were punished more harshly than men in cases of adultery.

Women had prioritised the amendment of the civil code and campaigned for it at least for two decades, but their struggle for the amendment of the penal code was swifter. The effective organisation of women's groups and the need

to conform to the egalitarian principles of the EU legal framework brought about quick results. After the new civil code became effective in January 2002, feminists focused on the shortcomings of the penal code and utilised all their acquired skills and power to make sure that the reforms they wanted were enacted.

By 2002, when the penal code reform process began in parliament, feminists in Turkey had gained enough experience not only to make their demands heard, but also to ensure that the state responded to them. Initially, they formed a working group, proposed more than thirty amendments for the new code and began their lobbying efforts. An early election decision taken by the governing coalition created a new set of opportunities and obstacles for the realisation of their proposed amendments. The interim minister of justice, Aysel Çelikel, was a feminist law professor who had initiated an egalitarian draft proposal for the civil code and the penal code. Çelikel formed a commission that included women working on the penal code, and had it prepare a new draft code. However, after the 2002 elections brought the Justice and Development Party to power, the new government formed its own committee and ignored that draft.

In response, feminist collaboration evolved into a more vigorous and focused campaign. A group of thirty civil society organisations, calling themselves the Women's Platform on the Penal Code, worked relentlessly to ensure that the changes women wanted would be reflected in the code. The members of the platform displayed the range and diversity of women's activism in the country. The coalition included women's organisations in the eastern Anatolian city of Van as well as those from Istanbul, Izmir, Çanakkale and Edirne. The Amnesty International Turkey branch, gay lesbian groups such as KAOS GL and LAMBDA, and the more traditional women's groups such as the Republican Women's Association and the Turkish Women's Union joined the platform. The feminist non-governmental organisation Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways coordinated the activities of the platform.

When Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan made a last-minute intervention to criminalise adultery through the code in 2005, women's groups set their media and European networks into immediate action. In response to the domestic and international pressure the platform activated, the government retracted the proposal. Compared to women's organisations, the press was slower and less effective in defending its rights and failed to stop the inclusion of articles restricting press freedom in the reformed penal code.

The new code was important because it proposed a new liberal, as opposed to the earlier communitarian, framework, to assess women's rights in society.

According to the new code, crimes related to sexual violence are now defined as ‘crimes against individuals’ rather than as ‘crimes against public morality’. Sex crimes are now punished with heavier sentences, and the new code criminalises sexual harassment as well as sex attacks and rape. Marital rape and harassment at the workplace – neither of which was recognised as an offence before the amendment – are now both recognised as crimes. The reformed code also increases penalties for domestic violence as well as sexual violence towards children. A number of discriminatory articles in the old code have been removed, including the article that assumed that consent could exist in cases of child abuse, the article that allowed for the deferral of punishment when a rapist married his victim and articles that discriminate between married and single women or virgins and sexually active women.

Feminists, who achieved the passage of twenty-four amendments out of the thirty that they campaigned for, argue that some inegalitarian provisions remain. Even though honour killings are now more heavily punished, they are not considered to be aggravated homicide. Feminists also argue that the law must include a more effective ban on virginity testing, and the consent of the woman concerned should be required if testing is a necessity. Feminist activists have also argued that consensual sexual relations between minors should not be criminalised and that discrimination based on sexual orientation should be explicitly recognised as a crime. Even though women continue to contest shortcomings in the legal code, the state has nonetheless made extensive concessions to feminist activists and thereby changed the way it relates to women.

### Demands for representation and KA-DER

Women constitute roughly one-third of academics, doctors and lawyers in Turkey. Yet, in formal politics, they have been invisible. Since the extension of suffrage in 1934, the percentage of women in parliament never increased beyond 4.5%. After the 2002 elections, there were 24 women in the 550-member parliament. The proportions were even lower at the local electoral levels. Under these circumstances, feminists have organised to increase the number of women representatives in politics. Despite their success in the amendment of the legal framework, they have been largely unsuccessful in increasing the number of elected female politicians; nor have they persuaded the government to establish a quota for women.

In 1997, a group of mostly feminist professional women came together to establish an organisation to help promote women in electoral politics.

KA-DER, the Association to Support and Educate Women Candidates, started with the goal of promoting at least 10% women representatives in parliament. From its inception, the organisation tried to bring together women of different ideological backgrounds, including those who do not identify as feminists. A major founding principle of the organisation was its non-partisan approach to different political persuasions and its commitment to promote women from different political parties. With its 12 branches, 8 initiative groups in different provinces and about 2,500 members, KA-DER is a conspicuous national organisation by Turkish standards. It is attractive to a large constituency because it pursues the empowerment of female from diverse backgrounds, at the local as well as the national level. Both the journalists in its own ranks and female reporters and columnists in the media have collaborated to promote KA-DER. The press has widely covered its activities, seminars and projects. When President Clinton visited Turkey in 1999, KA-DER was one of the few civil society organisations and the only women's organisation that he met.

The aim to bring together women of different persuasions to help women standing for different political parties has caused internal strains among KA-DER membership. Tension between secular and Islamist women, as well as between secular women who felt threatened by Islamists and those who felt they could collaborate with them, marked the activities of the organisation. Conflicts between different branches and different regions also undermined more effective collaboration, but the organisation pursued its goals with determination, bringing Islamist, Kurdish and Alevi women together with those from more politically established groups in electoral campaigns.<sup>24</sup>

Since its 1999 electoral campaign, KA-DER has promoted a quota for women in politics. The European Council's recommendation of 2003, which advised member states to promote women in politics and urged for quotas, helped KA-DER launch its campaign for a 30% quota for women in political representation. With the help of the Ankara University Research and Practice Centre for Women's Problems, the Turkish Women's Union and the Association of Republican Women, KA-DER created a legislative proposal with amendments that would initiate a quota in Turkey. Feminists in the universities as well as civil society organisations helped KA-DER build a coalition. KA-DER had the professional links and could muster the technical expertise to propose the legal changes required in the constitution, political parties

24 KA-DER. *Kadın Başımıza: Yerel yönetimlerde kadın katılımı ve temsili kampanyası* (Ankara: Yalçın Matbaa, 2004).

and electoral laws for a minimum of 30% representation for either men or women.<sup>25</sup>

The government, including the female minister of state responsible for Women and Family, Nimet Çubukçu, was restive. The minister publicly argued that quotas should be used at the discretion of political parties and not enforced through national legislation, which in effect meant keeping the status quo. Despite the feminist-friendly rhetoric of almost all ministers occupying the position, the required changes have never been made.

The minister has not yet changed her position, but feminist activists have continued to use their European links to pressure the government to adopt a quota. The report presented to the European parliament by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in April 2005 'on the role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political activities' notes the low rate of women's political representation, and suggests in article 22 'the adoption of a mandatory quota system combined with a zipper placement on the election lists as the best possible way to improve women's participation in Turkish politics in the short term, [and] proposes that the relevant Turkish laws be changed accordingly'.<sup>26</sup>

KA-DER had little success in increasing the number of women elected to local and national office, but it has propagated feminist values in Turkey. It is perhaps the most visible women's group and a major locus of feminist activism in the country. The organisation enhances its legitimacy through the professional support it can command from academics as well as the media in its projects to provide education to political candidates, organise conferences and extend services to female candidates. With its relatively large network and professionalism, it gave critical support to the major campaigns organised to amend the civil code and the penal code.

### Demand for religious recognition: Islamist women

Most of the feminist activists who demanded legal reform, an end to domestic violence and political representation did so within the established secular context of the Turkish Republic. However, other women challenged the nature of this secular framework, in the 1980s and since. As the influence of Islam became

25 KA-DER. *Eşit temsil için cinsiyet kotası: Erkek demokrasiden gerçek demokrasiye* (Istanbul: Acar Matbaacılık, 2005).

26 Emine Bozkurt, 'On the Role of Women in Turkey in Social, Economic and Political Activities', unpublished report, 2004/2215(INI), European Parliament, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, 2005.

more pronounced in Turkish politics, many women were attracted to Islam. Various factors and processes helped spread Islamist ideology. The problems of mass migration to urban areas, the inability of the state to distribute the fruits of modernisation fairly and the influence of the Iranian Revolution all contributed to the strengthening of Islam and women's involvement in it.

The appeal of Islamist teachings led women to adopt the headscarf in greater numbers. The practice conflicted with state policies in higher education. Women who wanted to cover their heads and attend universities precipitated a confrontation with the state, which banned head covering in universities. Most of these covered women did not call themselves feminists, though some did, and many did not work to expand women's opportunities. However, most of them covered their heads out of personal choice, not because they were forced to do so by their families or the Islamist groups who subsidised their education.<sup>27</sup> Many among this new generation of Islamist women had attended secular state schools and believed in basic secular rights, individual autonomy and self-expression. Although the constitutional court decisions against them questioned their allegiance to the secular state, these women by and large had adopted the fundamental principles of the Republic. They wanted a secular university education so that they could have a profession and partake in public life. The Republic rather than Islamist teachings encouraged them to do so. They did not want polygamy or unilateral divorce. Even those few who were sympathetic to Islamic law conceived of one where liberal civil rights were respected.<sup>28</sup>

Women who wanted to attend universities with head covering engaged in numerous cases of civil disobedience. They protested in front of university gates, organised demonstrations outside the universities, wrote about their victimisation in newspapers, journals and novels, and formed platforms to promote their right to wear the headscarf. Through the monthly journal *Kadın Kimliği* (Identity of Woman), which began in 1995, a group of Muslim women who covered their heads aimed to nurture their Islamist identities and also engage in a dialogue with women who did not cover their heads. The Istanbul Gökkuşuğu Kadın Platformu (Rainbow Istanbul Platform of Women, 1995–8) and Başkent Kadın Platformu, Ankara (Capital Platform of Women, 1996–) brought together Islamist women's associations and women's committees in Islamist foundations. These platforms helped increase the public visibility of headscarved women and develop their presence in civil life.

27 Yeşim Arat, *Rethinking Islam and Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

28 Ibid.

Other Islamist women channelled their protest at the secular framework into their engagement in Islamist political parties. In about six years, women working for the Islamist Refah Party registered about a million women as members of their party, an unprecedented figure in a country where female party membership is negligible. Many among these leaders in the party ranks were embittered by the ban on the head covering, because it restricted their opportunities for education and employment.

Islamist women's demands led to divisions among women who were reconciled to the secular framework of the Republic. Some of them resented Islamist women, others felt threatened by them, and some defended Islamist women's claims to their headscarves.

Many secular women perceived the emergence of Islamist groups and headscarved female activists as a threat. Particularly in the 1990s, when the Refah Party became the leader of the coalition government (in 1996), groups of secular women protested against the Islamists. In 1994, 300 female academics sent a letter to the prime minister and the head of the Higher Education Council complaining that the number of female students entering classrooms wearing headscarves had increased despite the legal prohibition.<sup>29</sup> In 1997, secular women organised a Women's March Against Shariat attended by fifty-two civil society and political party organisations in Ankara.<sup>30</sup> They argued that the Islamist groups would enact Islamic law and restrict women's rights.

Other secular women and some secular feminists, while wary of the Islamists' potential to restrict women's rights, support women's right to define Islam on their own terms, particularly concerning the issue of headscarves. These feminists respect Islamists' right to shape their religious beliefs because they value women's agency. They also argue that women should have a right to university education and participation in public life, regardless of whether or not they wear headscarves. Perhaps ironically, they claim a common denominator in their position against the state, which historically promoted women's rights as part of its Westernising efforts. Even though Westernisation opened a vital opportunity space, secular feminists, like Islamists, have been critical of the attitude that the state knew women's interests better than women themselves. Secular feminists sought substantive gender equality while Islamist women sought extension of religious rights. On the other hand, both Islamist feminists and secular feminists contest male patriarchy in their respective realms. Islamist women claim that they want to recognise no authority above them

<sup>29</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 28 March 1994.

<sup>30</sup> *Milliyet*, 16 February 1997.

besides that of God. Both groups oppose the commodification of women's bodies and the sexual exploitation of women, even though Islamists argue these abuses result from deserting religion and aping the West, whereas secular women agree with feminists in the West who also criticise these abuses and work to prevent them in a secular context.

As Turkey has become more integrated into Europe, Islamists have attempted to stake their claims in this new framework just like secular feminists. After Turkey signed a protocol with the Council of Europe whereby individual citizens could take their cases to the European Court of Human Rights, Islamists adopted this method of legal contestation. In 1998, a female student who wore the headscarf, Leyla Şahin, applied to the court arguing that the headscarf ban in higher education violated her rights and freedoms under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Şahin argued that the ban constituted an unjustified interference with her right to freedom of religion. She said that 'her manner of dressing had to be treated as the observance of a religious rule which she regarded as a "recognized practice"' and that 'the manner in which she had chosen to comply with what was a religious obligation was neither ostentatious nor intended as a means of protest and did not constitute a form of pressure, provocation or proselytism'.<sup>31</sup> She insisted that 'the Islamic headscarf did not challenge republican values or the rights of others and could not be regarded as inherently incompatible with the principles of secularism and of neutrality in education';<sup>32</sup> however, she did not convince the court.

The court ruled against her and in favour of Turkish government, which had claimed that principles of secularism and equality necessitated the ban. In its judgment of 1989, the constitutional court had stated that 'secularism in Turkey was among other things, the guarantor of democratic values, the principle that freedom of religion is inviolable to the extent that it stems from individual conscience and the principle that citizens are equal before the law'.<sup>33</sup> Islamist women claimed that secularism and headscarves could be compatible, but the Turkish government disagreed and the European Court supported the government. If secularism is the guarantor of democracy, Islamist women who did not reject secularism, yet wanted to expand its boundaries, were excluded in this democracy. They did not succeed in lifting the ban, but they have challenged the limits of Kemalist-style secularism in the country, and have

<sup>31</sup> European Court of Human Rights, 'Case of Leyla Şahin v Turkey', application no. 44774/98, Strasbourg, 29 June 2004, pp. 16, 19.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



questioned the relationship between democracy and secularism. If democracy is to be more inclusive, then secularism can accommodate alternate understandings of religion, as long as these do not undermine the secular codes.

### Demands for recognition of ethnic identity: Kurdish women

During the decades that saw the development of feminist activism and the Kurdish conflict in the country, Kurdish women demanded recognition. They opposed state policies towards the Kurds and towards women and positioned themselves against secular Turkish feminists, who were dismissive of ethnicity, as well as against the Kurdish patriarchy, which was dismissive of women's rights. Kurdish nationalism helped Kurdish women identify themselves as Kurds, who had problems unique to their history and tradition. Yet Kurdish nationalists and those who spoke in the name of Kurdish traditions, which cultivated Kurdish nationalism, viewed women as inferior to men.

A core group of Kurdish feminists split from Turkish feminists in 1989 over the usage of the Kurdish language in International Women's Day celebrations. The conflict led to the establishment of journals where nascent Kurdish feminism took shape. *Roza* (1996–2000) and *Jujin* (1998–2000) identified themselves as feminist publications. *Jin u Jiyan* (1998–) did not, but rather underlined the significance of class struggle in analysing women's problems, including violence towards women and questions of sexuality. *Yaşamda Özgür Kadın* (1998–2000) and *Özgür Kadının Sesi*, published after the former was closed by the state, reflected the problems of women and the nationalist movement.<sup>34</sup> These journals were short-lived, published irregularly and expressed an at times angry, essentialist Kurdish feminism that nevertheless gave voice to Kurdish women's struggles for liberation.

Kurdish feminists defined themselves primarily in opposition to the Turkish state and its policies towards Kurdish women. A controversial topic was the issue of the Multi-Purpose Community Centres (Çok Amaçlı Toplum Merkezleri, ÇATOM) which the state opened in 1995 in the context of regional development projects in south-east Anatolia. ÇATOMs were initiated by the state, with the help of UNICEF as well as some civil society organisations,

<sup>34</sup> Necla Açık, 'Ulusal mücadele, kadın mitosu ve kadınların harekete geçirilmesi: Türkiye'deki çağdaş Kürt kadın dergilerinin bir analizi', in Bora and Günel (eds.), *90'larda Türkiye'de feminizm*, pp. 280–2; Zeynep Kutluata, 'The Politics of Difference with the Feminist Movement in Turkey as Manifested in the Case of Kurdish Woman/Feminist Journals', MA thesis, Boğaziçi University (2003), pp. 52–5.

such as the Mother Culture Cooperative, the Women's Human Rights Project and the Turkish Development Foundation. The centres provided education programmes in literacy, health services, and crafts and skills to women of the region. Many women benefited from the services offered, although others questioned whether these centres aimed to empower the predominantly Kurdish women of the region, or assimilate them. The centres also created controversy because they provided birth-control measures and taught Turkish to Kurdish women.

Kurdish women's journals frequently argued against birth-control measures, viewing them as devices to control the Kurdish population. It was argued in *Jujin* that the state aimed to control Kurdish women because women physically gave birth to and then raised potential 'terrorists' against the state.<sup>35</sup> *Yaşamda Özgür Kadın* was more explicit in its criticism: 'In the person of the Kurdish woman, Kurdish people, killed in diverse ways, are to be killed as fetuses as well . . . Because every pill and every injection (for birth control) is seen as the killing of a "terrorist" that will be born, besides spending for military operations, a sizable amount of money is transferred to these areas. In this way, extermination and eradication policies are expanded through targeting of women's fertility.'<sup>36</sup>

Another major issue that Kurdish women criticise is the availability of education only in Turkish and the state restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language. Learning Turkish can empower Kurdish women because it expands their access to the public realm, which is defined predominantly in Turkish. However, many Kurdish activists see Turkish as a threat to the Kurdish community, since it limits usage of Kurdish and weakens the transmission of the language to a new generation.

Kurdish feminists' opposition to Turkish feminists was more complicated than their opposition to the state. Kurdish feminists have contested Turkish feminists in general, but collaborated with them on major issues. On the one hand, they have tended to depict all Turkish feminists as a homogeneous group of nationalists who dismiss Kurdish women and Kurdishness. On the other hand, they knew that some Turkish feminists welcome Kurdish women. The feminist monthly *Pazartesi*, published by a group of feminists who did not identify themselves with a Turkish ethnic identity, defended the cause of Kurdish women as victims of the Kurdish war, and sympathetically advocated Kurdish feminist journals. Through *Pazartesi*, Turkish feminists debated what

<sup>35</sup> Kutluata, 'The Politics of Difference', p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 80, translated by Arat.

their relationship to Kurdish feminists should be.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Kurdish and Turkish women share similar positions on a range of feminist causes. *Roza*, *Jujin* and *Pazartesi* all protested against violence towards women, including domestic violence, virginity tests and the sexual exploitation of women, as well as the Kurdish war and the state policies on the Kurdish issue. The growth of collaboration between Turkish and Kurdish feminists is another example of the expansion and diversification of the feminist movement in Turkey in recent years.

### Conclusion

Throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, women have both challenged the state and collaborated with it in order to defend their rights and expand their opportunities. The state's Westernising and modernising project helped most women to promote their causes, beginning with the Family Act of 1917. Women's groups and the Kemalist state made instrumental use of one another to promote their respective goals. With the influence of second-wave feminism in the West, Turkish women strengthened their voices, and the numbers and diversity of feminist groups increased. The extensive network of women's associations that emerged in the 1980s expressed women's needs and pursued their interests, helping cultivate a vibrant civil society. In more recent years, the availability of the internet helped their diverse organisations to connect and unite in political resistance. Women's groups voiced and aggregated demands, generated and disseminated information, and provided avenues, for women's political participation where access to traditional venues, including parliaments and political parties, were substantively, if not formally, obstructed. Feminist activists democratised Turkish politics, much as feminist groups have done in other countries.

However, feminists in Turkey played special roles peculiar to their historical and geographical position. They helped reshape the Turkish polity from one where state-led modernisation defined the 'common good' to one where citizens, including those traditionally marginalised in public space, can participate in reshaping this common good. As women have demanded their rights, they have pushed the state to abide by international human rights standards and pursue its aspirations to join the EU. Turkey's 'strong state', which has allegedly undermined civil society, responded to women's needs in the changing

37 Ayşe Düzkan, 'Kürt kadınlara hizmet', *Pazartesi* (April 1998); Ayşe Gül Karayazgan, 'Biz kadınlar diyemedik bir türlü', *Pazartesi* (May 1998).

international context. Women's engagement with the state helped it increase its international legitimacy and respect. Women's activism encouraged the Turkish state, which has often cultivated strength through authoritarian military interventions and restrictions of human rights, to cultivate strength through respect for human rights.

Women, in turn, have benefited from Turkey's pursuit of an alliance with the EU and the state's search for legitimacy through observance of human rights conventions. Even though women have attempted to mitigate the polarities that cross-cut Turkish society, including those between Islamist and secular groups and between Kurdish and Turkish groups, tensions still remain. However, the current international context and the shared goal of EU membership have helped women accommodate the potential for conflict that has characterised women's alliances and coalitions and their relationships with the state.

Women have been most successful in their efforts to make their oppression part of the public agenda, and to push legal reforms. They also galvanised the state and organised themselves to fight against women's illiteracy and violence against women, although much remains to be done. The adult literacy rate for women has increased from 67.4% in 1990 to 81.1% in 2003. However, despite this successful fight against illiteracy, many women remain dependent on men and subject to abuse and discrimination. According to 2003 statistics, their labour-force participation rate is 26.6%, while that of men is 70.4%. The proportion of women working for wages outside the agricultural sector is only 20.6%.<sup>38</sup> Although statistics on violence are scant, studies indicate that about 40 per cent of women in the country are exposed to domestic violence. Research carried out in shantytowns reports that 97% of women in these districts say that they are sometimes or frequently subjected to domestic violence by their husbands.<sup>39</sup> If we move beyond the local context, Turkey ranks 94 among 177 countries ranked by the *Human Development Report, 2005* in its human development index, 'a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development – a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living'. Turkey's ranking in terms of the gender empowerment measure, based on 'economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making and power over economic resources' is 76 out of the 80 countries that could be

<sup>38</sup> See [www.nkg.die.gov.tr](http://www.nkg.die.gov.tr).

<sup>39</sup> *Türkiye'de Kadın 2001*, pp. 111–12.

measured.<sup>40</sup> As close observers of Turkish politics note, the poor human development record of Turkey is mainly due to lack of women's empowerment.<sup>41</sup>

Despite their success in expanding public debate by voicing women's oppression and helping change the legislative framework, women have yet to build an extensive coalition – not merely among themselves, but also with other sectors of society that respect human rights, such as business, labour, Islamist and Kurdish groups, to extract more resources from the state to alleviate women's condition. In turn, women's groups can take a more active stand on societal problems beyond their immediate concern, which will help them build broader coalitions. While the challenges remain, women are vigilant over their rights and the prospects of expanding their opportunities.

40 UNDP, *Human Development Report, 2005* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 304–6.

41 Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), p. 191.

## Art and architecture in modern Turkey: the Republican period

SİBEL BOZDOĞAN

For many people, foreigners and Turks alike, 'modern Turkish art and architecture' is nothing more than a lamentable story of progressive decline from the past glory of their classical Ottoman counterparts. It is still the mosques, costumes and calligraphy of the Ottoman Empire that often represents Turkey in major international exhibitions and cultural events, and continues to define what most people consider to be the country's 'national heritage'. More recently, however, partly triggered by the country's rekindled prospects of joining the EU, there is a growing recognition that the country's claims to 'modernity' will ring hollow without a parallel display of modern cultural production. Events like the 2004 opening of the country's first modern art museum, the Istanbul Modern, or the hosting of the 2006 International DoCoMoMo (Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement in Architecture) Conference in Turkey,<sup>1</sup> are, without doubt, significant 'firsts'. Yet any broader public awareness and appreciation of Republican modernist heritage is still very minimal at best. Most of the time, the works themselves are threatened with neglect and oblivion, if not outright destruction.

The aesthetic merits of modern Turkish art and architecture are matters of ongoing academic debate. What is beyond dispute, however, is that Turkish modernism deserves attention for reasons beyond the more traditional and autonomous disciplinary concerns of art and architecture (such as stylistic, aesthetic, technical and preservationist concerns). Although these are by no means unimportant, it is far more provocative to look at Turkish modernism as a compelling example of how paintings, artwork, buildings, projects and urban spaces are as much the active means by which modern national identities

1 DoCoMoMo is an international organisation dedicated to the documentation and conservation of modern architecture across the globe through the work of national working parties. The theme of the 2006 conference was Other Modernisms, focusing on modern architectures of countries outside the canonic modern heritage of Europe and North America.

are produced and reproduced as they are formal/stylistic reflections of these historical experiences. In recent years, the history of art and architecture has made significant contributions to interdisciplinary cultural studies everywhere. Studies of representation, space, built form and visual culture are no longer marginal embellishments to the 'real stuff' of more traditional history (typically the work of political, social and economic historians) but rather the very substance of a new, critically and culturally conceived understanding of history itself – one that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Proceeding from these premises, this chapter offers a broad historical overview of how Turkey's perennial dilemmas of cultural and national identity, deriving from and complicated by the unique history and geography of the country, find compelling visual expression in modern Turkish art, architecture and urbanism. In this anthological format, the following account of Turkish modernism is inevitably weighted more heavily towards canonic works, official programmes or trend-setting artistic/architectural expressions than the numerous lesser-known examples of what can be characterised as anonymous, popular or spontaneous modernism. The latter constitutes a fertile new area of research and scholarship still largely unexplored. At the same time, the canonic histories themselves are also being rewritten through new critical perspectives focusing on the politics of culture, art and architecture, and this chapter is informed by their insights.<sup>2</sup>

In what follows, I discuss the most paradigmatic cultural, artistic and architectural works, trends and debates in Republican Turkey during four periods, starting in the 1910s, 1930s, 1950s and 1980s respectively. The first was a formative period, corresponding to the creation of a modern artistic and architectural culture in conjunction with the dramatic historical transition from the Ottoman Empire into the Republic. The second period represents the subordination of art and architecture to the larger project of nation building and state ideology. The third period marks the beginning of a more liberal, internationalist and pluralist cultural scene with a diversity of trends and ideas. Finally, the period after 1980 marks the unfolding of a 'post-modern' (or even a 'post-Kemalist') Turkey, in which the forces of globalisation and political Islam continue to challenge the founding ideas of Republican modernity and have a visible impact on

2 For a recent study of the 'everyday' or 'anonymous' dimension of modern Turkish architecture see U. Tanyeli, *İstanbul 1900–2000: konutu ve modernleşmeyi metropolden okumak* (Istanbul: Akin Nalca, 2004). For a critical study of the politics of the more canonic Republican modernism in the 1930s see S. Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

art and architecture. Although this periodisation is inevitably imprecise, with blurred boundaries and numerous overlaps between the periods, the political, economic and cultural outlines of each period are distinct enough to warrant the survey of their artistic and architectural expressions in this manner. The intention here is only to map a 'broad canvas', rather than to provide a comprehensive and descriptive survey of individual works. Selected works and artists/architects are cited here only as representatives of important events, influential ideas or broader trends in the culture, rather than in terms of their intrinsic value as examples of form, style or technique.

### First moderns: 1908–31

Although the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 is etched deeply in Turkish collective consciousness as the single most important event of modern Turkish history, many scholars agree that the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 marks the real turning point in the making of modern Turkey.<sup>3</sup> It is often pointed out that the key political and ideological directions set by the Young Turks and by their political and military organisation, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), were followed by the Republican leaders and consolidated by the single-party regime of the Republican People's Party (RPP) after 1931. In art and architecture too, it is important to begin by marking these continuities, as well as obvious important ruptures with the late Ottoman period. There is a common assumption that 'modernity' in Turkish culture, art and architecture is an exclusively Republican accomplishment and that it represents a radical and progressive break with the imperial Ottoman past. This assumption reflects, before everything else, a rather common conflation of 'modernity' (the larger historical process of industrial and urban transformations and people's specific experiences of these) with 'modernism' (a particular artistic and architectural expression of the twentieth century). It also reveals more about the biases of the Republican perspective than about the actual history of cultural, artistic and architectural production during the final decades of the Ottoman Empire when major modern transformations in art/architectural theory, education and practice were initiated and art and architecture were institutionalised

3 Erik Zürcher treats 1908–50 as a single unit in his comprehensive book on modern Turkey (*Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994)). Feroz Ahmad characterises 1908 as 'the opening of the 20th century for Turkey', the marker of the historical transition from empire to nationhood (*The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 3).



as self-defining and self-regulating disciplines with specific professional and political agendas.

Coinciding with dramatic historical events, major wars and the forging of a new nation out of a multi-ethnic, heterogeneous empire, the art/architectural culture of the 1908–31 period reflects an increasing self-consciousness of this larger national project on the part of Turkish artists and architects. The foundations of this project had already been laid in the final decades of the nineteenth century by the remarkable Osman Hamdi Bey, an artist, intellectual, bureaucrat and the founder of both the Imperial Museum of Antiquities (1881) and the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul (1882). He had been instrumental in highlighting the ‘national Turkish essence’ of Ottoman culture as distinct from Arab and Persian culture, and in establishing art and architectural education, as well as heritage preservation, as fundamental institutions of a modern nation-state. His paintings, while academic and ‘orientalist’ in technique (especially in his realistic details of Islamic crafts, carpets, objects and calligraphy), reflect in content a modern ideal that Western-educated Ottoman elites longed for: namely, a society that is distinctly (and proudly) oriental/Islamic, and yet modern, rational and refined at the same time.<sup>4</sup> After 1908, Ziya Gökalp, the leading ideologue of Turkish nationalism, delineated a new kind of distinction between national culture (*hars*) and international civilisation (*medeniyet*), suggesting the possibility of their reconciliation.<sup>5</sup> Whereas Osman Hamdi Bey had celebrated Islamic civilisation and Islamic high culture, Gökalp emphasised the compatibility between Western civilisation (corresponding to technical and scientific accomplishments of the West) and a national Turkish culture (corresponding to ethnic and folk elements). More significantly, this marked the beginning of the radical cultural shift from the multicultural artistic/architectural production of the late empire to the monocultural Turkish nationalism of the early Republic.

The dominant artistic/architectural formula that captured the imagination of the late Ottoman nationalists and their early Republican followers was a simple one: the mission of modern Turkish art and architecture would be to

4 In the context of orientalism debates after Edward Said, Osman Hamdi Bey’s paintings have attracted a lot of scholarly attention as counter-examples of orientalist painting trying to reverse the stereotypical representations of the orient as exotic, inferior and irrational. See Z. Çelik, ‘Speaking back to orientalist discourse’, in J. Beaulieu and M. Roberts (eds.), *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

5 Z. Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, islamlaşmak, muasırlaşmak* (Istanbul: n.p., 1918). See N. Berkes (ed.), *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

adopt European genres, theories and techniques (i.e. civilisation) and infuse them with national Turkish content (i.e. culture). The first artists who took this path were a group of late Ottoman painters, also known as the '1914 generation', who encountered modern artistic trends in Paris and brought a belated Impressionism to Istanbul on the eve of the First World War. The most prominent among them, İbrahim Çallı (1882–1960), Nazmi Ziya (1881–1937), Hikmet Onat (1886–1977), Namık İsmail (1890–1935), Feyhaman Duran (1886–1970) and Avni Lifij (1889–1927), sought to establish a modern, anti-academic style in Turkish painting, distancing themselves from the academic tradition of the previous generation, as displayed in the still-life paintings of Süleyman Seyyid and Şeker Ahmet Paşa or the orientalist paintings of Osman Hamdi Bey. Particularly notable in the new generation's work is the pervasiveness of landscapes (a genre that has been especially significant in the formation of a modern national consciousness everywhere, by highlighting the particularities of place and country) as well as portraits of ordinary people (which mark the emergence of modern individual subjectivities). To what extent their landscapes, portraits and figures were the products of their encounters with impressionism in Paris, and to what extent they should be seen in continuity with earlier Ottoman painting traditions, remains a point of debate among art historians.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, while landscape, figure and portrait painting had a longer tradition in the empire, the particular mood of these landscapes, as well as subjects such as nudes and scenes of everyday life, were conspicuously new, and underscored the 'modernity' of the period as perceived and promoted by these artists. War paintings depicting scenes of the Balkan Wars, the Gallipoli defence during the First World War and the Turkish War of Independence constitute another distinct genre, bearing a strong testimony to the political and historical turmoil of the period. These Impressionist artists of the 1914 generation also painted some of the best portraits of Atatürk and other heroes of the War of Independence such as İsmet İnönü and Fevzi Çakmak, further illustrating the continuities between the last decades of the empire and the emergence of the new Republic in 1923.

In architecture, the first systematic programme of culture/civilisation reconciliation was the prolific Ottoman revivalism that dominated building production from 1908 until the final demise of this style around 1930. Known to its contemporaries as National Architecture Renaissance and retrospectively

6 See, e.g., G. Renda, 'Modern trends in Turkish painting', in G. Renda and C. M. Kortepeter (eds.), *The Transformation of Turkish Culture: The Atatürk Legacy* (Princeton: Kingston Press, 1986) for the former view; and S. Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk sanatı* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1993), pp. 118–35 for the latter view.

labelled by architectural historians as the First National Style,<sup>7</sup> it combined Ottoman forms and stylistic motifs with European design principles, building types and construction techniques. Under the leadership of three prominent practitioners and educators, Vedat Bey (1873–1942), Kemalettin Bey (1870–1927) and the Levantine Italian architect Giulio Mongeri (1873–1953), architects extensively applied this hybrid style to the programmatic requirements of a modern state and modern urban life, not unlike its counterparts in Europe, such as neo-classicism and Gothic Revival. Banks, offices, hotels, cinemas and other public, urban structures were built in this style, first for the Young Turks and subsequently for the Kemalist Republic.

In most of these buildings, classical Ottoman architectural elements (especially wide overhanging eaves, domes, pointed arches and ornate tile decoration) were used as overt stylistic statements of Turkish identity applied onto what were otherwise conspicuously ‘European’ buildings designed along academic *Ecole des Beaux Arts* principles (symmetry, axiality and classic tripartite façade compositions) and Western construction techniques (steel and reinforced concrete, in particular). Large public buildings such as Vedat Bey’s Central Post Office (1909) or Kemalettin Bey’s Ministry of Endowments office block in Sirkeci (1912–26) represent the most canonic, technologically advanced and programmatically complex examples of this style, while numerous more anonymous buildings, not just in Istanbul and Ankara but in many provincial cities of Anatolia, testify to its pervasiveness and remarkable range of experimentation. Although essentially academic and revivalist in its premises, it is the modern self-consciousness of this style – its desire for national self-representation and historical agency – that makes it ‘modern’. Reacting against the stylistic plurality and eclecticism of the late nineteenth century (when Istanbul was the scene of construction in a wide range of architectural styles, from neo-classicism to art nouveau), the First National Style was a new patriotic programme that sought to demonstrate the viability of classical Ottoman forms and motifs, not only as the source of a ‘Turkish’ national expression in architecture, but also as the source of a ‘modern’ style for the early twentieth century with all its technological advances.

The predominance of this style in the design of practically all major public buildings of the 1920s in the new capital city, Ankara, inevitably strengthens its associations with the birth of the new nation. Particularly symbolic in this respect is the modestly proportioned First National Assembly Building

<sup>7</sup> Not to be confused with the Second National Style of the 1930s and 1940s, which sought inspiration from the vernacular traditions of the wooden Ottoman/Turkish houses.



Fig. 16.1 Ottoman revivalist First National Style buildings in Ankara: Turkish Hearth Building (1927–30) and Ethnography Museum (1926) by Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu [photograph from the author's collection]

(initially the CUP headquarters, today the Museum of the War of Independence) designed in 1917 by İsmail Hasif Bey, an architect who died in the War of Independence. Paintings depicting the opening day of the First National Assembly in 1920 feature the building as the iconic backdrop to this heroic, historical event. Other First National Style buildings were constructed in a very short time in the same part of 'old Ankara' around the National Square (Ulus Meydanı) below the Citadel. Among them is the Ankara Palas (1924–6), the joint work of Vedat and Kemalettin, who produced an ornate hotel with the latest technical infrastructure and modern conveniences to host the higher bureaucrats and foreign dignitaries of the new Republic. Also notable are the 'Ottoman', 'Agricultural' and 'Business' bank buildings (1926–9) of Giulio Mongeri, as well as a group of representative public buildings by the younger Arif Hikmet Koyunoğlu, lined along the avenue to the south: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1927), Ethnography Museum (1926) and Turkish Hearth Building (1927–30), which collectively display the ornate aesthetics of this style, with its marble façades, tile decoration, Ottoman domes and 'crystalline' column capitals with *muqarnas* details (see fig. 16.1). Similarly detailed First National Style

buildings proliferated in other cities of Republican Anatolia, such as Izmir, Konya, Kütahya and Sivas among others, as government ‘palaces’ (*hükümet konağı*), schools, post offices and other public buildings.

To this day, one of the most contentious topics in the historiography of modern Turkish architecture is the status and appropriateness of the First National Style as the aesthetic expression of a new, secular and modern republic at a time when the new regime was seeking to dissociate itself from its Ottoman/ Islamic past through a series of radical Westernising reforms. Many architects and architectural historians, having internalised the modernist biases of the Republic after 1931, tend to see this style as a ‘temporary aberration’ at best, dismissing its academic premises and historical references as anathema to the revolutionary modernism of the Kemalist project. Yet, far from being an anachronistic architecture, the First National Style was in fact a most appropriate expression of the volatile transition period from empire to republic. Its Ottoman stylistic references applied to modern building types were effectively ‘double-coded’, capable of signifying both the glories of an Ottoman/ Islamic past (necessary for national pride) and the new realities of a society in transformation. What eludes the modernist critics of this style is that in the late 1920s old allegiances to religion, the sultan, Istanbul and academic traditions of art and architecture coexisted with new allegiances to the nation, Atatürk, Anatolia and the modernist currents originating in Europe, for artists and architects just as for everyone else. As many scholars point out, in this period religion remained a powerful force for national mobilisation, and the nation was conceptualised as a kind of secular religion.<sup>8</sup> Symptomatic in this respect are the Atatürk portraits of this period, showing the national hero in his Gazi outfits (the word *gazi* signifying a ‘fighter for faith’) wearing the *kalpak* headgear (rather than the ‘panama hat’ he preferred after 1931) and sometimes displaying overt references to the religious and aesthetic codes of Islamic miniature painting.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, the 1908–31 period marks the emergence of a modern artistic and architectural culture (encompassing the totality of institutional practices, schools, exhibitions, publications and organisations, all of them informed

8 Most significantly by Şerif Mardin: see his *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); and ‘The Just and the Unjust’, *Deadalus* 3 (Summer 1991).

9 As for example in a 1923 painting by Tahirzade Hüseyin titled *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Paşa Hazretleri*, representing Atatürk’s portrait as surrounded by angels and border illuminations like those used in miniature paintings of the Prophet Muhammad’s life. For a reproduction of the painting see G. Elibal, *Atatürk ve resim heykel* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973).

by a new nationalist self-consciousness). One important development underscoring the new era, for example, was the rise of Muslim/Turkish artists and architects to influential leadership positions formerly held by Armenians, Greeks or Europeans. In the painting studios of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Alisi, established in 1882), the primary institution for the training of artists and architects until the end of the early Republican period, the academic instruction of Salvatore Valeri and Warnia Zarzecki gave way to the modernist teachings of the 1914 generation. Likewise, the Armenian sculpture teacher Oskan Yervant Efendi retired in 1908 and was replaced by İhsan Özsoy (1867–1944) and the German-educated Nijad Sirel (1897–1957). Meanwhile, in the architectural studios, Vedat Bey (trained in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris) succeeded Alexander Vallauray as the head of the architecture section. The other leading architect of the Ottoman revivalist First National Style, Kemalettin Bey (trained in Charlottenburg Technische Hochschule in Berlin), taught architectural courses to engineering students in the Civil Service School of Engineering (Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi, established in 1884) and also trained many young architects throughout his distinguished career as the chief architect/restoration expert of the Ministry of Endowments (Evkaf Nezareti).

In 1914, to accommodate female art students, a sister school to the Academy was established (Inas Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi) under the directorship of Mihri Müşfik Hanım (1886–1954), a talented artist and colourful personality, ‘sometimes veiled, sometimes elegantly dressed in high heels and straw hats adorned with flowers – a living testimony to the mixture of the *alaturka* and the *alafiranga*’, as one art historian puts it.<sup>10</sup> In 1926, the two schools were combined and the Academy formally approved the admission of girls. Equally significant was the institutionalisation of the new practice of working with nude models after 1917, an unprecedented step in a traditional and predominantly Muslim society. The foundation of the Society of Ottoman Painters in 1909 (Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti), the publication of its magazine *Osmanlı Ressamlar Cemiyeti Mecmuası* and the initiation of more systematic annual art exhibitions in the Imperial Lycée of Galatasaray are also important milestones in modern Turkish art. With the end of the empire in 1921, the Society of Ottoman Painters renamed itself the Society of Turkish Artists (Türk Sanatçılar Birliği) and opened its first exhibition in Ankara in 1923 on the occasion of the proclamation of the Republic.

<sup>10</sup> Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk sanatı*, p. 137.

As is frequently pointed out by art historians, successive modern currents from Europe were introduced to Turkey only after the eclipse of their initial critical force in Europe. At a time when all traditional conceptions of art were being radically shaken in Europe by the avant-garde currents of Cubism, Futurism, Dada and Constructivism, the Impressionism of the 1914 generation was as 'modern' as Turkey got in the midst of her own turmoil during the disintegration of the empire. This 'time lag' does not mean, however, that a linear historical trajectory based on European developments should be the only yardstick against which Turkish artists can be viewed and judged. Rather, the significance and contributions of each generation acquire meaning only in the context of the specific historical circumstances of Turkey. It is in this sense that Impressionism in painting and the Ottoman revivalist First National Style in architecture can be seen as the 'first moderns' in Turkey, even when their 'modernity' was a belated one by European standards and chronologies.

By the late 1920s, however, the demise of the 'first moderns' was already under way. In painting, a new group of younger artists was challenging the Impressionism of the 1914 generation, which, they claimed, had itself become an academic tradition rather than a critical, new current. This group of artists, including prominent painters such as Refik Epikman (1902–70), Mahmut Cuda (1904–87), Elif Naci (1898–1988) and Turgut Zaim (1906–74) gathered around the Association of Independent Painters and Sculptors (Müstakil Ressam ve Heykeltraşlar Birliği, established in 1929), representing a wide range of artistic trends irreducible to a common denominator. They acknowledged the influence of European avant-garde currents such as Cubism, experimented with these influences in landscape, figure and still-life paintings, and at the same time sought inspiration in the Anatolian folk sources of Turkish culture – a trend that would turn into a major nationalist programme in art after 1931.

In architecture, a series of major curricular reforms launched at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1926 prepared the ground for the final demise of the First National Style. The school was renamed, in modern Turkish, Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi, and was relocated to one of the shore palaces along the Bosphorus under the directorship of the painter Namık İsmail. An Austrian-Swiss architect, Ernst Egli, was appointed as the head of the architectural section where the curriculum was radically redesigned, replacing the classical Beaux-Arts model with the rationalist and functionalist precepts of European modernism already on the rise in Europe. Younger architects infatuated with modernism cast aside the teachings of Vedat Bey and Giulio Mongeri. Increasingly, these new modernists characterised the First National Style as modernism's stylistic and anachronistic 'other', which had to be left behind

in order to capture the *Zeitgeist* of the modern age. Prominent intellectuals such as Ahmet Haşim criticised Ottoman revivalist buildings as ‘a reactionary architecture (*mürteci mimari*)’.<sup>11</sup> Influential art historians such as Celal Esat Arseven celebrated the arrival of the ‘New Architecture’ (*Yeni Mimari*) as the European Modern Movement was then called, characterising the curricular transformations at the Academy as the emancipation of the architect from ‘the stifling of talent by classicism’ and hailing the progressive redefinition of the discipline of architecture ‘in response to contemporary needs and mentalities’.<sup>12</sup> The newly founded Society of Turkish Architects in Ankara (Türk Mimarlar Cemiyeti, 1927) and the Fine Arts Association in Istanbul (Güzel Sanatlar Birliği, 1928) became the breeding grounds of the young, modernist and anti-academic crusade in architecture, which effectively aligned itself with the revolutionary zeal of Kemalism. By 1931, the triumph of the ‘New Architecture’ was complete. With the more unequivocally secular and Western-oriented cultural politics of the Republic firmly established, artists and architects sought to dissociate Republican works from any references to the country’s Ottoman/Islamic past. Today the physical fabric of Ankara bears the traces of this decisive shift around 1930 in the style of architecture employed for its public buildings. The First National Style buildings of the 1920s are located in the older section of the city to the north, while the austere German and Central European modernism of the 1930s characterises the newer southern extension of the city, appropriately called Yenışehir or ‘the new city’.

### Art/architecture and the state: 1931–50

The series of radical institutional reforms in the late 1920s, which were carried out under the personal directive of Atatürk, collectively amounted to a total civilisational shift from a traditional order grounded in Islam to a modern, Western and secular one. The revolutionary self-consciousness of Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Republic, is most evident in its self-representations referring to the image of the French Revolution. One especially remarkable example is the 1933 painting by Zeki Faik İzer titled *İnkılap Yolunda* (On the Path of the Revolution) (see fig. 16.2). With overt allegorical references to the 1830 Eugène Delacroix painting *Liberty Leading the Nation*, it is a portrayal of the Kemalist Revolution as a popular insurgence of the Turkish people against

11 A. Haşim, *Gurabahane-i laklakan* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Culture, 1981 [1928]), pp. 154–7.

12 C. E. Arseven, *Yeni mimari* (Istanbul: Agah Sabri Kütüphanesi, 1931), which was adapted from Andre Lurcat, *L’Architecture* (Paris: Rene Hilsun, 1929).





Fig. 16.2 *İnkılap Yolunda* (On the path to revolution), by Zeki Faik İzer (1933)  
[courtesy of Sadi İzer; reproduced from Gültekin Elibal, *Atatürk ve Resim Heykel* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973)]

the darkness and anachronism of Turkey's *ancien régime*. The painting suggests a violent national upheaval (soldiers, bayonets and flag), guided by Mustafa Kemal himself and equipped with scientific knowledge and youthful energy (books, torchlight and young people in Western clothes). Mustafa Kemal's own words were no less allegorical when he characterised 'civilisation' as 'a sublime force, which pierces mountains, crosses the skies, enlightens and explores everything from the smallest particle of dust to the skies'.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, in his eyes it was a matter not of choice but of necessity to follow this 'sublime force', represented in the real world by the social and material progress of the West.

Within this progressive model of history, many artists and intellectuals subsumed the term 'culture' under the broader term 'civilisation', defining the latter as an irresistible process of social evolution in which scientific and technological development assumed a historical agency. In a 1933 article titled 'Culture and Civilization' in the magazine *Kadro*, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, the leading novelist and political figure of the early Republican period, rejected Ziya Gökalp's earlier distinction between the two terms in favour of a new,

<sup>13</sup> *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri*, vol. II (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1959), p. 212.

unified concept of contemporary civilisation.<sup>14</sup> Grounded in scientific and technological progress, this new concept of civilisation was also expected to be the basis of the cultural and artistic regeneration of the nation. In the early 1930s, many authors articulated this necessary relationship between the desired new art/architecture of the Kemalist Revolution, and the new technological epoch. Echoing and sometimes directly translating from the discourse of the modernist avant-garde in Europe, Turkish artists and architects wrote that the source of inspiration for this new art/architecture could no longer come from classical styles, monuments and traditions, but had to be found in the machines, automobiles, ocean liners and aeroplanes of the modern age.<sup>15</sup> Although Turkey in the 1930s was far from being anywhere near reaching the aspired-to 'machine age', the utopian image of a modern and industrialised Turkey was exalted by the visual culture of the Republic. Endlessly reproduced in official Republican publications, factories, railways, dams, trains, planes and industrial buildings acquired an unprecedented artistic appeal. In terms of this revolutionary emphasis on industrial development and on the linking of art with politics, many parallels can be drawn between early Republican Turkey and the Futurist and Constructivist fascination with the technological and industrial icons of the modern age in Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia.

Yet the cultural politics of the early Republic also contained certain ambiguities and complexities specific only to the Turkish experience. Most significantly, there were two 'civilizational others' against which a national culture was expected to assert itself. Not only was Turkey's own traditional Ottoman/Islamic past portrayed as standing in the way of progress, but the highly individualistic, materialist and cosmopolitan lifestyles of the capitalist West were also declared to be enemies of the kind of nationalism, idealism and populism that the RPP sought to create. Western civilisation was the model to be emulated for scientific and technological progress, but this idealised 'civilisation' had to be grounded in the country's native soil and national morals. Consequently, having already rejected Ottoman/Islamic precedents, early Republican nationalism instead turned to Anatolia's folk culture and the pre-Islamic heritage of the Turks. As the theories, forms and techniques of European modernism infiltrated artistic and architectural production in Turkey, Anatolian themes, folkloric motifs and nationalist symbols also became central preoccupations of the Turkish cultural scene.

<sup>14</sup> Y. K. Karaoşmanoğlu, 'Kültür ve medeniyet', *Kadro* 15 (1933).

<sup>15</sup> For example, B. Asaf, 'Neden sanatsız?', *Kadro* 13 (1933); A. Ziya, 'Yeni sanat', *Mimar* 2 (1932).

The entire artistic and architectural culture of the 1931–50 period can be viewed as an arena in which this profound tension played itself out and artists explored ways of ‘nationalising the modern’ or ‘modernising the national’, depending on how one chooses to characterise it. The cultural discourse of the period was dominated by the desire to show the world that the terms ‘national’ (meaning ‘Turkish’) and ‘modern’ (meaning ‘Western’) were not really antagonistic if Turkish artists could rid themselves of the contaminating elements of oriental Islamic culture. As the prominent painter Nurullah Berk put it, ‘the modernity, compositional simplicity, rationalism and harmony of Turkish art’ were celebrated as qualities distinguishing it from the oriental character of ‘Arabic, Persian and Indian art’.<sup>16</sup> Many other Turkish scholars and intellectuals, such as the art historian/critic Celal Esat Arseven or the archaeologist Ekrem Akurgal, articulated the same theme, pointing out the differences between Central Asian/Anatolian Turkish art and the art of other Islamic cultures, and explaining how Turkish art was closer to the humanistic, rational and tectonic conceptions of Western art, from its origins in classical antiquity to its modern industrial phase.

Even a cursory survey of the art and architectural publications of the 1930s reveal a passionate preoccupation with giving form to the Kemalist *İnkılap* (Revolution), with extensive debates on what constituted its appropriate artistic and architectural expression (*İnkılap Sanatı* and *İnkılap Mimarisi* respectively). Revolution was the keyword, and revolutionary regimes elsewhere in the world offered inspiring models. A Russian painting and sculpture exhibition opened in Ankara in 1934 to an enthusiastic reception. Some Turkish artists observed the organic link between the Italian avant-garde artists/architects and Mussolini’s fascist revolution with admiration throughout the 1930s. Revolution and the Arts was the theme of the first *İnkılap* Exhibition in Ankara in 1933, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Republic.<sup>17</sup> This exhibition, and similar ones in subsequent years, featured paintings depicting the accomplishments of Kemalist reforms and nation building, especially scenes of agriculture and industry, railways, modern women, school children and educational reforms. Most significant in the popularisation of art under the auspices of the RPP’s official ideology was the establishment of People’s Houses

16 N. Berk, *Modern Painting and Sculpture in Turkey* (New York: Turkish Information Office, 1955).

17 This exhibition was inspired by the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* of 1932 in Italy, celebrating the tenth anniversary of Mussolini’s march into Rome. Turkish architect Aptullah Ziya visited the exhibition and wrote about the need to emulate what the Italians accomplished in creating an art/architecture of their revolution.

(Halkevleri) in 1932 and the publication of its journal *Ülkü* (Ideal) after 1933. With branches in every major Anatolian town, the People's Houses served as cultural centres for arts, drama, music, sports, popular education and popular indoctrination designed to foster a Republican generation committed to the ideals of the *İnkılap*.<sup>18</sup>

The singular most defining feature of this period was the absolute and almost exclusive predominance of state patronage and official ideology in matters of art, architecture and culture.<sup>19</sup> The contents of the official propaganda publication *La Turquie Kemaliste*, published primarily for foreign observers and international publicity, illustrate the importance of exhibitions, museums, the 'new architecture', archaeology, modern painting and sculpture for displaying the cultural accomplishments of the young Republic (see fig. 16.3). The idea of a National Painting and Sculpture Museum was finally realised in this period, when the government converted one wing of the Dolmabahçe palace for this purpose in 1937. A programme of annual state painting and sculpture exhibitions (*devlet resim ve heykel sergileri*) was institutionalised also in 1937, at which awards were given out and selected works acquired for the permanent state collection. Throughout the early Republican period, these state-sponsored exhibitions remained the only venue for many artists to display their work to the public. Many art historians characterise this as 'the primary handicap of modern Turkish painting and sculpture', depriving it of constructive exchange with critical opinions, and hence from the real creative dynamics that govern the arts in the capitalist world.<sup>20</sup>

The dependence upon the state is even more obvious in the case of architecture, which, as a technical profession different from the plastic arts, has always depended on a powerful clientele to flourish. In the conspicuous absence of an autonomous bourgeoisie class in Turkey, the state was the primary client for the profession until the 1950s, while public buildings representative of the state constituted the only major design commissions. Government buildings and municipal offices, railway stations, post offices and perhaps most representative of the ideological programme of the RPP, schools and People's Houses, are the most characteristic building types of this official architecture. Also representative are the three major infrastructure projects of Republican Ankara

18 For the significance of the People's Houses in the architectural culture of the period see N. G. Yeşilkaya, *Halkevleri, ideoloji ve mimarlık* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1999).

19 For an overview of the relationship between politics and culture in this period, see Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*; D. Köksal, 'Art and Power in Turkey: Culture, Aesthetics and Nationalism during the Single-Party Era', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 31 (Fall 2004).

20 Tansuğ, *Çağdaş Türk sanatı*, p. 218.



Fig. 16.3 Women artists, photograph from *La Turquie Kemaliste* 29 (February 1939)  
[postcard from the author's collection]

in the mid-1930s: the Çubuk dam, the large urban park and artificial lake of the 'Youth Park' (Gençlik Parkı) and the Atatürk Model Farm and Forest (Atatürk Orman Çiftliği), collectively aiming at not only the 'greening' and beautification of the city against the adversities of a barren land and an arid climate, but also providing secular public spaces where the norms of 'civilised' public behaviour and recreation could be displayed (see fig. 16.4). Beyond Ankara, the construction of railway stations, schools and factories (including such Republican icons as the Sümerbank factory towns in Kayseri and Nazilli) were the most significant architectural extensions of the Kemalist project of modernity into Anatolia.

The construction of Ankara as a modern capital out of the roots of an insignificant Anatolian town is itself an episode of epic proportions, achieved



Fig. 16.4 Çubuk Dam, public park and restaurant outside Ankara (1930–6)  
[postcard from the author's collection]

largely through the work of German, Swiss and Austrian architects and planners who introduced modernism to Turkey under the rubric of 'New Architecture'. Of these, Swiss architect Ernst Egli and the German-Jewish Bruno Taut were particularly influential as teachers at the Academy and as the designers of major higher education buildings in 1930s Ankara, such as the canonic İsmet Paşa Girls' Institute (1930) and the Faculty of Humanities (1937) respectively. A third major figure, the Austrian architect Clemenz Holzmeister, designed the entire governmental complex and the presidential residence (1930–2) in the austere, official modernism known as 'the Ankara Cubic'. It is important to note that these German-speaking architects proposed the Ankara Cubic not as an imported European modernism, but as a regionalist discourse responsive to the climate, terrain and local materials of central Anatolia. They were more 'conservative' in their work and discourse than the young Turkish architects who internalised all the aesthetic and constructional canons of the European Modern Movement, especially asymmetrical compositions of cubic volumes with horizontal and vertical elements, unadorned surfaces, horizontal band windows, continuous sills, cantilevering balconies, round corners and, in many cases, flat roofs even when it was not technically possible to



Fig. 16.5 The building of Ankara as the new capital city with the new Exhibition Hall (Sergievi) designed by Şevki Balmumcu to the right (1933) [postcard from the author's collection]

properly insulate them. Although Turkish architects had little access to major state commissions in this period, exceptional accomplishments such as the Ankara Exhibition Hall (1931–3) by Şevki Balmumcu (see fig. 16.5) or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs residence (1933–4) by Seyfettin Arkan testify to a rapidly maturing Turkish modernism.

After the 1926 modernist curricular reforms in the Academy, the architectural section graduated an entire generation of modernist Turkish architects who became active in professional organisations. Gathered around the Fine Arts Association in Istanbul, they started publishing their professional journal *Mimar* in 1931, renaming it *Arkitekt* three years later.<sup>21</sup> The writings and projects published in this journal became the primary venues for promoting the universalism and scientific claims of the Modern Movement and its defining principles of rationalism and functionalism. In the absence of

21 Two more architectural journals started publication in the early Republican period: *Yapı* in Istanbul after 1941; and *Mimarlık*, the journal of the Turkish Society of Architects (later the Chamber of Turkish Architects) in Ankara after 1944. See G. B. Nalbantoğlu, 'The Professionalisation of the Ottoman/Turkish architect', Ph.D. thesis, University of California (1989), pp. 150–7.

major public commissions (which typically went to the foreign architects), young Turkish modernists such as Zeki Sayar, Abidin Mortaş, Seyfettin Arkan and Behçet Ünsal turned their attention to residential architecture (*mesken mimarisi*), designing the canonic 'cubic' villas and apartments of the 1930s with their flat roofs and unadorned volumetric compositions. However, given the poor state of the building industry, the formidable costs of reinforced concrete construction, shortages of skilled workmanship and the absence of any large-scale low-cost, rationalised and industrialised housing production, these modernist experiments remained limited to a handful of well-crafted individual houses for the Republican elite. The question of mass housing, one of the central preoccupations of interwar modernism in Europe, did not become a major item on the Turkish architectural agenda until after the Second World War.

In art, the paradigmatic Group D, the closest movement in spirit to the modernist avant-garde in Europe, was formed in 1932 and the journal *Ar* started its publication as the group's major voice. Among the founding members of the group were painter, art critic and group spokesman Nurullah Berk (1904–82), other painters such as Cemal Tollu (1899–68), Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1913–75), Sabri Berkel (1907–93), Zaki Faik İzer (1905–88) and Abidin Dino (1913–93), and the sculptor Zühtü Müridoğlu (1906–92). Influenced by Andre Lhote and Fernand Leger in Paris, the artistic premise of Group D was a critique of Impressionism and the introduction of Cubist and Constructivist currents to Turkish art. However, it is debatable to what extent Group D constitutes an 'avant-garde'. The idea of a modernist avant-garde, as it historically emerged in Europe in the 1910s and 1920s as a radical and subversive challenge to established artistic norms, was, by definition, outside official ideology. It was an exaltation of individual creativity, not of the collective; an exploration of the abstract and universal, not of the figurative and the local. Group D, on the other hand, was a product of the Kemalist period, when art was expected to have a larger social function, and national idealism above and beyond individualistic experiments. Like most artists and architects of the 1930s, Group D members also aligned themselves with the RPP programme and contributed paintings to the İnkılap Exhibitions organised by the state.

After 1935, Burhan Toprak succeeded the late Namık İsmail as the head of the Academy of Fine Arts and a new set of appointments were made, marking the predominance of European educators. More than two hundred foreign artists and experts fleeing from the Nazi rise to power in Germany and Austria were invited to Turkey in this period, most of them playing key roles in the establishment of Turkish higher education, both in the arts and in almost



every field of the sciences and the humanities. The painting section of the Academy was given over to Leopold Levy with some Group D members as his assistants. Bruno Taut replaced Ernst Egli as the head of the architectural section, and the sculpture section was entrusted to Rudolph Belling, both Taut and Belling having formerly worked in the radical *Arbeitsrats für Kunst* in Weimar Germany prior to the Nazi takeover of the arts. In the same years, the architectural curriculum of the School of Engineering also underwent modernist reforms under the leadership of the Swiss-educated Turkish architect Emin Onat (1908–61). Two other prominent architects of the early Republic, the Austrian Clemenz Holzmeister and the German Paul Bonatz, also taught in the School of Engineering, which was transformed into Istanbul Technical University in 1944.

While the majority of the foreign professors teaching and working in Turkey were Jewish refugees or opponents of the Nazi regime, the Turkish government also officially contacted the Third Reich for visiting professors. The overt admiration for German nationalism and its cultural production became evident in the official art and architecture of the state in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The monumental and 'classical' modernism of the Grand National Assembly by Clemenz Holzmeister, the winner of an international competition in 1937, bears testimony to the strong relationship between architecture and state power. The Ankara railway station by Şekip Akalın (1937) and the TCDD State Railway headquarters by Bedri Uçar (1941) are other important examples of this monumental architecture, often featuring imposing stone façades and symmetrical entrances with colossal colonnades rising to the entire height of the building (see fig. 16.6). In the fall of 1942, Paul Bonatz brought the *Neue Deutsche Baukunst* Exhibition, featuring the work of Albert Speer and the architecture of the Third Reich, to an admiring Turkish audience. The German influence on the Turkish arts of the 1930s is also evident in the Atatürk and Victory monuments in Ankara, Samsun and Afyon by the German sculptor Heinrich Krippel, and especially in the paradigmatic Güven Monument in Kizilay Square in Ankara (1935) by Anton Hanak and Josef Thorak. With conspicuous similarities to Nazi state art, the latter features a sculptural relief of Atatürk with a serious, frowning expression and flanked by four naked, muscular youths, all resting against a granite wall atop a granite base.

The ultimate nationalist state monument of the Republic, however, is Atatürk's mausoleum, or the Anıtkabır, perched on the Rasattepe hill in Ankara, and designed by Emin Onat and Orhan Arda (1942–55). The result of an international competition following the death of the national hero, the



Fig. 16.6 Opening of the Ankara railway station (1937) designed by Şekip Akalın [Fotoğraflarla Yeni Ankara Garı, official photo album, author's collection]

Anıtkabir is, in effect, a religious precinct adopting a temple form and a processional alley (see fig. 16.7). It is a potent monument to the Republican recasting of the nation as a secular religion. Iconographic references to pre-Islamic Anatolian civilisations, such as the Hittite lions along the processional axis and decorative quotations from folk art and the coloured and gold mosaic *kilim* motifs on the ceiling of the entrance portico make this design a perfect built manifesto of the nationalist Turkish history theses promoted around the same time. These theses traced the historical and linguistic origins of the Turkish people to Central Asia and to successive migrations to Anatolia, thereby giving a new nationalist significance to artistic/architectural references to prehistoric Anatolian civilisations, Central Asian monuments and other pre-Islamic structures.<sup>22</sup> Particularly significant were Hittite motifs and figures which, to this day, constitute powerful symbols of secular Republican nationalism.

22. A most paradigmatic work applying Turkish history theses to history of art and architecture is C. E. Arseven, *Türk sanatı* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Matbaası, 1928). This nationalist text was central to art history and archaeology education in Istanbul and Ankara Universities, based on the founding ideas of Austrian and German scholars such as Heinrich Gluck and Katharina Otto-Dorn, as well as their Turkish students such as Oktay Aslanapa.



Fig. 16.7 Anıtkabir, Atatürk's mausoleum (1942–55), designed by Emin Onat and Orhan Arda – the ultimate nationalist monument of modern Turkey  
[photograph by the author]

If pre-Islamic history served to locate national identity in a distant, mythical past, the vernacular folk culture of Anatolia offered another timeless source for Turkishness, and rapidly became the central trope of the artistic and architectural culture of the period. Between 1937 and 1944, a travel programme for artists was established by the RPP under the auspices of the People's Houses. It was intended to encourage artists to travel in Anatolia and paint the landscapes, houses, peasants, costumes, colours and folkloric characteristics of Anatolian towns and villages. Similar nationalist programmes, ethnographic studies and field research were carried out in many fields during this period, particularly that of music. The Hungarian composer Béla Bartók and his Turkish colleagues travelled from village to village, collecting folk songs and tunes that would be the primary ingredients in the making of a modern Turkish music along Western lines.<sup>23</sup> In 1932, the art department of the Gazi Teachers' College was established in Ankara, ending the Istanbul Academy's monopoly

<sup>23</sup> See A. A. Saygun, *Bela Bartok's Folk Music Research in Turkey* (Budapest: Akademia Kiado, 1976).

of art education and soon becoming an important centre in the proliferation of 'Anatolian themes' in Turkish art. As a major theme in Republican cultural discourse, Ankara was portrayed as the embodiment of the youth, idealism, patriotism and purity of the Kemalist *İnkılap*, in contrast with the old, imperial and cosmopolitan Istanbul.

With the intensification of nationalist sentiments, Republican art critics, novelists and intellectuals increasingly criticised the internationalism of the modernist avant-garde, as well as the credo of 'art for art's sake' in the late 1930s. Ali Sami Boyar's essays in *Ülkü* are representative in this respect. 'Before paintings of magnolias and chrysanthemums', he wrote, 'we need paintings that will depict our national legends.'<sup>24</sup> Likewise, writing in the illustrated Republican weekly *Yedigün*, Peyami Safa attacked Cubism as 'an aggressive counter-cultural tendency, born out of post-war hysteria and cut off from any ties to habit and tradition'.<sup>25</sup> Almost echoing the Nazi condemnation of the avant-garde as a 'degenerate art', Halide Edip Adivar saw the Cubist paintings of Picasso as the expressions of a 'psychologically disturbed mind' and 'cubic architecture' as a pathological phenomenon that 'disturbs the eye'.<sup>26</sup> In his 1934 novel *Ankara*, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu described the coldness, sterility and feeling of alienation embodied by a modern 'cubic house'.<sup>27</sup> Addressing the 'homelessness' of modern lives, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın lamented the proliferation of 'cubic apartments', which, he observed, 'have turned us into nomads without home and a hearth'.<sup>28</sup>

In this climate, the call for a 'national art' (*milli sanat*) and a 'national architecture' (*milli mimari*) became the motto of the most prominent artists and architects of the early Republic, including the Group D members who had initially introduced modernist trends such as Cubism, Purism, Expressionism and Constructivism to Turkey. Distancing themselves from abstract, formalist and individualist conceptions of art, they joined the academic establishment in education and internalised the RPP ideology in practice. Prominent members of the group such as Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Nurullah Berk and Cemal Tollu adapted cubist techniques to Anatolian themes and folkloric motifs, producing what one art critic calls 'a peasant cubism' (*köylü kubizmi*).<sup>29</sup> Along the same lines, the paintings of Turgut Zaim display a distinct 'Turkish 'naïve'

24 A. S. Boyar, 'Sanat varlığımızda resmin yeri', *Ülkü* 5 (1934), p. 398.

25 P. Safa, 'Bizde ve Avrupa'da kübik', *Yedigün* 8, 188 (1936), p. 8.

26 H. E. Adivar, 'Tatarcık: büyük milli roman', *Yedigün* 12, 305 (1939), pp. 12–13.

27 Y. K. Karaosmanoğlu, *Ankara* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1981 [1934]), pp. 124–5.

28 H. C. Yalçın, 'Ev ve apartman', *Yedigün*, 11, 265 (1938), p. 5.

29 S. Tansuğ, *Türk resminde yeni dönem* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1995), p. 86.

genre with his highly stylised and idealised paintings of peasant women and children, Anatolian landscapes, mud-brick houses and poplar trees, folk arts and crafts, *kilims* and copper pots.<sup>30</sup> Zaim also designed stage-sets for the productions of the National Theatre, where the ballets, symphonies and operas of Turkish composers inspired by Anatolian folk-tunes were performed. In 1940 the New Group of painters, formed by Nuri İyem (1915–2005), Avni Arbaş (1919–2003), Selim Turan (1915–94) and Abidin Dino (1913–93), introduced a new sociological content to Turkish art. Supported by the writings of prominent sociologist and intellectual historian Hilmi Ziya Ülken, these artists painted not just peasants and rural themes, but also the urban poor, workers at the docks and many other subjects reflecting the social realities of the country.

In architecture, Sedad Hakkı Eldem (1908–88) assumed the leadership of the quest for a national architecture that was to emerge out of the native soil, traditions and materials of the country, and would flourish directly under the sponsorship of the state.<sup>31</sup> In 1934, he established a National Architecture Seminar at the Academy dedicated to documenting the surviving examples of traditional ‘Ottoman/Turkish houses’, which Eldem saw as the only viable source of a national architecture movement. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s prairie houses and very familiar with the work of modernist architects in Paris and Berlin, Eldem saw the traditional wooden *yalı*s and *konaks* of Istanbul as thoroughly rational and functional designs in terms of their plan types, constructional principles and programmatic layout.<sup>32</sup> He argued that the ‘Turkish house’ was already ‘modern’ in its functional and constructional logic, and hence the only viable source of the desired New Architecture. Through the 1930s, he built many villas and *yalı*s for the Republican elite, reinterpreting the traditional wooden Turkish house in modern materials. His canonic Taşlık Coffee House in Istanbul (1948, demolished in the 1980s), a reinforced concrete replica of a late seventeenth-century wooden *yalı*, was the ultimate built manifesto of his ‘national architecture’ programme (see fig. 16.8). Ironically, by the time it was built, the cultural climate in Turkey was already shifting in parallel with the transition to a multi-party system in 1945 within the overall post-war dynamics of the world at large.

30 The genre of painting popularised by Turgut Zaim was later continued in the work of his daughter Oya Katoğlu, another prominent Turkish painter.

31 S. H. Eldem, ‘Milli mimari meselesi’, *Arkitekt* (1939); S. H. Eldem, ‘Yerli mimariye doğru’, *Arkitekt* (1940).

32 See S. H. Eldem, *Türk evi* (Istanbul: Tac Vakfı, 1984); also S. Bozdoğan, S. Özkan and E. Yenal, *Sedad Hakkı Eldem: Architect in Turkey* (Singapore: Concept Media, 1987).



Fig. 16.8 Taşlık Coffee House (1948) by Sedad Hakkı Eldem, a modern reinforced concrete replica of a seventeenth-century wooden house, the Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Yalısı on the Bosphorus; a canonic example of Second National Style in architecture [Sedad Hakkı Eldem Archives, Istanbul]

### Diversification of the scene: 1950–80

With the landslide election victory of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950, a new era opened up in modern Turkish history, marking the end of the RPP's hegemony over politics and cultural life. Turkey's incorporation into the world capitalist system led by the US after the Second World War, the onset of more liberal economic policies, the modernisation of agriculture and the beginning of migration to big cities constitute the backdrop for important developments in art and architecture in this period. Closer ties with the US were forged through the Marshall Plan in 1947, and Turkey's geo-political position as an ally of the West was ratified with her NATO membership in 1952. In the following decade, Turkish society became increasingly more interested in American

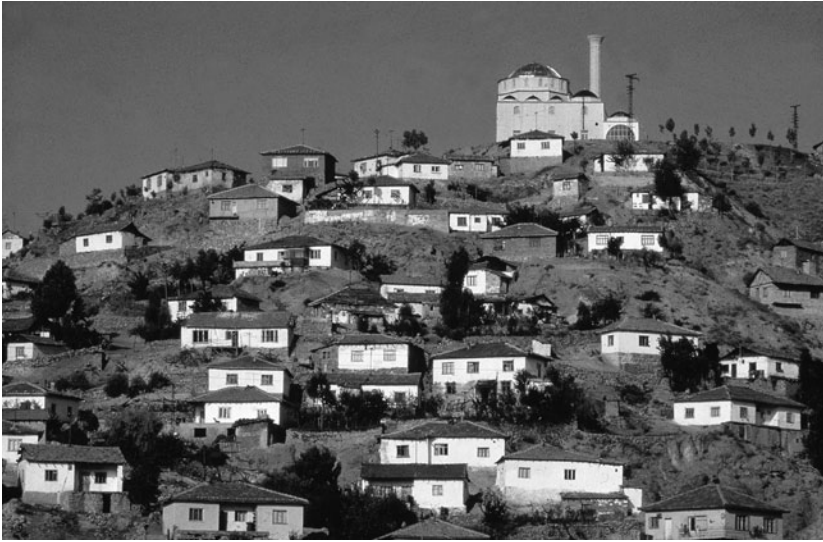


Fig. 16.9 Early examples of squatter houses (*gecekondu*) on the urban fringes of Ankara: the legacy of massive migration from rural Anatolia to major cities starting in the 1950s and continuing in the following decades [photograph by the author]

lifestyles, consumer goods and middle-class wealth, all captured by the DP slogan of ‘becoming Little America’. As miles of new roads and highways were constructed (acquiring a status analogous to railways in the RPP era), agriculture mechanised and cities expanded, Turkey rapidly became a classic case for modernisation theories in social science, affirming the latter’s linear models of development.<sup>33</sup> Although the DP was swept out of power by the 1960 military coup, the socio-economic transformations of the DP era continued into the next two decades. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the DP decade is the phenomenal urbanisation unleashed by massive migration from rural areas and the subsequent growth of squatter settlements around major cities, Ankara and Istanbul in particular (see fig. 16.9). For the first time, masses of people came in contact with the ambivalent experiences of modernity. As large migrant populations encountered the seemingly endless possibilities, lifestyles, aesthetic norms and high cultures of modern life in cities, they also

<sup>33</sup> Especially D. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958) and B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

began to be shaped by a profound awareness of their own exclusion from these things, preparing the ground for successive social upheavals.

The 1950s marked a conspicuous departure from the cultural politics of the early Republican period. The switch from *étatist* to more liberal economic policies was reflected in the cultural scene by an accompanying shift from state to private sponsorship of arts and architecture. Private clients, especially banks, businesses and corporations, began to emerge as the primary patrons sponsoring art exhibitions, organising architectural competitions and commissioning artists and architects. While the art galleries of banks and foreign cultural missions played a pioneering role in the early 1950s, the proliferation of private galleries had to wait until the 1970s. Nonetheless, this period saw the gradual development of an art market in Turkey in the capitalist sense, in stark contrast to the ideologically motivated state art exhibitions of the early Republican period. As art education dispersed beyond the traditional confines of the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul and the Gazi Teachers' College in Ankara into various fine arts departments of new universities, cutting-edge artistic developments began happening outside these institutions altogether, in rapidly multiplying private studios. Many art historians and critics observe that the individuality of the artist emerged as a major force in this period, in contrast to the predominance of groups or schools in the early Republican period.<sup>34</sup> The disintegration of Group D at the same time that the painter Nuri İyem opened the first individual art show in 1946 is symbolic in this respect.

Like in many other countries after the Second World War, a pervasive 'Americanism' can be observed in the Turkish architectural scene of the 1950s, especially after the construction of the canonic Istanbul Hilton hotel in 1952–5 (see fig. 16.10). Widely published in international architectural magazines of the time and designed by the US corporate firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (with Sedad Hakkı Eldem as the local collaborating architect in Turkey), the Istanbul Hilton best represents the aesthetic and ideological shifts of the post-Second World War era. As Annabel Wharton and others have observed, to enter the Hilton was to gain admission to 'a little America',<sup>35</sup> the paradigm of the benevolent and democratic capitalist society that the DP regime embraced as model. In Turkey as elsewhere, the 1950s ushered in a corporate 'international style' in the form of steel-frame high-rises, glazed curtain-walls and an abstract façade aesthetic of repeating modules expressive of high modern efficiency. Largely derived from the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and

34 Renda, 'Modern trends in Turkish painting', p. 240.

35 A. Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 22.





Fig. 16.10 Istanbul Hilton Hotel (1952–55), designed by the US corporate firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Sedat Hakkı Eldem as the local collaborating architect [courtesy of the late Sedat Hakkı Eldem; Aga Khan Programme, MIT]

his disciples in the US (such as his canonic Seagram Building in New York, 1954–8), this style epitomises the rise of the US as a world power after the Second World War. The Emek office tower, the so-called ‘skyscraper’ (*gökdelen*) in Ankara (1959–64) designed by Enver Tokay, is one of the first examples of such steel-frame, curtain-wall high-rises in Turkey. Equally influential upon the architectural scene in Turkey were the later works of Le Corbusier (such as his *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseille, 1948), as well as the Le Corbusier-inspired ‘tropical modernism’ of Latin American and Caribbean architects (such as the work of Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil), all of which were published extensively in Turkish architectural journals. Following the Istanbul Hilton, other significant projects such as the Istanbul City Hall (1953) by Nevzat Erol, the Anadolu Club on *Büyükdada* (1959) by Turgut Cansever and Abdurrahman Hancı and the Lawyers’ Cooperative Apartments in *Mecidiyekoy*, Istanbul (1960) by Haluk Baysal and Melih Birsal represent the best and most sophisticated syntheses of these multiple international influences.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> See S. Bozdoğan, ‘Democracy, development and the Americanization of Turkish architectural culture in the 1950s’, in S. Isenstadt and K. Rizvi (eds.), *Modernism and the Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, forthcoming).



Fig. 16.11 Turkish Pavilion at the Brussels International Expo (1958) designed by Utarit İzgi, Muhlis Türkmen, Hamdi Şensoy and İlhan Türegün, dismantled after the Expo [courtesy of Burhan Doğançay]

In 1958, Turkey participated in the Brussels International Exposition (Expo '58) with an elegantly designed modern pavilion that earned the country substantial praise within international architectural media (see fig. 16.11).<sup>37</sup> Conceived as a showcase of Turkey's newfound confidence as a NATO ally in the Cold War context, as well as its artistic/architectural commitment to new international trends in post-Second World War modernism, it was designed by Utarit İzgi (1920–2003) and his three colleagues Muhlis Türkmen, Hamdi Şensoy and İlhan Türegün, with the collaboration of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, a former member of Group D and Turkey's most prominent modern painter and mural artist. The two main components of the design, the transparent glass box of the main exhibition space and the smaller teak-wood and glass box of the restaurant/café, a modern reinterpretation of the traditional 'Turkish

37 On the story of this pavilion see S. Bozdoğan, 'Paradigme de la modernité turque en Europe: le pavillon turc', in M. DeKoonig and R. Devos (eds.), *L'architecture moderne à l'Expo '58* (Brussels: Dexia/Mercatorfonds, 2006).

house', were connected by a 50-metre wall covered by the colourful abstract mosaics of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu featuring stylised motifs from Anatolian landscape and folklore. The incorporation of the latter as a defining element of the main design concept was a superb example of 'the synthesis of the arts' – a distinctly 1950s idea of collaboration between architecture and the plastic arts 'for the mutual benefit of both', as Utarit İzgi explained it.<sup>38</sup> The incorporation of paintings, mosaic murals and abstract sculpture into architecture was already a well-established trend in modern culture generally, especially in Latin American modernism with results that captured the imagination of Turkish architects and artists through the 1960s. That the demountable modular components of the pavilion, including the mosaic panels of Eyüboğlu, were brought back to Istanbul after Expo '58 only to be abandoned to neglect, oblivion and eventual loss is one of the tragic episodes in Turkish modernism.

Another such unfortunate episode involves the distinctly modernist Kocatepe Mosque project of Vedat Dalokay (1960) which, if built, could have been the paradigmatic architectural monument of the DP years, when a new reconciliation with Islam occurred. A conspicuous relaxation of the radical secularism of the early Republic provided a favourable context for reintroducing mosque design as an important architectural problem worthy of professional attention. Dalokay's design innovatively reinterpreted the central-domed classical Ottoman mosque typology, using the cutting-edge technology of a thin-shell concrete roof structure. Although the foundations were laid out in 1963, the design remained controversial. The construction was halted and the project shelved officially as a result of technical and programmatic difficulties. The more plausible explanation, however, is the perennial tension between secularists and Islamists in Turkey, the latter longing for the aesthetic and formal symbols of traditional Islam, not its modernised versions. Over the next two decades (1967–87), a very different Kocatepe Mosque was built on the same site, in the form of a stone and marble-faced replica of a classical Ottoman mosque, testifying to the strong symbolic charge of mosque design in a country that still does not seem to have fully come to terms with secular modernity.

While regaining the importance it had lost to Ankara during the early Republic, Istanbul experienced the most dramatic and comprehensive modern urban transformations in this period. The extensive demolitions and new construction carried out in the 1950s were conceived as a major project of

38 Utarit İzgi, *Mimarlıkta süreç: kavramlar, ilişkiler* (Istanbul: Yapı Endüstri Merkezi, 1999).



Fig. 16.12 Prime Minister Adnan Menderes reviewing the model for the Golden Horn Bridge, 1957; architect Sedad Hakkı Eldem to his left and mayor Fahrettin Kerim Gökay to Eldem's left

[courtesy of the late Sedad Hakkı Eldem]

political legitimacy and public relations under the personal directive of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (see fig. 16.12). The wide Vatan and Millet Avenues cutting through the old fabric of the historical peninsula and the shore road along Marmara Sea connecting the tip of the historical peninsula to the airport in the west still bear the legacy of Menderes's ambitious urban interventions (see fig. 16.13). Equally significant in terms of its consequences for Istanbul's urban fabric was the introduction of a new and soon-to-be-pervasive architectural typology: the high-rise slab-block apartment, which was initially used for cooperative housing schemes financed by credit from the newly established Emlak Bank. Among the first examples are the Levent and Ataköy housing schemes, which resolved issues of site planning, rational unit design and construction quality with relative success. However, with the exception of a handful of such well-designed housing projects, mostly for the middle and upper classes, most apartment blocks built in Istanbul and other Turkish cities in the following decades were lesser examples, replacing aesthetic concerns with the priorities and profit motives of the developer in a lucrative housing market. Especially after the landmark 'condominium legislation' (*Kat Mülkiyeti Kanunu*) of 1965 (which allowed ownership of individual units or flats within a multi-unit apartment building), the early modern residential fabric of most cities was rapidly torn down and replaced by newer, higher, developer-built multi-unit



Fig. 16.13 Demolitions and urban modernisation in Istanbul in the 1950s  
[courtesy of İpek Akpınar and Ara Güler]

apartments, turning the dwelling unit into a commodity – a financial asset and a source of revenue. The speculative apartment boom of the next few decades became the notorious symbol of the sterility, banality and repetitiveness of modern architecture and urbanism, turning major Turkish cities into ‘concrete jungles’, as it is often put in common parlance.

As in architecture, a closer look at the artistic production of 1950–80 reveals an increased awareness of international artistic trends after the opening of the country to the outside world. Aided by new ties with the US and post-war Europe, Turkish painters and sculptors closely followed American abstract expressionism, as well as surrealist, fantastic, pop art and other emerging trends, producing artwork ranging from the merely derivative to the highly original. In fact, Turkey itself was no longer the exclusive location of modern Turkish art. Some of the best work was produced by Turkish artists living and working abroad, such as Fikret Mualla (1904–69) and Abidin Dino (1913–93) in Paris, the traditional art capital of the world, and Burhan Doğançay (b. 1925), and Erol Akyavaş (1932–99) in New York, the new centre of the art world after the Second World War. Most importantly, these expatriate artists were no longer sent abroad by the state to learn the latest techniques and bring them back for application to national themes. They were often self-exiled artists



Fig. 16.14 Fahrelnissa Zeid, *Soyuta karşı mücadele*, oil on canvas, 1947  
[Eczacıbaşı Collection, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul]

contributing to an international artistic culture, a culture that transcended national boundaries and cultural codes. This does not mean, however, that they left behind all native inspirations and home influences. Most of them continued to carry the aesthetic inspiration of folk and popular arts as well as of Islamic calligraphy and two-dimensional miniature paintings into their modern abstract compositions, as, for example, in the work of Fahrelnissa Zeid (1901–91), an accomplished female artist whose unique and fascinating life spanned big Western metropolises such as Paris, London and Berlin as well as traditional centres of Islamic art such as Istanbul and Baghdad (see fig. 16.14).

The first important abstract paintings in modern Turkish art were produced in this period by artists like Zeid, as well as her son Nejad Devrim (1923–95) and others such as Mubin Orhon (1924–81), Selim Turan (1915–94) and Hakkı Anlı (1906–91). While the works of these pioneers are of historical significance, abstract artistic trends flourished in Turkey after the 1950s, with the work of younger painters such as Adnan Çoker (b. 1927) and Adnan Turan (b. 1925), and sculptors such as İlhan Koman (1921–86) and Kuzgun Acar (1928–76). Yet, as many art historians/ critics observe, the primacy of figurative approaches was

never fully shaken in Turkey, even in the heyday of abstract trends.<sup>39</sup> Some artists tried abstract compositions in the 1950s, only to return to figurative compositions in the 1960s. Others produced highly original work by which they defied any sharp binary opposition between abstract and figurative painting. The expressive brush-strokes of Omer Uluç (b. 1931), the figure-ground plays in the paintings of Orhan Peker (1927–78) and the abstract rhythmic patterns of floating birds, autumn leaves or cityscapes of Devrim Erbil (b. 1937) stand out, among others.

Among the more eccentric and original of contemporary Turkish artists of this period, Yüksel Arslan (b. 1933) and Mehmet Güleriyüz (b. 1938) made distinguished reputations for themselves outside Turkey, especially with their unique styles in illustrations and line drawings. Trained in Paris in the 1970s and also involved with theatre and stage design, Mehmet Güleriyüz is a prolific illustrator of metamorphosing figures and ink sketches of half-human, half-animal creatures bordering on the grotesque, as can be seen in his highly acclaimed later work in New York. Yüksel Arslan's work embodies an intense intellectual content informed by philosophers and books as well as fantastic and erotic imagery, and was enthusiastically received by André Breton and the surrealists in Paris, where he exhibited his work in 1961. The paintings of Cihat Burak (1915–94) and Erol Akyavaş (1932–99), both of whom trained as architects, also contained surrealist overtones and dreamy and metaphysical collapsing of spaces. Yet, rather than arising out of the artist's inner psyche, desires and fears as surrealist art was defined in the West, their works were intimately connected to their own cultural context. Cihat Burak's fantastic images of urban life and urban landscapes, for example, were informed by his familiarity with and passion for Istanbul. The surrealist feeling of Erol Akyavaş's earlier compositions, on the other hand, gradually gave way to his later creative engagement with Islamic arts, especially after 1980. Likewise, another highly accomplished artist, Burhan Doğançay (b. 1925), first painted the walls, graffiti and posters of New York, gradually moving towards abstract compositions inspired by torn strips of paper peeling away from walls, but also alluding to calligraphic script.

After the military coup of 1960 brought 'the DP decade' to an end, democracy was restored in 1961 with a relatively liberal constitution, after which the Turkish political and cultural scene displayed a plurality of ideas, programmes, political parties, popular tastes and artistic/architectural styles. A very important feature of this period was the emergence of the Turkish left as a major

39 Tanşuğ, *Çağdaş Türk sanatı*, p. 268.

force in politics, society and culture and the proliferation of socialist views, especially among students, intellectuals and professionals, until their eventual suppression by the military coups of 1971 and 1980. Unsurprisingly, a number of Turkish artists also sympathised with the left and adopted versions of Social Realism in this period. Following the earlier work of Neşet Günel (b. 1923) in this genre, İbrahim Balaban (b. 1921) painted poor peasants, bare-footed children, toiling workers and farmers with big hands and sun-baked faces, attracting the personal acclaim of Mehmet Ali Aybar, the leader of the newly established Turkish Workers' Party. At the same time, a highly politicised Chamber of Architects and left-leaning architectural students became active in questioning the role of the architectural profession and its relationship to society at large.

After 1960, following developments in international architectural culture, modern Turkish architecture entered a pluralist period, with a range of new experiments highly critical of the legacy of the 1950s and of the formal vocabulary and prevailing canons of international style. Once again the examples of American architects, especially the 'organicism' of Frank Lloyd Wright, the 'new monumentality' ideas of Jose Louis Sert and Louis Kahn and the New Brutalism of Louis Kahn and Paul Rudolph, were the primary inspirations for the Turkish architectural production of the 1960s and 1970s. Organic forms and modular systems were employed to fragment the prismatic boxy aesthetic of high modernism. The 'brutalist' aesthetic of exposed concrete, brick or wood offered textured surfaces to replace the slick façades of glass, metal and polished materials. The architectural school of Middle East Technical University (1962–3), designed by Altuğ and Behruz Çinici (b. 1932), is a well-crafted example of these trends, as is the work of Şevki Vanlı (b. 1926), who established a prolific practice in Ankara along similar precepts. The establishment of Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara was itself a new challenge to the traditional hegemony of the Academy of Fine Arts and Istanbul Technical University in the education of Turkish architects. Unlike the French and German systems upon which the latter were originally based, METU's curriculum was modelled on American examples, with Louis Kahn's University of Pennsylvania directly involved in its foundation.<sup>40</sup>

Most conspicuously, the early Republican quest for a 'national style' in architecture was abandoned in this period. The word 'nationalism' was replaced with 'regionalism', as the marker of architects' desire to ground modern architecture in a local context, sensitive to the topography, materials, climate and

40 A. Payashoğlu, *Barakadan kampusa 1954-1964* (Ankara: METU Publications, 1996).



qualities of that context. The towering figure of modern Turkish architecture, Sedad Hakkı Eldem, continued his prolific career along these new lines. Private patronage of architecture enabled him to produce some of his best villas for the leading industrialists, businessmen and wealthy families of Istanbul, mostly along the shores of the Bosphorus. Among these, villas for the Kıraç, Uşaklıgil, Sirer, Bayramoğlu, Koç and Komili families are significant examples of his life-long commitment to the iconography of the traditional 'Turkish house' reinterpreted in modern terms. His use of traditional plan types, the repetition of modular vertically proportioned windows and the wide roof overhangs, which were the leitmotifs of his 'national architecture' programme in the 1930s and 1940s, became the distinguishing features of his accomplished career in the 1960s and 1970s. In his award-winning office complex/social centre for the Social Security Organisation in Zeyrek (1963–70), he employed the same stylistic leitmotifs and successfully fragmented the programme into smaller volumes, with sensitivity to the historical context of the Zeyrek district.

Another important name in 'regionalist' modernism is Turgut Cansever (b. 1922), whose Turkish Historical Society building in Ankara (1966) demonstrates how a modern building can be sensitive to local context, materials and historical precedents and still make a civic, urban presence. Likewise, Cengiz Bektaş (b. 1934), the prominent poet/architect and designer of the Turkish Language Society building in Ankara (1972–8), also advocated learning from vernacular traditions and from the old houses and neighbourhoods of Anatolia in order to combat the facelessness and placelessness of international high modernism. During the same years, the preservation efforts of Çelik Gülersoy's Automobile Association began in Istanbul, symbolising nostalgia for the architectural and urban qualities of Istanbul before the onslaught of urbanisation and *gecekondu* development. The preservation and adaptive reuse of late Ottoman buildings, kiosks and pavilions under the sponsorship of the Automobile Association was an important step in the cultivation of a public consciousness of historical heritage, albeit in a rather commodified and 'touristy' fashion that is not without controversy.

Between 1950 and 1980, in addition to the foundation of METU, the number of architectural schools multiplied, with new architectural departments in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Trabzon, Konya and Edirne. As the number of professional architects increased dramatically, a concomitant 'proletarianization of the profession'<sup>41</sup> followed, radicalising the Chamber of Architects along

41 A. Yücel, 'Pluralism takes command', in R. Holod and A. Evin (eds.), *Modern Turkish Architecture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), p. 122.

leftist lines. Sympathetic to Third World and 'non-aligned' versions of modernisation, they advocated a shift of attention from Western architectural models to the lessons of vernacular architecture and squatter settlements and, even more strongly, from the aesthetics of architecture to the politics of the production processes. One consequence was a growing academic interest in squatter housing as an alternative social and architectural model, outside the domain of both the state and the profession and from which architects could learn. Often built by the inhabitants themselves, squatter houses represented spontaneous and piecemeal processes of construction with meagre resources, the conceptual opposite of professional/technocratic solutions 'from above' (see fig. 16.9). As social criticism and ideas about participatory and democratic design methods entered architectural discourse with full force, other important issues such as history, preservation, energy consciousness, scientific design methods and environmental controls were also taken up, significantly enriching architectural debates beyond issues of form and style. It is possible to conclude that, during the 1960s and early 1970s, there was indeed a critique of high modernism in its architectural form that came from within modernist premises, without surrendering the enlightenment epistemologies on which design professions are built. However, this foundational belief in the ability of modern architecture to transform society for the better rapidly waned in the political, economic and cultural climate of the 1980s.

### Postmodern trends: after 1980

The period following the military coup of 1980 is commonly identified with the still-contentious legacy of the late Turgut Özal, prime minister and president, who initiated a spectacular transformation of Turkey along the economically liberal and culturally conservative paths set by Reagan and Thatcher in the West. Labelled 'the third Republic' by the historian Erik Zürcher,<sup>42</sup> this period marks the end of nationalist developmentalism, an unequivocal reorientation of the country towards free markets and global capitalism and an accelerated push towards the decades-old ambition to join the EU. In this period, the official ideology, cultural norms and mental habits of the old Republican elite, as well as of the traditional left, have been challenged in unprecedented ways by groups ranging from advocates of liberal economy, civil society and popular

42 Zürcher, *Turkey*, pp. 292–322.

culture to various Islamist groups.<sup>43</sup> As in many other parts of the world, particularistic discourses of identity have emerged to compete for visibility in public space and the media, shaking the earlier belief in modernisation theories and homogeneous nation-states. Particularly remarkable has been the rise of political Islam as a major force, first following the municipal election victories of the Welfare Party (WP) in the 1990s and more recently, the sweeping rise of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power. The seemingly paradoxical picture that many commentators observe is that the more democratic Turkey becomes (largely through the pressure of the prospects of EU membership), the more 'Islamic' it seems to get, and that Islam has far more presence in Turkish society and politics today than it has had at any other time in Republican history.

One conspicuous consequence of these developments is a new sense of reconciliation between artistic/cultural production and some overtly Ottoman or Islamic themes, motifs and precedents. In a 'postmodern' world more sympathetic to discourses of identity than before, works that deliberately highlight the Ottoman/Islamic ingredients of Turkish culture have been received favourably at both national and international levels, especially if they have been capable of casting these ingredients in Western artistic and literary terms. A most notable example in art is the work of Erol Akyavaş (1932–99), arguably the most important contemporary Turkish painter, whose work embodies complex cross-cultural encounters. Although not entirely new, Akyavaş's earlier preoccupation with Islamic arts, miniature painting, calligraphy and paper-marbling as the possible philosophical and aesthetic sources of a modern Turkish art has grown even stronger in this period, as for example in his 1987 *Miraçname* series of limited-edition prints inspired by the story of the Prophet's ascent to Heaven (see fig. 16.15). With his formative years well grounded in Western modernist and surrealist avant-garde currents and having worked between Istanbul and New York for many years, Akyavaş's work epitomises a new form of trans-national cultural production that skilfully mixes Western genres with Islamic aesthetic sensibilities, not unlike the internationally acclaimed novels of Turkey's literary celebrity and 2006 Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk.

On the architectural scene, while the professional establishment continues to be largely secular and modernist, there is a wide consensus that architects who acknowledge indebtedness to Turkish and Islamic traditions have

43 See S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba, 'Turkey at a Cross-road', *Journal of International Affairs* 54 (Fall 2000), pp. 1–20.

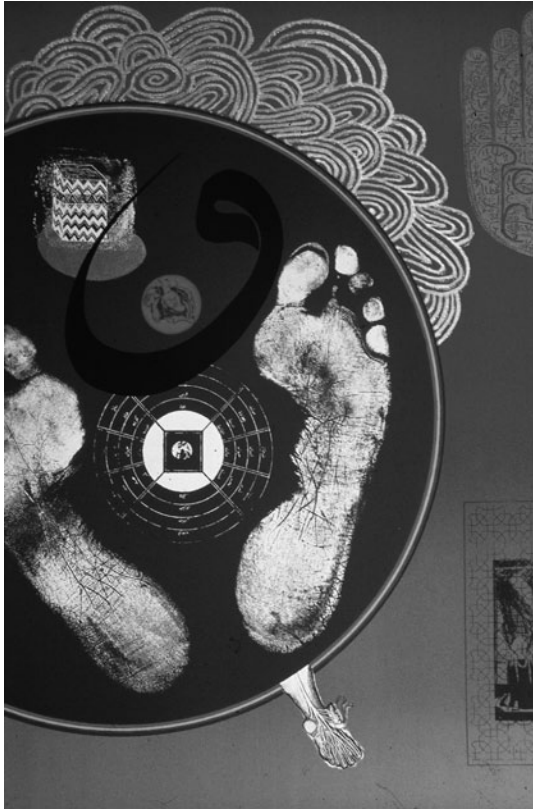


Fig. 16.15 Erol Akyavaş, *Miraçname*, limited edition print (1987), Galeri Nev, Istanbul [print in the author's collection]

gained a new visibility after 1980. It is, for example, of considerable symbolic significance that the prominent architect Turgut Cansever (b. 1922) has identified himself more vocally with an Islamic world view in this period. In a 1991 interview, he blamed the contemporary plight of architecture and urbanism on Renaissance humanism and on the instrumental rationality of modernism, calling for a return to the philosophical premises and craft foundations of traditional Islamic environments.<sup>44</sup> His award-winning Demir Holiday Village on the Bodrum peninsula (1971), which adapts the stone vernacular traditions of the region, albeit for a thoroughly secular, modern and wealthy urban clientele, has become a canonic example of the pervasive 'return to tradition'

<sup>44</sup> See interview with T. Cansever in *Dergah* (July 1991).

trend that marked postmodernism everywhere in the world. The inception of the Ağa Khan Awards in 1980 for recognising good architecture in Muslim countries and the subsequent awards given to tradition-conscious architects such as Sedad Hakkı Eldem and Turgut Cansever have also contributed to a heightened awareness of Islamic traditions and historical precedents within the architectural community, while drawing criticism from the staunchly modernist adversaries of this rising traditionalism.<sup>45</sup>

If such selective and well-crafted artistic/architectural productions like those of Eldem and Cansever represent the higher/elite end of traditional Islamic aesthetic sensibility, its lower end contains the more pervasive and popular expressions of political Islam in Turkey, most visibly the phenomenal increase of mosque construction all over the country. Largely the work of anonymous designers, often cheaply constructed and devoid of aesthetic merit, such mosques are, first and foremost, highly visible political statements of a reclaimed Muslim identity, rather than programmatic architectural responses to any real need for prayer space. The case of the later design for Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara (1967–87) is a dramatic example illustrating the current confrontation between Islamists and secularists in Turkey. Designed by Hüsrev Tayla and Fatin Uluengin as a monumental ‘neo-Ottoman’ mosque crowning a hilltop across from the Anıtkabir (the ultimate monument to Atatürk and secular nationhood), the Kocatepe Mosque is probably the most provocative challenge to the secular Republican identity of the national capital (see fig. 16.16).<sup>46</sup> Yet the fact that the Kocatepe Mosque complex also contains a vast supermarket and parking garage in its lower levels illustrates a distinctly postmodern juxtaposition of consumer society with renewed religiosity.

In contrast to Kocatepe’s overt reference to classical Ottoman precedents, the design of the new Parliament Mosque complex (1989), an innovative modernist combination of prayer hall and library without any recognisable markers of Islamic identity such as a dome or a minaret, is a compelling illustration of the fact that while the increasing presence of Islam is an undeniable fact of post-1980 Turkey, its particular form and aesthetics are still hotly contested. Although the construction of a mosque within the grounds of the Turkish Grand National Assembly does indicate the power of an increasing number of

45 Ş. Vanlı, ‘Dönemin mimarisi, yirminci yüzyıl sorumluluğu’, *Yapı* 248 (2002) and the following polemical debates with Suha Özkan, the deputy secretary general of the Ağa Khan Awards.

46 For a discussion of these two monuments in terms of their politics and identity implications see M. Meeker, ‘Once there was, once there wasn’t: national monuments and interpersonal exchange’, in Bozdoğan and Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity*.



Fig. 16.16 Kocatepe Mosque complex, Ankara (1967–87); contemporary replica of a classical Ottoman mosque epitomising the new prominence of Islam in the Turkish urbscape  
[photograph by the author]

conservative, Muslim representatives in the current parliament, the choice of a conspicuously modernist design by the architects, Behruz and Can Çinicı, can be seen as a successful compromise, more palatable to the secularist establishment than the Kocatepe Mosque. In other instances, the ‘culture wars’ between the secularists and Islamists have not been so reconciliatory, as for example in the controversial proposal of Ankara’s conservative Islamist mayor Melih Gökçek to change the logo of the municipality from a Hittite symbol, rooted in the Kemalist nationalism of the 1930s, to the domes and crescents of Islam. Equally controversial has been the proposal, after the 1994 municipal victory of the WP, to build a new mosque in Taksim Square – a proposal that was resisted and finally defeated after the WP was forced out of power in 1997. However, the fact that similar proposals for new mosque construction keep coming up under the current AK Party government (such as a recent proposal to build a mosque in Göztepe Park on the Asian side of Istanbul) testifies to the continuing contest over symbols. If the ‘headscarf controversy’ constitutes the first symbolic battleground between the Republic’s foundational secularism and the growing Islamic tide after the 1980s, mosque construction is clearly the second.

At the same time, this increasing presence of Islam in Turkish culture coexists with an equally strong presence of the effects and cultural expressions of globalisation in Turkey. An inexorable construction boom continues to transform the physical fabric of major Turkish cities, especially Istanbul, with the familiar spaces of trans-national capitalism everywhere: five-star hotel chains, supermarkets and shopping malls, international fast-food chains, business centres, office towers and holiday villages. A parallel global trend gaining popularity in Turkey is the rise of a new upper-income residential typology, namely the development of luxury villas in exclusive gated communities, complete with golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts and fitness clubs within privately controlled boundaries. These exclusive suburbs, such as Kemer Country on the European side of Istanbul or Kasaba on the Asian side, are marketed with the promise of offering their residents 'exclusive lifestyles' close to nature, away from the chaos, congestion and pollution of the city. Large finance capital and leading banks have entered this lucrative residential sector (such as İş Bankası in Kasaba) and it is not uncommon to find the stamp of prominent international designers in upper-class residential development in Istanbul, as for example in the case of Maya Residences in Etiler, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the American corporate giant whose work in Turkey goes back to the Istanbul Hilton in the early 1950s.

Although formal/stylistic references to traditional Ottoman houses seem to be the most popular and easily marketable choice of developers (see fig. 16.17), as in the Kemer and Kasaba examples, a wide stylistic repertoire is available for different tastes – from more abstract modern designs, such as the Optimum Villas outside Istanbul on the Asian side, designed by the talented young architect Han Tümertekin, to Kemer Country's weekend houses in the style of 'American log cabins'. Primarily catering to a wealthy, internationally connected and technologically savvy clientele of young professionals, business, finance and media elites, such exclusive residential suburbs (and the luxury cars and SUVs that make these new lifestyles away from the city possible), testify to the progressive retreat of the wealthy, educated and Westernised elites from public urban space, which, in turn, is increasingly occupied by the poorer, more traditional, visibly more 'Muslim' populations from the urban fringes. In stark contrast to aesthetically pleasing wealthy neighbourhoods and luxury suburbs, the poorer urban fringes offer visible testimonies to how the global market economy and the new wealth it creates exist side by side with expressions of extreme urban poverty and disorder, particularly in a vast metropolis such as Istanbul. Any visitor approaching Istanbul by land can witness the unchecked sprawl of the city in all directions, the ever-growing high-rise shantytowns (the



Fig. 16.17 New residential development in Kemer, a suburb of Istanbul, showing the use of neo-traditionalist 'Turkish style' façades (2004)  
[photograph by the author]

newer versions of *gecekondu*), entire satellite cities with sub-standard housing construction and very poor infrastructure collectively pointing to an overall aesthetic deterioration.

Reflecting the heterogeneity, plurality and visual contrasts of contemporary architecture and urbanism, contemporary Turkish culture is equally diverse. Everywhere in Turkey, but especially in Istanbul, a vibrant popular culture flourishes: the so-called *arabesk* music blasting out of shops, taxis and minibuses that provide transport to and from new squatter settlements, cheap little mosques with aluminum domes, *kebab* restaurants opened by migrants from the south-east, plastic ornaments sold in the streets and many other forms of contemporary 'kitsch' produced and consumed by the poorer migrant populations of urban fringes. Reactions to this colourful scene display a wide range of positions. The old guard of Republican intellectuals, along with many established artists and architects, resents this cheapening of culture and hybridisation of tastes – this 'invasion' and transformation of their beloved Istanbul by rural migrants. They uphold the values of high art



and elite culture, whether of the West or of classic Islam, as defended – for example – by the painters Mehmet Güteryüz and Erol Akyavaş respectively. By contrast, a younger generation of ‘postmodern’ artists and intellectuals embrace popular culture, ethnic mixings and hybrid experiences as the very reality of Turkish identity, between East and West, between country and city, between modern aspirations and their constant frustration. What Latife Tekin has accomplished in literature<sup>47</sup> and Fatih Akin in cinema,<sup>48</sup> the paintings of Gülsün Karamustafa have accomplished in art. Some of Karamustafa’s work uses *arabesk* motifs and a kind of ‘kitsch aesthetic’ to offer a critique of elitism. Another young artist, Nur Koçak, directly engages with trends such as American hyperrealism and photo-realism in order to problematise the boundaries between art and advertisement.

Contemporary and avant-garde artistic experiments, especially the New Tendencies Exhibitions (*Yeni Eğilimler Sergileri*) have taken hold in Istanbul since the art festivals of the Academy of Fine Arts in the late 1970s. Conceptual art, multi-media installations and the influence of currents like ‘Arte Povera’ and ‘New Realism’ were represented in these exhibitions, challenging both the more conventional art of the establishment and the ideological impositions of the traditional left in Turkey. The conceptual artworks, spatial installations and collages of Şükrü Aysan, Serhat Kiraz and their Art Definition Collective (Sanat Tanımı Topluluğu, STT) were important pioneering experiments. Other young artists such as Canan Baykal, Gülsün Karamustafa, Ayşe Erkmen, Hale Tenger, Erdağ Aksel and Adem Genç occupy the cutting edge of contemporary Turkish art, participating in major international art events. The number of Turkish artists living and working abroad has also substantially increased in this period, now including first- and second-generation immigrants permanently settled in Europe and the US. Accomplished sculptor Azade Koker (Berlin), artists Adem Yılmaz (Cologne), Şükran Aziz (New York), Canan Tolon (San Francisco) Utku Varlık (Paris) and the ceramic artist Alev Ebuzziya Siesbye (Denmark) are some of the better-known names. Within Turkey, Bedri Baykam, arguably the most colourful personality on the Turkish scene as an artist, public figure and political activist, combined abstract expressionism, graffiti and political content in his earlier paintings. In 1994, he made a show of his secularist Kemalist political activism in the form of an art installation titled *Kuvay-i Milliye*, and has embarked upon a second career as an

47 See L. Tekin, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1992); L. Tekin, *Dear Shameless Death* (New York: Marion Boyars, 2001).

48 Especially his *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul*. (2005), a documentary of the various popular music genres in Istanbul.

outspoken opponent of the rising Islamic movement in Turkey, clashing frequently with Melih Gökçek, the Islamist mayor of Ankara. Gökçek's decision to remove a number of sculptures from Ankara's public spaces on grounds of their 'obscenity' provoked a strong protest not just from Baykam but from the entire art establishment, testifying to the fact that public art, like many other issues, is a contested territory between Islamists and secularists in Turkey.

Yet beyond such publicised ideological battles around public art and public space, the period since 1980 corresponds to a growing perception of art as a commodity for private aesthetic consumption and refinement of individual tastes. The unprecedented expansion of the art market and the proliferation of private galleries in the post-1980 period have significantly transformed the Turkish art scene. Among the most notable galleries, Baraz (1976), Maçka Sanat Galerisi (1976), Uart (1982), Galeri Nev (1984) and Tem (1986) have organised major exhibitions and retrospective shows of the best work in contemporary Turkish art. Galeri Nev's publication of numerous high-quality art books, catalogues and monographs, as well as the art/architectural publications of major banks such as İş Bankası and Yapı Kredi Bankası and of private institutions such as Yapı Endüstri Merkezi (Centre for Building Industry) collectively represent a dramatic leap in the making of a high-quality contemporary artistic/architectural culture in Turkey. The proliferation of art/architecture journals like *Sanat Dünyamız* (Our Art World), *Boyut* (Dimension), *Plastik Sanatlar Dergisi* (Journal of Plastic Arts), *Genç Sanat* (Young Art), *Art Décor*, *Tasarım* (Design) and *Arredemento Dekorasyon* have also contributed to an increasingly sophisticated discussion of art and architecture among academics, artists, architects, critics, intellectuals, students of art and architecture and members of the more educated general public. Popular magazines for 'good living' and 'home decoration' have also proliferated, providing the wealthy urbanites, especially in Istanbul, with an ambitious (and expensive) programme to aestheticise their lifestyles and refine their tastes as a way of acquiring elite status.

In architecture, with the demise of the left, the earlier intensely political discourse of the Chamber of Architects gave way to a reorientation of the profession towards issues of form and image making in line with the latest trends in architectural culture at large. There is a hitherto unprecedented proliferation of glossy publications and new journals of architecture, as well as of industrial and interior design. Among practising architects, 'liberation' from the sterility and monotony of high modernism has been celebrated with a wide range of formal and stylistic trends, applied primarily to office complexes, business centres, commercial structures, hotels and holiday villages. Among these, Doruk Pamir (b. 1938), an architect with a distinguished career



Fig. 16.18 Kanyon Tower residences/shopping mall in Istanbul (2001–6) designed by Jerde Partnership/Tabanlıoğlu Architects and Arup Engineers [photograph by the author]

and international experience, has elaborated a formalism and high-tech expressionism illustrated by such projects as his Dikmen Valley ‘bridge’ in Ankara (1996), commercial centre for Vakıf Real Estate Investment Company also in Ankara (2000–1) and his highly controversial Süzer Plaza tower, known as the ‘Skyframe’ (*Gökkafes*) in Istanbul (1991). Likewise, Ragıp Buluç (b. 1940) has worked with the contemporary universal language of glazed malls and atria, as in the case of his Atakule shopping mall in Ankara (1989), with an observation tower containing a rotating restaurant. Doğan Tekeli and Sami Sısa, the designers of the highly acclaimed Lassa tyre factory in İzmit in the 1970s, have continued their mastery of industrial buildings and large-span structures with such recent projects as the Eczacıbaşı pharmaceutical plants in Luleburgaz (1992), the Antalya airport international terminal (1998) and the Metrocity tower residences/shopping mall in Istanbul (1997–2003), the popularity of the latter to be eclipsed three years later by the adjacent Kanyon Tower shopping mall designed by Jerde Partnership/Tabanlıoğlu Architects and the structural engineers of Arup Associates (see fig. 16.18). The mastery of cutting-edge

technology, new materials and advanced construction systems has dramatically increased, making it no longer surprising for Turkish architects/design firms to work with complex programmes and technologically challenging structures such as airports, concert halls and auditoria. The Sabiha Gökçen airport in Istanbul (2000–1) and the Bilkent University concert hall in Ankara (1998–9) by Erkut Şahinbaş are two award-winning examples.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the appeal of postmodernism has also prompted architects such as Merih Karaaslan to seek new approaches to residential architecture by breaking the monotony of the conventional apartment block with formal playfulness and the use of colour. Even the older generation of well-established architects, such as Behruz Çinici (b. 1932) and Şevki Vanlı (b. 1926), has experimented with new forms, historical and contextual quotations and a generally more colourful architecture, as in the case of Çinici's higher-end Platin Residences in Istanbul (1994–9). The architecture of hotels and holiday villages has emerged as a major category parallel to the expansion of the tourism sector after 1980. Tuncay Çavdar (b. 1934) has attracted both praise and criticism for his exuberant holiday villages along the southern coast of Turkey near Antalya, combining the international language of 'playful postmodern vacation architecture' with the local climate and architectural iconography of the Mediterranean. The hotels of Ahmet İğdırlıgil (b. 1955) in the Bodrum peninsula, where he resides and works, continue to display the Aegean stone vernacular traditions in a kind of contemporary regionalism.

Since the 1990s, a younger generation of Turkish architects has achieved remarkable success in transcending traditionalist, regionalist and/or postmodernist clichés, as well as the clichés of an international corporate architecture, in favour of beautifully crafted work that can be contextual and universal at the same time. The recognition of such work by the annual National Architecture Awards (*Ulusal Mimarlık Ödülleri*) of the Turkish Chamber of Architects and the publication of anthologies such as the *Architectural Yearbooks* by Kolleksiyon, a leading furniture/interior design firm, have substantially increased the visibility of quality design in architecture. Among these, Han Tümertekin's (b. 1958) B-2 House in Ayvacık, Çanakkale overlooking the Aegean, the recipient of the prestigious Ağa Khan Award in 2004, stands out. This small weekend house for an urban client is a minimally simple yet conceptually sophisticated design sensitively situated in the landscape. The same tectonic qualities, celebration of textured materials, working with the landscape and an overall minimalist modern sensibility can be seen in the residential designs of Nevzat Sayın (b. 1954), Emre Arolat (b. 1963) and Şevki Pekin (b. 1946), among others. These architects

have also designed many large, complex industrial programmes, offices and corporate buildings which are executed with a level of quality detailing that has only recently become possible in Turkish construction scene. Nevzat Sayın's Gön leather factories (1994–5) and Emre Arolat's Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporters' Association offices (1999–2000) are two notable examples. In 2006 Arolat's design for the Dalaman airport won the prestigious Emerging Architecture Awards of the London-based *Architectural Review*, further testifying to the increasing maturity of contemporary Turkish architecture.

The connection established with the rest of the world in matters of art and architecture is the single most important and visible accomplishment of the period. A more confident Turkey is no longer limited to importing international trends, but has started in the direction of becoming an exporter of artistic and architectural production and a recognised participant on the global scene. One very important development in this period has been the appearance of large corporate design, engineering and construction firms such as MESA and STFA, entering the free-market economy with full force and forming the fourth major sector of Turkish economy alongside textiles, tourism and finance. These firms have not only built extensive housing and public works projects within the country, but have also undertaken big commissions abroad, especially in the Middle East, Gulf States, Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union. Equally significant has been the progressive integration of Turkey into a global art and design network, parallel to the country's rekindled prospects for EU membership and the concomitant efforts to refashion Istanbul as a 'world city' worthy of international attention. In architecture, professional organisations and private-sector sponsorship have been effective in inviting international celebrities such as Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi and Zaha Hadid to Turkey, culminating in Istanbul's colourful hosting of the UIA World Architecture Congress in 2005.

In art, the organisation of international exhibitions and events under the leadership of competent curators such as Vasif Kortun and Beral Madra, especially the institutionalisation of the Istanbul Biennale since 1987, has dramatically elevated the image of Turkish art abroad and increased its connections with the international art market. Historical buildings such as the church of St Irene and the Baths of Haseki Sultan and Ottoman industrial buildings such as the historical Feshane were used as temporary settings for Biennale exhibitions throughout the 1990s. The foundation of Sanart in Ankara in 1992 as the resourceful organiser of international art symposia and exhibitions has also been significant. An even more spectacular boost to Turkey's visibility has been the opening of major private museums in Istanbul with the wealth of the

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## In Picasso, Istanbul Gets a Special Taste of Europe

Turkey is still negotiating for membership in the European Union, but a private museum in Istanbul has already taken a big step to embrace Western Europe with an exhibit of works by Pablo Picasso, including some that are rarely seen.

"Picasso in Turkey" is the country's first solo exhibition of a Western artist, according to Nazan Olcer, director of the Sakip Sabanci Museum, where the show was to open on Nov. 24. Among the more than 130 pieces are some that Picasso never displayed or sold, Ms. Olcer said.

The exhibition, on view through March 25, includes paintings, drawings, sculptures, etchings, ceramics and textiles. Also on display are photographs of the artist, his studios, his inner circle of friends and his family.

Picasso's grandson Bernard Ruiz-Picasso was instrumental in the selection process, even contributing pieces from his own collection, like the rarely seen tapestries of "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and "Les Femmes à Leur Toilette," right. Other works are on loan from private collections and the Picasso museums in Barcelona and Paris.

"The people here in Turkey really want and need to see modern art," Mr. Ruiz-Picasso said. "I'm very happy



Images Moderns

about collaborating with the museum."

Picasso won't be the only Western artist with a solo show in Turkey in 2006. Coming up next at the Sakip Sabanci: a retrospective of Auguste Rodin, the French sculptor.

With its new state-of-the-art annex, the museum has 69,965 square feet of exhibition space. It is best known for

its Ottoman calligraphy collection.

Admission to the museum, which is closed on Monday, is 6 new liras, about \$4.50 at 1.38 liras to the dollar; the exhibit costs 10 new liras extra.

The Sakip Sabanci is at Istinye Cadessi 22, in the Emirgan area. Information: (90-212) 277-2200, and at muze.sabanciuniv.edu/english.

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Fig. 16.19 *New York Times* article on the Picasso Exhibition in Sabancı Museum Istanbul, 27 November, 2005

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country's top industrialists turned patrons of art and culture. The Rahmi Koç Museum of Industry, converted from the old industrial buildings of Ottoman shipyards along the Golden Horn, opened in 1994 as Turkey's first technology museum. The Sabancı Museum in Emirgan, which opened in 2002 featuring the Sabancı family's calligraphy collection and a rich selection of late Ottoman and modern Turkish paintings, has drawn international attention with the opening of a Picasso exhibit in the summer of 2005, another important 'first' for Turkey (see fig. 16.19). The latter was attended by the Turkish public in record-breaking numbers, a rather unprecedented event in a country where modern avant-garde art has historically been viewed with nationalist contempt.

The crowning achievement of the cultural promotion campaign on the eve of the EU's acceptance of Turkey's candidacy was the inauguration of The Istanbul Modern in December 2004 as the country's first museum of modern art.

The elegantly modern and spacious galleries, café and gift shop of the Istanbul Modern, all contained in a simple reinforced concrete frame building, one of the existing warehouses of the Galata harbour, were designed by Tabanlıoğlu Architects. Spectacularly located at the entrance to the Bosphorus, the Istanbul Modern has done more for Turkey's image abroad than years of official government publicity programmes. The permanent exhibitions feature a representative national collection of late Ottoman and Republican Turkish artists, most of them from the collections of another leading industrialist family, the Eczacıbaşı Foundation. A busy schedule of thematic exhibits and retrospective shows is currently in the works under the leadership of the talented curator Rosa Martinez. Acknowledging this new liveliness of the art scene in Istanbul, a 2005 article in the *New York Times* observed, albeit with the familiar orientalist overtones, that 'contemporary art is now blooming among the minarets'.<sup>49</sup>

The vitality of the cultural scene in Istanbul does give a glimmer of hope in these troubled times, supporting the desired compatibility of a predominantly Muslim country with the culture, aesthetics and politics of modernity. The liveliness, energy and plurality of the art/architectural scene since the 1980s have done a lot to challenge the authoritarianism and doctrinaire position of traditional Republican cultural politics, not to mention its elitism. Today, compared to their early Republican counterparts, both the producers and the consumers of art and architecture come from different classes, cultures and political persuasions, working with a multiplicity of aesthetic codes from the low to the high end. Examples of beautifully designed and crafted architectures, built with cutting-edge technologies and high-quality materials, coexist with technically substandard, aesthetically banal and environmentally unsustainable buildings that make up the majority of the urban fabric in most Turkish cities. Internationally acclaimed art shows in the Istanbul Modern or other private art galleries in Istanbul address an elite audience while more traditional, poorer crowds flock into public places such as Minyatürk – an architectural theme park which opened along the Golden Horn in 2004 (see fig. 16.20).

Yet there are also legitimate reasons for concern, such as the potential pitfall of a standardless relativism, where 'anything goes' in an increasingly aggressive free market. Already, the overproduction and fast consumption of artistic and architectural ideas and trends have become matters of concern for critics.<sup>50</sup> In the workings of the art/architectural market, the organisation of exhibitions

<sup>49</sup> *New York Times*, 28 August 2005.

<sup>50</sup> See for example, B. Madra, '1997 ve sonrası için çağdaş sanata ilişkin düşünceler', *Arredamento Dekorasyon* (February 1997 and March 1997).



Fig. 16.20 Minyatürk: architectural theme park along the Golden Horn (2004) with scale models of architecture from Seljuk, Ottoman and modern Turkish periods [photograph by the author]

or the commissioning of architects for big projects, there is frequently a conspicuous absence of a theoretical position, a clear ideological stance or even a consistency in the selection of names. Like everywhere else in a rapidly globalising world, the critical edge of cultural production in Turkey can be quickly blunted by market imperatives. One needs to look no further than the recent eagerness of the conservative 'Islamist' AK Party government to generously open up Istanbul's precious real estate to international corporate developers for new commercial, residential and tourism projects, such as the highly controversial proposal for two high-rise towers in Istanbul, dubbed the 'Dubai Towers' in reference to the Gulf capital behind them. As many commentators point out, the 'programmatically dimension' of Turkish modernity, which has shaped and reshaped the country since the proclamation of the Republic, also embodies a 'destructive dimension' that continues to erase the traces of its own history and its own collective memory.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ali Cengizkan, *Modernin saati* (Ankara: Mimarlar Derneği, 2002).



## Conclusion

At the risk of oversimplification, it is possible to look at the history of modern Turkish art and architecture in the Republican period in terms of two parallel but contradictory processes. On the one hand, since its institutionalisation under the ideological auspices and patronage of the Kemalist state, modern artistic/architectural production in Turkey has come a long way in emancipating itself from official cultural politics, towards a relatively more 'autonomous' status. Especially since the 1980s, artists and architects are catering to an increasingly diverse private clientele and focusing increasingly more on specific professional and disciplinary concerns (such as matters of form, style, cutting-edge technologies, media, market etc.) rather than on the single ideological mission of giving form to modern/national Turkish identity. On the other hand, also since the 1980s, in the context of the increasing polarisation of Turkish culture and politics between the secular/nationalist old guard and their liberal and/or Islamist challengers, art and architecture often find themselves pulled back into the centre of politics once again, often with surprising new alignments that defy traditional definitions of progressive versus conservative, left versus right, modernist versus traditionalist etc.

For example, it is not without a certain amount of irony that in their effort to market Istanbul as a world city, it is the conservative, Islamist municipality of Istanbul that is taking bold initiatives to invite the international stars of contemporary architecture to tackle the city's formidable urban, environmental, ecological and aesthetic problems (as in the case of two interesting and insightful recent projects by Zaha Hadid and Ken Yeang for the Kartal and Büyükçekmece districts of Greater Istanbul respectively), while the 'modernist' architectural establishment is putting up an ideologically motivated nationalist opposition to such initiatives, declaring them 'an insult to Turkish architects carrying the blood of the great master Sinan'.<sup>52</sup> This is not to say that the new architectural/urban proposals of the AK Party are without serious problems. On the contrary, the haste and eagerness with which Istanbul and coastal Turkey are being opened up to new construction, commercial development and global tourism, often with little regard for their social and environmental impacts, are indeed troubling. Yet, rather than launching a constructive, expertise-based critique of the projects themselves, the reaction often takes the form of an ideologically charged anti-globalisation, anti-Islamist

52 Declaration by the Turkish Chamber of Architects, Ankara, 7 April 2006.

discourse, anachronistically evoking the isolationist nationalism of the early Republic.

A concluding observation could be that while individual talent and creativity have never been lacking in modern Turkey, as a collective enterprise Turkish artistic/architectural culture has mostly been framed by larger political, ideological and economic agendas that have blunted its creative and critical edge. Between serving the authoritarian secular nationalism of the early Republic, on the one hand, and offering commodified postmodern 'pastiche' for today's global market (including 'Islamic' identity statements), on the other, there has been very little room for more nuanced, alternative, critical positions in art and architecture. It is only in the 1950s and 1960s, when the official cultural politics of the early Republican regime was somewhat relaxed and the dual forces of global capitalism and political Islam had not yet risen up, that art and architecture seems to have enjoyed a brief period of precisely such an opening. It is a period to which we cannot help but look back with a certain amount of nostalgia today.

## The novel in Turkish: narrative tradition to Nobel prize

ERDAĞ GÖKNAR

### Introduction: historical context and literary periods

An ongoing debate persists about the literary canon in Turkey. Does Turkey actually have such a canon? If so, what merits inclusion? What are the texts that might establish the canon? The debates are pertinent to this survey in that they attempt to describe not only the characteristics of literature in Turkey, but to catalogue the mix of figures, images and tropes at play in that literature. As a framework for a literary survey, the canon is useful for tracking a progression of genres and themes, for identifying local and foreign influences, and for revealing a projected 'reader-citizen'. The audience of any canon is in one respect the 'nation', imagined or otherwise. Furthermore, as a body of texts that are models of form and content, the canon is one way to determine the changing cultural logic of a national tradition as well as the sites of its political and ideological power. (It hardly bears emphasis that literary production in Turkey is political.) In a context of traditional narratives transformed by European influences, the Ottoman and Turkish novel functioned to mediate contradictory forces and to open up new sites of identification. There is perhaps no better anthropological or aesthetic artefact with which to read social change, to gauge resistance and to trace the scars of history and ideology on local populations than the novel. In the process of 'reading' modernity, politics and the novel together, this survey compiles a running commentary of texts that constitute one possible canon of the Turkish novel.<sup>1</sup> Most of these works still await translation into English. Where translations are available or forthcoming, the English title appears before the Turkish.

When the narrative form of the novel first appeared in Ottoman cities in the 1860s it confronted other forms of traditional narrative that had been in

1 The criteria for this selection are texts of aesthetic merit that establish or subvert dominant ideologies, introduce influential changes in narrative form or structure and/or introduce influential changes in content, character and subject matter.

existence for centuries such as mystical verse romances (*mesnevi*) and oral epics (*destan*), the Karagöz shadow play and *meddah* storyteller improvisations, Turkish *commedia dell'arte* (*orta oyunu*) and minstrel (*âşık*) tales, as well as Qur'anic and sufic parables. These traditional forms have influenced the genre of the novel in Turkish to the present day. After an incubatory period of translations from the French, Ottoman novel writing targeted an urban readership and was influenced by romantic and realist genres often concerned with social and ethical issues. Debates until the turn of the century revolved around whether fiction should concentrate on the aesthetic ('art for art's sake') or have a social, didactic purpose. In either case, the novel articulated social representations that were clearly vehicles of modernisation and self-reflection for members of Ottoman society.

In the late nineteenth century, Ottoman novels appeared in serial in daily papers as authors sought to entertain, educate or warn the populace through consciousness raising about social issues. By the early 1910s, the novel became overtly politicised and was used as a vehicle for intellectual debates concerning state and society. Novelists were also often journalists, politicians, poets and historians (even today, authors in Turkey are rarely bound to a single genre). Increasingly, the novel was used as a didactic tool for matters of poverty, education and the social position of women. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Republican novel was used as a vehicle of nationalisation through the early decades of the nation-state before giving way (with ever-increasing literacy rates) in the 1950s and 1960s to a focus on Anatolian social consciousness and the plight of the villager. The attention of authors and their works moved from the city to the countryside. Ideology played as significant a role as aesthetics (with major exceptions) in much canonised literature. In the 1970s, however, the concentration on collective, national problems and realities gave way to individual concerns that included feminism, marginalised voices and victims of state violence. This trend grew even stronger towards the end of the century as authors revisited modernising projects with irony and even indifference. Future-oriented movements for progress had reached an impasse, and after the 1980 military coup, the focus on national realities turned to fantasy, the imagination, pre-national Ottoman history and, generally, to an emphasis on form and aesthetic style over content and social engagement. Currently, the novel in Turkish appears to be working to capture the broadest possible spectrum of content and form as novelists and their publishers proliferate. Nothing is sacred to the youngest generation of artists, and the novel is the art form that is establishing this axiom in the wake of the 'Turkish Nobel'.

Early twentieth-century writers of the Ottoman–Turkist transition formed, styled and changed the country’s language. The Republican writers who followed them after the alphabet change (1929), which separated Ottoman language from modern Turkish, did so as well. Due to the effects of the half-century of Turkist linguistic engineering that began in about 1930, the language currently plays in various registers including Perso-Arabic vocabulary, colloquial Turkish, pure Turkish (*öz Türkçe*) and the mixed style of what might be termed ‘lived language’. The lexical changes provide an apt metaphor for social and political changes in the name of modernity and progress. As early as the late nineteenth century, simple, direct sentences were advocated so that messages of equality and freedom, and new literary forms representing ‘civilisation’ such as novels and plays, could reach a wider audience. With the first rumblings of cultural nationalism around the turn of the century, this transformation developed gradually into a call for Turkification; in short, freedom from – in the widely used term – ‘linguistic capitulations’ imposed by Persian and Arabic, whose vocabulary and some grammatical constructions were integral to Ottoman rhetoric and expression. In essence, the goal was to make the spoken idiom the basis for the written language. The process of ‘linguistic engineering’ and the principle of one people, one nation, one language took hold shortly thereafter. The push for a nationalistic pure Turkish began with the change to the Latin alphabet in 1928/9 and the purging of non-Turkish words from the vocabulary and/or their replacement by Turkic and Turkish suffixes and neologisms. This was also symbolic of a process of secularisation and nationalisation in the wake of the partition of the Ottoman Empire into nation-states, mandates and kingdoms. From the establishment of the Turkish Language Society (TLS) in 1932, this process continued until the TLS was privatised, and thereby marginalised, in 1983. Since then, there has been a return to the ‘lived language’ and a resurgence in the use of Arabic and Persian words, with a parallel increase in the influence of English. As a result, the language and diction used by any author writing in Turkish will often indicate a political stance. It will come as no surprise that many dedicated leftists applauded the work of the TLS as vital to visions of secularism and populism and those with an interest in tradition and Islam ridicule it as being extreme and unnecessary. Language itself is a microcosm of the social engineering (and violence) inflicted by the state on national identity. The way language is articulated is just one expression of modernity in the Ottoman and Turkish context. Presently, most young writers mix all registers in their works: Perso-Arabic (and Ottoman), pure Turkish, colloquial Turkish and foreign words (French and English). This new aesthetic began in earnest in the 1980s and continues today, marking the idiom of

Turkish literary production for the twenty-first century as being transnational – indeed, post-national.

The basis of this new ‘mixed style’ might be traced back to the historical starting point of this introduction, to the nineteenth century, and the increasing cultural influence of Europe that grew in proportion to its colonial incursion into North Africa and the Middle East. This incursion institutionalised persistent textual attitudes towards the ‘East’ in British, French and Russian literary traditions, establishing and disseminating stereotypical orientalist attitudes towards Muslim cultures, including the Ottoman. As stated, the first translations of European fiction into Ottoman were made from the French, introducing an outsider’s gaze into the narrative authority of the novel form. A doubling of narrative perspectives arose from seeing oneself and one’s local society from the ‘outside’ as well as from the ‘inside’. Beginning with their earliest novels, Ottoman and Turkish author-intellectuals struggled within a divided sense of self and identity. That is, they experienced a division resulting from an ‘internalised Orientalism’, which in turn set the ground over decades, for an array of aesthetic, nationalist and/or socialist responses. These responses, as much as possible, recast modernisation and identity formation from the perspective of the local population. In short, the progressive forces of modernity from a Western perspective were linked to orientalism (the cultural logic of colonialism) and from a Republican perspective to nationalism or socialism (local self-determination).

Outsider perspectives tended to view Ottoman and Turkish literature as ‘belated’, imitative and derivative of other traditions (i.e. Persian or European), whereas insider perspectives emphasised an originary and unchanging group essence (Turkishness) that could be traced from ancient times to the present. These orientalist and nationalist perspectives, equally reductive, overlooked the complexity of forces that interacted to produce literature and stripped authors, in their reception, of the agency to create, question and qualify form, theme and content. Most surveys of Turkish literature, literary histories and anthologies, intentionally or not, are plagued by a persistent distortion based on the dominance of these two lenses of modernity. That is, most surveys divide Turkish literature into two distinct hemispheres as derivative, an imitation or copy, or as a measure of the essence of Turkishness. Both poles of this ‘orientalist–nationalist binary’ are linked, ironically, by certain underlying commonalities: (1) timelessness or ahistoricity, which indicates the incapacity of Turks to progress or change, on one hand, and ascribes to them unchanging qualities, on the other; (2) transcendent characteristics (whether positive or negative) such as the ‘terrible Turk’, the ‘lustful Turk’, or the ‘brave Turk’;

and (3) ethno-racial categorisations that elide 'other' identities of the populace based on gender, community, geography and religion.

As such, literary modernity, for the purposes of this survey, is not simply 'Westernisation' (mimicry of Europe) nor nationalism or national essence; it is rather the attempt, as captured through the medium of literature, to create new aesthetic expressions, to hear voices that have not been heard before, and to recast 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures from new perspectives as being interrelated and interdependent. It is the attempt to inscribe alternative sites of identification beyond the incarcerations of the orientalist–nationalist binary, a challenge with which many Ottoman and Turkish writers have struggled and continue to do so – one that constitutes a profound and persistent crisis for them. The novel in this context is, in one sense, a vehicle of modernisation that reveals Ottoman and Turkish experience as human experience, connected to and contingent upon other human experiences. The predicament of the orientalist–nationalist binary, contrastingly, is the inability to address, subvert, or even engage the essentialising functions of 'outsider' and 'insider' clichés. So many local authors have struggled with this cultural crisis that it has become a dominant trope in Turkish letters and intellectual life, more generally known as the 'East–West problematic'. But, as will become evident, the most provocative encounters of modernity and the novel do not tread well-worn routes of orientalism and nationalism.

The forces of modern thought and literature in which the 'old' and emerging 'new' are locked in an ongoing struggle are significant to the understanding of Ottoman and Turkish literary culture in the twentieth century. Local engagement with European colonialism as it threatened the Ottoman state released various forces of modernisation, a political and cultural engagement that later became formative in the establishment of the Republic. History reveals that beginning with the nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms (1839–76), the modernisation of the Ottoman state and later of the Republic (after its founding in 1923) occurred in the top-down manner of a European 'civilising mission'. However, the novel tells a more complex and contradictory story: the novel was arguably 'Ottoman', 'Muslim', 'Turkish' and 'European' all at the same time. Moreover, as a space of representation and contestation, it was in itself a part of an alternative modernity that did not simply imitate Europe, but experimented with its innovations in multiple ways. To be sure, 'Turkey' did not just translate and receive the novel from Europe, it rewrote the novel based on its own social and historical contingencies.

A historically sensitive periodisation of Turkish literature would reveal that the novel is a cultural force anticipating and influencing greater political and

social change through the development of conscience and the raising of social consciousness. However, the commonly accepted periodisation of Turkish literature has shortcomings that arise from the distorting effects of the above-mentioned orientalist–nationalist binary. The periodisation advocated in this survey attempts to reinterpret these persistent distortions, among them: (1) the anachronistic classification of major movements of late Ottoman and Republican literature as part of a continuum of secular ‘Turkish’ literature that projects the vision of the Turkist cultural revolution (1922–38) back in time so it connects with golden ages of pre-Islamic Turkic history; (2) the denial of the influence of socialism on early national projects and of its widespread currency through most of the twentieth century; (3) the acknowledgement of a formative role of tradition and Islam, at the very least with regard to ethics and morality, in narrative production rather than its repression; (4) the granting of creative agency to local authors as being more than ideologues or imitators of Western models; and (5) the narrow definition of literary periods by the life of magazines representing particular trends or schools. The following periodisation of seven dominant world views and cultural trends, to be elaborated below, covers a period of about 125 years. This new periodisation marks generations by important social and political upheavals. The aim is to contextualise authors of the late Ottoman state and Republic of Turkey and their works while emphasising the interrelation between literary transformation and historical change:

- 1) Ottoman modernism (1876–1908): object lessons
- 2) Ottoman Turkism (1909–21): narrative identity
- 3) Turkist social nationalism (1922–49): national allegories
- 4) Anatolian socialist realism (1950–70): village novels
- 5) Feminism and existentialism (1971–80): marginalised voices
- 6) Post-Kemalism and neo-Ottomanism (1981–99): meta-fictions
- 7) Transnationalism and transgression (2000–present): writing beyond the nation

### Ottoman modernism (1876–1908): object lessons<sup>2</sup>

The late nineteenth-century Ottoman modern was an urban figure seduced by the trappings of European culture (including dress, French language and new

- 2 Principal authors and representative works (novels unless specified):

- İbrahim Şinasi (1826–71), *The Wedding of a Poet (Şair Evlenmesi)*, 1860, play
- Ziya Paşa (1829–80), *Zafername Şerhi (Book of Victories)*, 1868?, humour



modes of consumption). This was a period when the Ottoman state ruled a mixed population in territories that included the south-eastern Balkans and the Arabian peninsula, though cosmopolitan, revealed a defensive stance towards the growing cultural, political and military power of Britain, France and Russia. The dilemma, in short, was one of Ottoman Islam on the cusp of European colonisation, and the response of Ottoman intellectuals, which at this stage had nothing to do with the ethno-nationalism of the early twentieth century.

Popular novelist Ahmet Mithat Efendi's *Felâton Bey ile Râkım Efendi* (Felâton Bey and Râkım Efendi, 1875) is an iconic novel of this era that describes positive and negative engagements in the late Ottoman modernisation process through its display of the lives of two opposing characters. Similar themes are taken up in Recaizade Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* (Carriage Romance, 1896) and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *Şipsevdi* (Love at First Sight, 1911). In Ahmet Mithat's novel, the profligate dandy Felâton Bey manifests his vision of modernity through blind imitation of Europe. Born to a wealthy family, he peppers his conversations with French words and phrases, whose meanings he does not know, and spends his money randomly in the pursuit of foreign women. Ultimately, he goes broke and is forced to leave the city. In marked contrast to the passive mimicry of Felâton Bey, Rakım Efendi is born into humble circumstances. He, however, demonstrates a strong work ethic. Through slow, hard, concerted work, he amasses some wealth. With the opportunities these funds provide, he oversees the education of a young woman who is destined to be sold in the *cariye* slavery system. The novel revolves around this object lesson: the spendthrift squanders not only his inheritance, but the opportunity to become a model member of modern nineteenth-century Ottoman society;

- Şemsettin Sami (1850–1904), *Taaşşuk-u Talât ve Fitnat* (*The Romance of Talât and Fitnat*), 1872
- Namık Kemal (1840–88), *İntibah* (*Awakening*), 1874
- Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844–1912), *Felâton Bey ile Râkım Efendi* (*Felâton Bey and Râkım Effendi*), 1875
- Abdülhak Hâmit Tarhan (1852–1937), *Sahrâ* (*Desert*), 1878, poetry
- Beşir Fuat (1852–87), *Beşer* (*Humankind*), 1886, articles
- Samipaşazade Sezai (1859–1936), *Sergüzeşt* (*Adventure*), 1888
- Mizancı Mehmet Murat (1854–1917), *Turfanda mı Yoksa Turfa mı?* (*The Good or Bad Seed*), 1891
- Nâbizâde Nâzım (1862–93), *Zehra* (*Zehra*), 1894
- Recaizâde Mahmut Ekrem (1847–1914), *Araba Sevdası* (*Carriage Romance*), 1896
- Fatma Âliye (1862–1936), *Muhazarât* (*To Keep in Mind*), 1891
- Niğâr Hanım (1862–1918), *Aks-i Sadâ* (*Echo*), 1900, poetry
- Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1865–1945), *Aşk-ı Memnu* (*Forbidden Love*), 1900
- Mehmet Rauf (1875–1931), *Eylül* (*September*), 1901
- Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (1875–1957), *Hayal İçinde* (*Within a Dream*), 1901

rather, he is seduced by a Europe which destroys him. On the other hand, the hard-working 'self-made man' engages in the local economy, provides jobs for others, advocates the education of local women and leaves a legacy: the synthesis between Europe and tradition that is also a working model of modernisation. Ahmet Mithat, as author-intellectual-cum-narrator, thus assumes the role of arbiter of modernity for Ottoman society, advocating a vision of synthesis that responds to orientalist stereotypes about Muslim society. He is one of the first to address the modernity/tradition problematic in an overtly synthetic way, which other intellectuals later take up. He sees his role as novelist as the 'protector' of society through education, revelation and frank talk.

In contrast to the moral didactic novels of Ahmet Mithat and the first generation of Ottoman novelists (Namık Kemal, Şemsettin Sami and Samipaşazade Sezai), Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* (Forbidden Love, 1900) is a realist, dramatic tragedy played out in the estate of the wealthy Adnan Bey. It, too, contains an object lesson, but one that is dramatised rather than overtly stated. *Aşk-ı Memnu* is an account of Ottoman moderns concerned with their own individual and insular lives. A widower, Adnan Bey, lives quietly with his son Bülent and daughter Nihal. When he decides to take a much younger wife, Bihter, the established order of the household changes. Now the lady of the house, Bihter does her best to be a good wife and mother, but circumstances work against her. Nihal accuses her of separating her from her father, her brother (sent to boarding school), and the household staff. Bihter, soon bored by her older husband, becomes sexually involved with Adnan Bey's nephew Behlül, a philanderer. When Bihter later learns that Behlül and Nihal are to be wed, she reveals their illicit affair and commits suicide. The household returns to its state at the start of the novel, yet forever changed by Bihter's tragedy. The conflicts and dilemmas of this novel are important in Ottoman literature, because they are internal, individual and psychological and focus on the plight of women of the upper classes. This is in marked contrast to the social concerns of Ahmet Mithat, whose focus on women is morally guided, and who concentrates on the lower classes and the downtrodden, including prostitutes, as in *Henüz On Yedi Yaşında* (Only Seventeen, 1881). More to the point, both novels indicate that the rarefied life of Ottoman moderns is in crisis in different ways: Ahmet Mithat by drawing attention to misguided lifestyles influenced by Europe and Uşaklıgil by subtly revealing the alienation and desperation caused by rigid morality and social hierarchies.

Ottoman modernism corresponds to the reformist political movements of the Young Ottomans and Young Turks, and is delineated by the two constitutional periods beginning in 1876 and 1908, respectively. An attempt to reconcile

Islam with modernity preoccupied many intellectuals of the period, and represented a regional movement that spread from Afghanistan to the Balkans and from Arabia to North Africa. Namık Kemal's polemical *Renan Müdafaaamesi* (Rebuttal to Renan, c. 1885) is a representative example of a text that champions modernist Islam as it targets the orientalist thinking of European intellectuals such as Ernest Renan about Muslim societies.

Understanding 'Ottoman modernism' as a distinct period emerging out of the Tanzimat reforms begins to correct the distortions of Eurocentric orientalism as well as the anachronistic projection of secular Turkist nationalism back into the nineteenth century. Traditional literary histories divide this period into two main movements. The first is labelled Tanzimat literature (1860–96), beginning with the works of İbrahim Şinasi and Namık Kemal. This is followed by the Servet-i Fünun school, or Wealth of Sciences (1896–1901), also known as Edebiyat-ı Cedide, or New Literature, represented by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, Mehmet Rauf, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Nâbizâde Nâzım and Recaiâde Mahmut Ekrem. The former represents a romantic and romanticist influence in late Ottoman letters with aspects of social engagement, whereas the latter advocates naturalism and realism focusing on aesthetic concerns and individualism. However, the over-arching themes of morality and modernity in both do allow these two periods to be linked under the broader category of 'Ottoman modernism'.

Many works of this era focus on various representations of urban characters representing 'Occident' (Europe and French culture) and/or 'Orient' (the Ottoman state and Muslim ethics). The plots reveal a confrontation or synthesis between Ottoman Muslim values and European positivism that leads to a persistent cultural dualism. In terms of content, romances and morality plays are often presented as allegories on the status of Muslim identity in the face of 'Westernisation'. Rather than being explicit, Islam often appears in these works as a cultural subtext or part of the general context or setting. The problem of a synthesis between European and Ottoman cultural logics was depicted as a crisis through didactic stories meant to warn of ethical and moral dangers. Paradoxically, Europe was also seen as a model of progress. The resulting cultural duality became a theme that persists in Turkish letters to this day.

Ottoman modernism, emphasising that tradition held the spiritual aspects of culture and the West material and technological aspects, forecast an ideal synthesis whose realisation was made impossible by the continued rise of European colonialism (culminating in the First World War). The accommodating aspects of a 'modernist Islam' were no longer viable in the face of European

encroachment, aggression and occupation. In place of such a hybrid ideal, ethno-nationalism became the political norm of resistance. Much later, the movement provided the foundations for a resurgence in religious faith after the end of the Cold War, manifesting as 'liberal Islam' and 'political Islam' as reflected in the cultural sphere through the contemporary growth of Islamic novels (*hidayet romanı*).

### Ottoman Turkism (1909–21): narrative identity<sup>3</sup>

Woman, as politically involved and often in the role of a teacher or nurse, recurs throughout this period as a character symbolising the ideals of nationalism and the transition between an identity based on elite class and Islam (Ottomanism) to one based on education and ethnic culture (Turkism). The ideological changes brought about by the Second Constitutional Revolution (1908) and the decade of war between 1912 and 1922, which resulted in a violent remapping of Ottoman territory based on ethno-religious categories, led to the politicisation of the figure of the Ottoman modern and the birth of the socialist-minded Turkist modern. This version of Turkism continued to incorporate aspects of tradition and Islam as an element in its cultural synthesis meant to foster modernisation and democracy. The famous slogan, 'Turkify, Islamicise, Westernise' by the father of Turkism, Ziya Gökalp, summarises this new ideology, one that advocates new sites of identification and implicitly accepts the division of multi-ethnic Ottoman society along ethno-religious lines in its vision of modernisation.

The heroine of Halide Edip Adivar's *Yeni Turan* (New Turan, 1913), Kaya (lit. 'rock'), is politically devoted to the community to such a degree that she has no individual desires. In fact, this leads her to sacrifice herself for the greater good of Turkism by agreeing reluctantly to marry the leader of the

#### 3 Principal authors and representative works:

- Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran (1864–1947), *Küçük Paşa (Little Pasha)*, 1910
- Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (1864–1944), *Şıvsevdi (Love at First Sight)*, 1911
- Ahmet Rasim (1865–1932), *Şehir Mektupları (Letters from the City)*, 4 vols., 1912–13, anecdotes, articles
- Halide Edip Adivar (1882–1964), *Yeni Turan (New Turan)*, 1913
- Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), *Kızıl Elma (Red Apple)*, 1914, poetry
- Müfide Ferit Tek (1892–1971), *Aydemir (Aydemir)*, 1918
- Ömer Seyfettin (1884–1920), *Efruz Bey (Efruz Bey)*, 1919, novella
- Aka Gündüz (1885–1958), *Kurbağacık (Tadpole)*, 1919, novella
- Refik Halit Karay (1888–1965), *Memleket Hikâyeleri (Stories from the Homeland)*, 1919
- Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu (1870–1927), *Gönül Hanım (Miss Gönül)*, 1920
- Halide Nusret Zorlutuna (1901–84), *Küller (Ashes)*, 1921
- Reşat Nuri Güntekin (1889–1956), *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl (Çalikuşu)*, 1922

opposition Ottomanist political party, which will in turn result in the release of the leader of the Turkists from prison. Halide Edip's novel is an account of romantic intrigue set against a pitched political battle between two political parties with historical parallels. The novel, in a sense, contains within its plot and characterisation the fissure between Ottoman modernism and Ottoman Turkism in terms of gender, class and identity. In this interpretation, the former is characterised by patriarchy, the upper class, and Muslim rather than Turkish identification; the latter demonstrates female protagonists who challenge the traditional patriarchy, reveals the plight of lower classes and exhibits Anatolian and Turkish identities. In *Yeni Turan*, two political parties – the New Ottoman, based on a platform of federalism, and the New Turan, dedicated to strengthening the central government – are struggling for power. The main characters, Hamid Paşa, and his nephew Asım Bey, are the Ottoman moderns representing the New Ottoman faction. Samiye Hanım, a woman who has undergone an ideological conversion and adopted the Turkic name 'Kaya', and her distant relative Oğuz (eponymous name of a Turkic tribe), are leaders of New Turan. Hamid Paşa agrees to have Oğuz, who has been imprisoned, freed on condition that Kaya marries him. His intention is to fulfil his personal desires while weakening the political opposition. For the sake of her party, Kaya sacrifices herself, and agrees to the marriage, which lasts four years. Later, when Kaya learns that Oğuz has taken ill and is near death, she leaves Hamid Paşa and goes to him, but is unable to speak with him before he dies. This tragic novel summarises 'Ottomanist' federal and 'Turkist' national debates of the era and includes passages that present the roles of women with respect to these debates. It is a transitional text that demonstrates both aspects of romances from the Ottoman modern era and ideological debates of the new Turkist ethno-religious national vision. The novel is, furthermore, openly political, ushering in a series of compromised female protagonists torn between traditional familial roles and the call of new socio-political causes.

Related themes are echoed in Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (*Çalılıkuşu*, 1922), a popular novel that is significant for its use of Anatolia as a setting, its identification of the challenges that await the 'new' women of secular Islam and its implicit critique of Istanbul's modern society for its ignorance of the lives of Anatolian peasants. The protagonist, Feride, is orphaned at a young age. Through the help of her aunt, she receives a French education at a boarding school in Istanbul. While in high school, she becomes engaged to her cousin, Kâmuran. However, she calls off the marriage when she learns that he has been involved with another

woman, and flees to western Anatolia where she serves as a teacher in various villages and small towns. What begins as a typical Ottoman modern romance story turns into a single woman's drama in the patriarchal world of rural Anatolia. The ideals instilled in Feride through her education are tested by the traditional customs of small villages and patriarchal landowners or *ağas*. Compromised in terms of gender and sexuality, she becomes the focus of a dilemma of modernisation wherein as an educated woman she faces the obstacles of Anatolian traditionalism. In a marriage of convenience to protect her honour, she is married 'on paper' to her avuncular friend, Dr Hayrullah Bey. Upon his death, Feride returns to Istanbul to reunite with her estranged beloved, Kâmuran. Her experiences in Anatolia have provided her with a vital real-world education in the needs and desires of the people that will make up the new Republic. The lesson seems clear: knowledge from the West must be complemented by knowledge of the people of one's own country. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of state and society to 'modernise' rural areas and towns as well as cities. In both these novels, the battle over modernisation and identity as it changes from Ottoman Islamic to Anatolian Turkist is played out through the position of women in society who struggle to be engaged socially in a way that does not conflict with traditional family roles.

The period of Ottoman Turkism, one of almost constant warfare, witnesses the contestation between ideologies meant to consolidate the Ottoman state and provide a locus of individual and group identification. Turkism (ethno-nationalism) is one of these ideologies, together with Ottomanism, Islamism, Bolshevism (Bolshevik nationalism) and Westernism. The Tripopolitan/Libyan War (1911), the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the First World War (1914–1918) and the Greco-Ottoman War (1919–22) resulted in an enormous demographic change for Ottoman territories that were reduced to the Anatolian peninsula and Eastern Thrace. By 1922, the Ottoman government was left to rule a majority Muslim population whose governance was taken over by Mustafa Kemal in a coup that ousted the sultan and abolished the sultanate. The 'problem' of Muslim rule (from Europe's perspective) had been handled through war and a bloody unmixing of peoples as 'Turkey', one of the first Muslim nations in the modern era, was born. Turkism was the ideology that provided an argument for self-determination in a limited territory that avoided the vagueness of Ottomanism, the expansiveness of Islamism and the colonial cast of Westernism. Many authors began to dramatise both the ideology and the identity that Turkism espoused – one that was secular, modern, yet tied to tradition. Thus Turkism brought with it two major contradictions reflected in

the phrases 'Muslim nationalism' and 'secular Islam'. The challenge for subsequent generations was to try to manage such contradictions through new political and cultural syntheses.

'East versus West' debates regarding tradition and reform are reflected in the works of Ottoman Turkist writers such as Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin, Halide Edip Adivar and Müfide Ferit Tek. The nascent cultural Turkism movement began to grow and gain momentum against the backdrop of early twentieth-century non-Muslim secession movements. Rather than trying to accommodate the 'West', author-intellectuals of this period for the first time fully recognised the dark side of European culture in Western imperial and colonial aims. In turn, resistance gradually became an individual, social and political imperative. Intellectuals guided the populace through novels that demonstrated new narrative identities.

Under the influence of Ziya Gökalp's Turkist thought, late Ottoman Muslim social engineering included calls for the creation of a 'New language' based on a simplification of the written idiom and the involvement of women in education and public life. The possibility of an alphabet change to Latin and the transfer of the capital to Anatolia were first expressed in this period. These suggestions were contested, however, as some argued for the persistence of tradition in culture and literature. Realism based in recent historical events gave rise to a new identification based on ethno-religious and geographical realities as the territories of the Ottoman state contracted to majority Muslim regions and then to Anatolia. With the Greek invasion of western Anatolia in 1919, Turkist nationalism grew even stronger. The battle of Sakarya (1921) marked a decisive victory for Anatolian nationalists and the death knell of the Ottoman government in Istanbul. Organisations such as the Turkish Hearths (whose leading members included Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver) and journals such as *Genç Kalemler* (Young Literati) and *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland) spread the ideals of a Turkist-Muslim culture that would revitalise the late Ottoman state or create a nation-state in its stead.

Traditional literary histories include in this period movements such as the Fecr-i Atı (The Coming Dawn, 1909–13) and the Milli Edebiyat (National Literature, 1911–23) schools. The Coming Dawn, led by thinkers such as Ali Canib and Ahmet Haşim, espoused an individualist 'art for art's sake' stance and the National Literature school led by Ömer Seyfettin and Halide Edip advocated engagement with national-social realities. The National Literature movement emphasised Muslim–Turkish identification, but not yet secular identity. These groups emerged at a time when the 'Young Turks' moved from being an

opposition party to an authoritarian party in power (1913). The Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and the quashing of the 1909 counter-revolution ushered in a period of false optimism for modernisers of the Muslim state. The establishment of a constitutional sultanate was not enough to prevent continued European control over Ottoman territories. Ultimately the response became more desperate and extreme, leading to a variety of nationalism that itself intimated the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

Turkist social nationalism (1922–49):  
national allegories<sup>4</sup>

This era witnessed the proliferation of ideological novels; that is, historically grounded representations of new ‘men’ and new societies with a socialist, nationalist and/or Turkist colouring. Often, one of the main characters can be read as a clear allegory for the nation or collective itself. For example, most of the protagonists of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s novels advocate a national Turkist idealism. His *Nur Baba* (1922) is an ideologically informed popular novel that ridicules the practices of sufi brotherhoods, in this case a Bektaşî shaykh and his followers. Within a few years of its publication, the Kemalist government would outlaw all dervish lodges, forcing sufism in the Turkish context underground. The novel is significant in that it anticipates some of the transformations of the Turkist cultural revolution (1922–38), and it targets Islam as being inimical to modernisation. The politicisation of Islamic symbols and everyday ritual practice marks this period of literary

4 Principal authors and representative works:

- Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889–1974), *Nur Baba*, 1922
- Ercüment Ekrem Talu (1888–1956), *Kan ve İman (Blood and Faith)*, 1925
- Sadri Ertem (1898–1943), *Çıkrıklar Durunca (When the Looms Stop)*, 1930
- Peyami Safa (1899–1961), *Fatih–Harbiye (Fatih and Harbiye)*, 1931
- Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889–1974), *Yaban (The Outsider)*, 1932
- Burhan Cahit Morkaya (1892–1949), *Yüzbaşı Celâl (Captain Celâl)*, 1933
- Memduh Şevket Esendal (1885–1952), *Ayaşlı ve Kiracıları (Ayaşlı and his Tenants)*, 1934
- Sabahattin Ali (1907–48), *Kuyucaklı Yusuf (Yusuf of Kuyucak)*, 1937
- Mithat Cemal Kuntay (1885–1956), *Üç İstanbul (Istanbul Triptych)*, 1938
- İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (1886–1978), *Hayatım (My Life)*, 1938–41, memoirs
- Nihal Atsız (1905–75), *Dalkavuklar Gecesi (Night of Sycophants)*, 1941
- Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar (1887–1963), *Fahim Bey ve Biz (Fahim Bey and Us)*, 1941
- Suat Derviş (1905–72), *Fosforlu Cevriye (Phosphorescent Jevriye)*, 1945–6
- Şüküfe Nihal Başar (1896–1973), *Domaniç Dağlarının Yolcusu (Traveller of the Domaniç Mountains)*, 1946
- Safiye Erol (1900–64), *Çiğerdelen (Çiğerdelen on the Danube)*, 1947
- Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–62), *A Mind at Peace (Huzur)*, 1949



production. In the novel, the main character, Nur Baba, is portrayed as a charlatan interested in his own pleasures. The mostly wealthy women who come to him end up losing their wealth and themselves to his power. It is by seducing women that he becomes a shaykh, attains wealth and forces one Nigâr Hanım to leave her husband, children and place in society in joining him. In a matter of years, Nur Baba abandons her to marry a younger woman. The novel implies that such characters will persist in exploiting members of society unless they are stopped. In short, the novel argues for the drastic measures witnessed in the Republican cultural revolution. Here, as with previous novels, women, their freedom and contribution to social life are the gauges of modernity.

Over a period of decades, the national allegories of novels written in the 1920s and 1930s by Yakup Kadri, Peyami Safa and Halide Edip gradually gave way to more nuanced accounts. In Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's work, the reader is confronted not with object lessons, morality or didactic 'party' novels espousing the Kemalist vision of society and history, but with a complex reckoning of the transition between Ottoman and Turkist states. In the milestone modernist novel *A Mind at Peace* (*Huzur*, 1949), the historical traumas experienced between 1908 and 1938 have become psychological dilemmas that afflict the upper-class characters. Rather than providing an indictment of traditional Islamic practices as many Turkist writers do, Tanpınar bears witness to the loss of lifestyles and articulates a web of narrative memory threatened with oblivion through cultural revolution (locally) and war (externally). The two novels bookend this period of reform and social engineering, the former through ideological zeal and the latter by dramatising the great socio-political and psychological burden of those who have experienced a loss of empire and a marginalisation of Istanbul cosmopolitanism. *A Mind at Peace* is an aesthetically complex novel structured in four parts reflecting lament, melancholy, elation and the 'dark night of the soul'. Mümtaz, the protagonist, is a young man whose parents died during the Graeco-Ottoman war of 1919–22 and who was raised in the household of his cousin İhsan, a history teacher. Mümtaz works as an assistant in the department of literature of Galatasaray Lycée after receiving his degree from the same department. The tragic novel characterises his mental breakdown under the weight of the illness of his cousin and mentor İhsan, of the ending of his relationship with his girlfriend Nuran, of the suicide of his nemesis Suad (who also loves Nuran) and of the impending world war in Europe. In its depiction of Istanbul's streets, neighbourhoods and the Bosphorus, the novel is an icon of modernist, cosmopolitan prose. The leitmotifs of urban Turkish culture, including the architecture of Istanbul and traditional

Ottoman music, add a dimension of cultural nationalism that is a first for the novel in Turkish. *A Mind at Peace* also is one of the first testimonies of the shortcomings of the national and social modernisation projects of the 1920s and 1930s.

Developing from the cultural Turkism of the previous era, this period of Turkist social nationalism emphasised the political and social realities of European injustice, war and poverty to give rise to a variety of Turkism that moved from the cultural to the political and psychological realms. Vast state mobilisation for the promotion of a national identity based in Turkism began. Three events that marked the start of the Turkist cultural revolution were especially influential in removing religion and religious symbols from the public arena: the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate (1922); the declaration of the Republic and the transfer of the capital from Istanbul to Ankara (1923); and the abolition of the caliphate (1924). 'Separation of religion and state' became a guiding principle as secularism was valorised as the ideology that would bring the greatest progress to war-torn Anatolia and the greatest pride to its people. Novels such as Yakup Kadri's *Nur Baba* and Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Yeşil Gece* (Green Night, 1928) ridiculed religion and sufi brotherhoods, portraying Islamic traditions, rather orientalistically, as being inimical to women's rights and a principal obstacle to modernisation.

The Turkist cultural revolution, with its many reforms and its successes and failures, is a major theme that emerges in texts of this era with an often didactic character. The crises of the cultural duality (modernity versus tradition; individual versus nation; religion versus secularism) that appeared in earlier periods persists here through romantic allegories ('national romances') that explore the dilemma of orientalised and nationalised individuals and their changing identities. The positive hero or heroine is usually an urban individual who surrenders to the national-social collective and accepts the ideals of a national utopia based in Anatolia as in Halide Edip's *The Shirt of Flame* (*Ateşten gömlek*, 1922) and Yakup Kadri's *Sodom and Gomorrah* (*Sodom ve Gomore*, 1928). However, national 'distopic' themes begin to quickly follow suit as subtexts in novels of nationalisation or as developed narratives in their own right. Such themes might focus on the rift between devoted revolutionary intellectuals and Anatolian villagers (as in Yakup Kadri's *Yaban* (The Outsider, 1932)), the patriarchal system that puts women involved in public or educational work at risk of harm or death (Halide Edip's *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore, 1926)) and the great psychic risks of denying the recent Ottoman cultural past including the traditions of Islam (Tanpınar's *Sahnenin Dışındakiler* (Behind the Scenes, 1950)).

With the alphabet reform of 1928/9, literary works no longer appeared in Ottoman script and began to be published in the Latin alphabet for the first time. The ensuing language reform began extensive corpus planning of Turkish, ostensibly to make it easier to acquire and render it more accessible to the populace. It also created an epistemological barrier between the cultural heritage of the Ottoman state and Islam and the newly established Republic. New nationalised generations would hence have little or no textual access to the recent Ottoman-Islamic past. This era also saw the establishment of the Turkish Language Society (1932) and the Turkish Historical Society (1935) whose efforts in creating 'pure Turkish' and rewriting history from an ethno-national Turkist perspective helped institutionalise Turkist thought and identity. The Village Institutes were established in 1938 to educate those in rural areas. Writers such as Mehmet Başaran, Talip Apaydın, Fakir Baykurt, and Mahmut Makal, who would be influential in the next generation, emerged out of these schools. The Village Institutes were closed in 1947 in the context of the rise of the Cold War.

This period witnessed the emergence of cultural groups such as the Kadro (Cadre) intellectual movement to systematise Kemalism and the Yedi Meşaleler (Seven Torches) and Garip (Strange) schools of poetry. Generally, the fiction of this era valorises the sacrifice of individuals and intellectuals for the cause of the national-social collective. An ideal (whether it is national, ethical or moral) and the confounding realities that prevent its manifestation are always present in these works. Characters are deemed worthy to the degree that they aspire to these ideals. The texts themselves are didactic and aim to create a nationalised readership. The intellectual symbolises a go-between between outside world and local populace with the interests of that populace always being paramount. As representations, these works clearly function as part of a cultural economy that is driven by the Turkish state. The state emerges as a force of censorship and control, especially against a perceived leftist threat and extreme fascist tendencies of nationalism, beginning a long tradition of conflict with writers, many of whom spent considerable time in jail or in exile.

A Turkist national master narrative, supported by the state, emerges early in this period. This master narrative is comprised of four plot-points: colonial encounter; Anatolian turn; collective consciousness; and cultural revolution. This emplotment can be traced in many of the works of this period and the following periods. Aspects of it are present in later 'postmodern' works as well. As is evident by new historical novels such as Turgut Özakman's *Şu Çılgın Türkler* (Those Crazy Turks, 2004) and Attilâ İlhan's *Gazi Paşa* (2005),

the national master narrative has resurfaced in the twenty-first century as a form of 'neo-Kemalism' in reaction to the Justice and Development Party, the rule of the Erdoğan administration, the threat to national identity caused by the demands of EU accession and the decentring trends of neo-liberalism. It is ironic that today this movement is somewhat reactionary, as opposed to being relatively progressive, as it was in the 1920s and 1930s.

The era of secular Turkism is tempered by the transition from monoparty to multi-party politics (1946) and the loss of power by Atatürk's party in the 1950 elections. This blow to authoritarian nationalism in the wake of the Second World War also saw the first early attempts at socialist realism represented by Sadri Ertem, Sabahattin Ali, Nâzım Hikmet and Suat Derviş – whose works forecast the dominant trends of the mid-century in the context of the Cold War.

### Anatolian socialist realism (1950–70): village novels<sup>5</sup>

The novel began as a cosmopolitan, urban form in the Ottoman Turkish context. With the establishment of the Republic, Anatolia and its people became

#### 5 Principal authors and representative works:

- Nâzım Hikmet Ran (1901–63), *Human Landscapes from my Country (Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları)*, written 1941–6, published 1966–7
- Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906–54), *Kayıp Aranıyor (Missing Person)*, 1953
- Orhan Kemal (1914–70), *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerine (On Bountiful Land)*, 1954
- Peride Celâl (b. 1915), *Üç Kadının Romanı (A Novel of Three Women)*, 1954
- Yaşar Kemal Gökçeli (b. 1923), *Mehmed, my Hawk (İnce Mehmed)*, 1955
- Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1905–83), *Cinnet Mustatili (Rectangle of Madness)*, 1955, prison memoirs
- İlhan Tarus (1907–67), *Yeşilkaya Savcısı (The Yeşilkaya Public Prosecutor)*, 1955
- Nahit Sırrı Örik (1895–1960), *Sultan Hamid Düşerken (As Sultan Hamit was Deposed)*, 1957
- Talip Apaydın (b. 1926), *Sarı Traktör (Yellow Tractor)*, 1958
- Fakir Baykurt (1929–99), *Yılanların Öcü (The Snakes' Revenge)*, 1959
- Nezihe Meriç (b. 1924), *Korsan Çıkmazı (Pirate Dead End)*, 1961
- Attilâ İlhan (1925–2005), *Kurtlar Sofrası (A Feast of Wolves)*, 1963
- Tarık Buğra (1918–94), *Küçük Ağa (Little Agha)*, 1963
- Sâmîha Ayverdi (1905–93), *İbrahim Efendi Konağı (The İbrahim Effendi Estate)*, 1964
- Sevim Burak (1931–83), *Yanık Saraylar (Burned Palaces)*, 1965, stories
- Kemal Bilbaşar (1910–83), *Cemo (Jemo)*, 1966
- Hekimoğlu İsmail (b. 1932), *Minyeli Abdullah (Abdullah of Minye, Egypt)*, 1967
- Kemal Tâhir Demir (1910–73), *Devlet Ana (Mother State)*, 1967
- Aziz Nesin (1916–95), *Şimdiki Çocuklar Harika (Kids These Days are Wonderful)*, 1967
- Halikarnas Balıkcısı / Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (1890–1973), *Deniz Gurbetçileri (Sea Exiles)*, 1969
- Mehmet Başaran (b. 1926), *Sürgünler (Exiles)*, 1970
- Demirtaş Ceyhun (b. 1934), *Asya (Asia)*, 1970

an increasingly important area that began to engage the interest of intellectuals and entered the plots of novels. As mentioned, early attempts at depicting Anatolia were achieved by Reşat Nuri Güntekin (*Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*) and Sabahattin Ali (*Kuyucaklı Yusuf* (Yusuf of Kuyucak, 1937). However, true 'Anatolian consciousness' did not manifest until the spread of socialist ideals, which had a great influence in Turkey during the Cold War.

A privileged Istanbulite-turned-poet-of-the-people, Nâzım Hikmet's *Human Landscapes from my Country* (*Memleketimden İnsan Manzarları*, 1939–50) is a novel in free verse that attempts to capture the multidimensionality of Anatolia through the plot of a train journey from Istanbul. Hikmet's work was banned, thought it circulated *samizdat*-fashion to reach its audience. In 1965, posthumously, his works began to be published openly. Hikmet's style and vocabulary mimics his ideals; he aestheticises the speech of the commoner and eschews formal metre and rhyme. His subject matter moves from the dispossessed to the wealthy, from prostitutes and criminals to industrialists and bankers. The 'journey in' was made by intellectuals from Istanbul in the past, but none presented the country with the expository and poetic power of Hikmet. *Human Landscapes* is semi-autobiographical and contains historical vignettes between 1908 and 1950, including the First World War, the Turkish War of Independence and the Second World War. The epic work, relying on techniques of montage in parts, follows the main character, a political prisoner named Hilmi. Book One describes the villagers, workers, officials, gendarmes, convicts, unemployed and homeless embarking on a train that is leaving Haydarpaşa railway station in Istanbul. Book Two describes politicians, journalists, entrepreneurs and veterans of the War of Independence embarking on an express train leaving the same station, most of whom are travelling in couchettes. Book Three reveals the predicaments of the writer Hilmi, who is on the first train and has been convicted for being a communist, in various prisons and hospitals where he is seeking treatment for a worsening eye condition that threatens to leave him blind. Book Four addresses the Second World War, describing aggressors, resistance movements, patriots, compradors, feudal landlords and peasants. Book Five returns to the poet Hilmi, focusing on his suffering, desires and the letters he receives from his wife while he remains incarcerated. Anatolia appears in this work through vignettes that describe around 300 different people; together they constitute an indictment of nation-states whose exploited people are suffering from a variety of injustices while a select minority live lives of privilege. *Human Landscapes* is one of the sacred texts of Turkish letters and a model of form for both poets and writers. The verse-novel is also important, not least because it reveals the power of colloquialisms, the spoken language of the

common man, and addresses a recurring theme in Turkish letters: the 'prison narrative'.

While socialist realism had many facets, focusing on dialects, oral narrative traditions and the everyday lives of various regions of Anatolia, it was not until the work of Kemal Tâhir that this genre was historicised and applied innovatively to the Ottoman past. In his famous novel *Devlet Ana* (Mother State, 1967), Tâhir combines the Turkish literary tradition of Anatolian socialist realism with what might be termed socialist idealism. While focusing on the geographical, economic and social conditions prevailing in pre-Ottoman Anatolia and giving intimate accounts of the lives of both commoners and key historical figures, he weaves a chauvinistic argument for the Ottomans (and Turks) as being model and just state builders. Combining Anatolian realism, the Marxist belief in the Asiatic mode of production and strains of Turkism, Tâhir introduces a new understanding of historiography into the socialist realist novel. The novel has two main storylines: the establishment of the Ottoman state by the Söğüt Turks; and a story of revenge and initiation about Kerim Can, whose older brother has been murdered. The socio-political and individual stories are intertwined. The novel is optimistic: it describes how Ertuğrul, his son Osman (founder of the Ottoman dynasty) and his grandson Orhan sowed the seeds of the Ottoman state in north-western Anatolia between the faltering Byzantine and Seljuk empires while Kerim Can fulfils the will of his mother, Bacı Bey, and gets his just revenge against European enemies Notus Gladius and Uranha. Focusing on the geographical, economic and social conditions that gave rise to the Ottoman Anatolian (and, by extension, the Turkish Republican Anatolian) state, *Devlet Ana* is influenced by Fernand Braudel's thought and the Annales school of history, which emphasised long periods and mentalities/attitudes as it intersected with Marxism. Tâhir in this way put forth a 'deep' interpretation of history, an alternative to the superficial versions espoused by Turkist modernisers. His thesis is that Ottoman society was classless, unlike European models, and that progressive state formation was among the greatest legacies of the Ottomans. The plot focuses on the establishment of the Ottoman state after the dissolution of the Seljuk state around 1300, which however is an allegory for the establishment of a trans-national socialist state accepting a variety of people, languages and religions in the present. Tâhir provides an example of historiographic socialist realism that breaks a Republican taboo by demonstrating the pertinence of the Ottoman past to present-day Turkey. The fact that both Hikmet and Tâhir were imprisoned for their socialist beliefs gives an indication of the strong opposition between nationalist and socialist versions of Turkish Republican culture.

As in other periods, the movement of Anatolian socialist realism was fuelled by national and international developments. The start of multi-party politics in 1946 and the election of the Democrat Party to power in 1950 contained an implicit critique of the Republican People's Party and the Turkist cultural revolution that was reflected in literature through a move away from nationalist ideals, focusing on elite intellectuals, to socialist ideals, focusing on the Anatolian peasant. For the first time, writers en masse began to focus on characters and settings outside Istanbul and the major urban centres. The influence of Soviet socialist realism, the re-opening of the People's Houses (Halkevleri) in 1961 to help educate those living in rural areas and the 1960 coup that led to the adoption of a socially progressive constitution all played their part in affecting Turkish literature.

Author-intellectuals including Nâzım Hikmet, Kemal Tâhir, Orhan Kemal, İlhan Tarus, Yaşar Kemal, Talip Apaydın, Fakir Baykurt and Tarık Buğra established the genre of the 'village novel' that advocated social justice for the dispossessed. Some of the more provocative examples of the village novel merged with other genres such as the Ottoman historical novel and the bandit (*eşkiya*) trope. This period also gave rise to reassessments of the War of Independence and to the first novels with overtly Islamic themes: Hekimoğlu İsmail's first novel, *Minyeli Abdullah* (Abdullah from Minye), considered to be the vanguard of the Islamist novel (*hidayet romanı*), was later made into a popular film.

This period focuses on the injustices suffered by the peasants of Anatolia in novels that pit innocent victims against opportunistic oppressors. The genre, often historically grounded and based on the use of actual documents, addresses bleak economic hardships, blood feuds, patriarchy, honour, outlaws and the cruelty of gendarmes, petty officials and exploitation by landowners (*ağas*). Protagonists, victims of exploitation, are brought to the point of rebellion, seeking revenge, justice and honour. Many works, formulaic in character and ideologically informed, are allegories of social revolution and rebellion. Settings are mostly agrarian villages, towns and the rural countryside. Local oral narratives including myths, legends, epic tales, folk literature and *âşık* minstrel accounts are incorporated into plots, as in Yaşar Kemal's works. Local dialects are often represented. Many works reflect a strong influence of Soviet socialist realism, and praxis is championed over poetics and aesthetics. Likewise, social and class conflict takes precedence over individual concerns and inner psychological conflict. Works contain an implicit critique of cultural revolution as incomplete in developing the country and of little consequence to those living outside cities and towns.

The 1960 coup, valorised by the left as ending an era of overly nationalistic authoritarian rule, and the new constitution, established wide-ranging freedom of the press, an independent judiciary, the right to form unions and autonomy in universities reinforced a socialist context and kept alive the possibility of social freedoms and justice. However, the village novel, meant to confront the realities of rural life, became formulaic and idealised as well, later leading to an emergence of individual concerns in the following generation, especially by female authors frustrated with marginalisation. Nezihe Meriç and Sevim Burak represent those who helped establish an early feminist realism that took root after the 1971 military coup.

### Existentialism and feminism (1971–80): marginalised voices<sup>6</sup>

Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar* (*Dispossessed*, 1973) is one of the first novels in Turkey that self-consciously demonstrates meta-narrative elements. The 'inter-coup' era was a socially fragile period that saw intellectuals removed

#### 6 Principal authors and representative works:

- Şule Yüksel Şenler (b. 1938), *Huzur Sokağı* (*Serenity Street*), 2 vols., 1970–3
- Oğuz Atay (1934–77), *Tutunamayanlar* (*Dispossessed*), 1971
- Leylâ Erbil (b. 1931), *Tuhaf bir Kadın* (*A Strange Woman*), 1971
- Hasan İzzettin Dinamo (1909–89), *Kutsal Barış* (*Sacred Peace*), 7 vols., 1971–6
- Çetin Altan (b. 1927), *Büyük Gözaltı* (*A Long Incarceration*), 1972
- Ahmet Günbay Yıldız (b. 1943), *Çiçekler Susayınca* (*When Flowers Thirst*), 1972
- Adalet Ağaoğlu (b. 1929), *Ölmeye Yatmak* (*Lying Down to Die*), trilogy, 1973
- Yusuf Atılgan (1921–89), *Motherland Hotel* (*Anayurt Otel*), 1973
- Necati Cumalı (1921–2001), *Acı Tütün* (*Bitter Tobacco*), 1974
- Orhan Duru (b. 1933), *Ağır İşçiler* (*Hard Workers*), 1974 stories
- Füzruzan (b. 1938), *47'liler* (*Generation of '47*), 1974
- Emine İşınsu (b. 1938), *Cambaz* (*Acrobat*), 1974
- Hüseyin Karatay (b. 1937), *Sürgün Öğretmen* (*Exiled Teacher*), 1974
- Erdal Öz (b. 1935), *Yaralısın* (*You're Wounded*), 1974
- Sevgi Soysal (1936–76), *Şafak* (*The Dawn*), 1975
- Vedat Türkalı (b. 1919), *Bir Gün Tek Başına* (*One Day All Alone*), 1975
- İsmet Özel (b. 1944), *Cinayetler Kitabı* (*A Book of Crimes*), 1975, poetry
- Selim İleri (b. 1949), *Her Gece Bodrum* (*Bodrum Each Night*), trilogy, 1976
- Samim Kocagöz (1916–93), *Tartışma* (*The Argument*), 1976
- Ferit Edgü (b. 1936), *O/Hakkârî'de Bir Mevsim* (*He, a.k.a. A Season in Hakkârî*), 1977
- Bilge Karasu (1930–95), *The Garden of Departed Cats* (*Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi*), 1979
- Demir Özlü (b. 1935), *Bir Küçük Burjuvannın Gençlik Yılları* (*The Youth of a Petite Bourgeois*), 1979
- Pınar Kür (b. 1943), *Asılacak Kadın* (*A Condemned Woman*), 1979
- Hulki Aktunç (b. 1949), *Bir Çağ Yangını* (*The Fire of an Age*), 1980
- Mustafa Miyasoğlu (b. 1946), *Dönemeç* (*Turning Point*), 1980
- Bekir Yıldız (1933–98), *Halkalı Köle* (*Ringed Slave*), 1980



from life, career and family in society. Irony and sarcasm about ideological projects on both left and right began to make their way into fiction, and various depictions of alienation became prominent. The plot of *Dispossessed* revolves around Turgut Özben, a character who begins to research the death of his friend Selim Işık, a suicide. During the period of his research into his friend's life, Turgut is able to reconstruct hidden aspects of his life. He also learns that Selim had been compiling an 'Encyclopaedia of the Dispossessed', in which he had included himself. Turgut's investigations help him realise things about his own self. He begins to distance himself from his customary routine and associations, and slowly withdraws from all that is familiar, accepting that he himself is one of the dispossessed. The significance of the novel rests in its individuality, style and structure. For the first time, a social or national cause does not drive the plot in some fashion, but rather, the plot is constituted by marginalised voices that weave an indictment of the collectivity.

Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Ölmeye Yatmak* (Lying Down to Die, 1973) is another novel that marks this period, this time with a female protagonist, Aysel, a professor who withdraws to a hotel room to commit suicide. This focus on the plight of one woman is set against a reckoning of Turkish history between 1938 (Atatürk's death) and the revolutionary upheavals of 1968 in Europe. Aysel has had an affair with one of her students, Engin, and believes she might be pregnant. The moral and ethical implications of this act disrupt everything she has known about bourgeois life in Turkey until then. Her guilt at having betrayed her husband and the Republic push her in one direction while her affair allows her to feel for the first time that she is 'both a person and a woman'. The re-emergence of sexuality is an important theme here, and the novel represents the stirrings of second-wave feminism out of first (or 'state feminism') in the Turkish context. The fact that Aysel withstands this 'dark night of the soul' is a statement about emerging feminist agency.

These novels, part of a category referred to as 'March 12' novels (in reference to the date of the 1971 coup), reveal, among other things, a renewed focus on the individual, the crisis of the intellectual, feminism and a desire to experiment with novelistic form in new and innovative ways. The period after the coup saw the emergence of the individual out of the national-social collective. This was the first period of committed feminist literature, prison memoirs, coup novels, existentialist texts and absurdist narratives, most of which were in their own ways indictments of the ideologies of the patriarchal military state and/or socialist opposition. The emerging individualism, or 'individual realism', did not completely abandon committed socialist literature; however, a new aesthetic between the psychological and the national-social found its way

into fiction. This often led to a narration of the crises in Turkish society and politics since the founding of the Republic that resulted in a pattern of military coups. Collective critiques based on national identity or class gave way to more subjective accounts from the perspective of victims of the state whose voices had been suppressed.

The 1971 coup ushered in an era of renewed state control and authoritarian rule. The closed world of prisons, torture, police stations, martial law and of 'counter-guerrilla' interrogation centres funded by the US became accessible to the reading public through novels based on real-life individual experiences. The ideals of a nationalist or socialist utopia faded in the face of the new confessional voices and personal histories. The re-emergence of an authoritative military state in the context of the Cold War led to the further splitting of society into leftist and rightist camps, wherein university students became increasingly polarised and clashed in bloody skirmishes. Revolutionary youths full of purpose and anger were helpless against a multifaceted state apparatus. In turn, the social engagement of yesterday became the existential angst of the present. Strong women emerged into prominence to make social critiques of earlier eras as exemplified in the narratives of Adalet Ağaoğlu, Leyla Erbil, Sevgi Soysal and Füzünan. Others retreated into isolation and alienation as revealed in the works of Oğuz Atay and Yusuf Atılgan. Themes involving Islam and lived traditions began to appear with greater frequency, perhaps filling 'spaces' vacated by large-scale socialist movements which had failed to gain political power and transform society. The 'Islamic novel' grew through the efforts of authors such as Şule Yüksel Şenler, Ahmet Günbay Yıldız and Mustafa Miyasoğlu. The oppression suffered by the left after the 1980 coup opened more opportunity spaces for the Islamic movement which criticised the secular nature of the first generation of Republican writers and the Marxist ideological slavishness of the second. From this perspective, both movements tended to exploit Anatolian people and their traditions for political aims rather than provide a true reflection of their lives and culture.

These were texts that revealed a realist texture akin to memoir and confessional accounts of witness. They were, in a sense, oral histories whose content took precedence over their form as they explored and excavated changing relationships and identities in the context of the triangulation between state, society and individual. The 1980 coup was a more severe operation meant to quash the leftist politics and culture that had taken hold since 1960 and replace them with new social values and aims. This sent authors looking for new narrative spaces beyond the national and the social into experiments with history, fantasy and meta-fiction.

## Post-Kemalism and neo-Ottomanism (1981–99): meta-fictions<sup>7</sup>

Latife Tekin and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk helped define this generation of writers through works that were challenging in terms of form and content but, more importantly, that questioned established narratives of Turkish identity and history. In this period, writers began to transcend the limits of national traditions and to strive for international audiences. Pamuk's ever-changing narrative style reached the first of many peaks with his third novel, *The White Castle* (1985), a concise historical meta-fiction that subtly criticised authoritarian nationalism while reintroducing the Ottomans to a sophisticated, literary readership. Furthermore, the novel made a philosophical challenge by subverting the self-other binary through a display of narrative finesse that marked

### 7 Principal authors and representative works:

- Ahmet Altan (b. 1950), *Dört Mevsim Sonbahar* (*Autumn, Four Seasons Worth*), 1982
- Feyyaz Kayacan (b. 1993), *Çocuktaki Bahçe* (*The Garden in the Child*), 1982
- Latife Tekin (b. 1957), *Dear Shameless Death* (*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*), 1983
- Vahap Akbaş (b. 1954), *Alevler ve Güller* (*Flames and Roses*), 1984
- M. Talat Uzunyaylalı (b. 1955), *Senatörün Kızı* (*The Senator's Daughter*), 1986
- Duygu Asena (b. 1946), *Kadının Adı Yok* (*Women Have No Name*), 1987
- Nurullah Genç (b. 1960), *Tutkular Keder Oldu* (*Passion Became Sorrow*), 1987
- Nazlı Eray (b. 1945), *Yoldan Geçen Öyküler* (*Stories Passing on the Street*), 1987, short stories
- Pınar Kür (b. 1943), *Bir Cinayet Romanı* (*A Crime Novel*), 1989
- Metin Kaçan (b. 1961), *Ağır Roman* (*A Serious Novel*), 1990
- Yılmaz Karakoyunlu (b. 1936), *Salkım Hanım'ın Taneleri* (*Pieces of Salkım Hanım*), 1990
- İnci Aral (b. 1944), *Ölü Erkek Kuşlar* (*Dead Male Birds*), 1991
- Vüs'at O. Bener (b. 1922), *Bay Muannit Sahtegi'nin Notları* (*The Notes of Mr. Muannit Sahtegi*), 1991
- Tahsin Yücel (b. 1933), *Peygamberin Son Beş Günü* (*The Prophet's Last Five Days*), 1992
- Mehmet Uyar (b. 1960), *Efsane Sır* (*Legendary Mystery*), 1993
- Mehmet Efe (?), *Mızraksız İlmihal* (*Catechism Without a Lance*), 1994
- İhsan Oktay Anar (b. 1960), *Puslu Kıtalar Atlası* (*The Atlas of Misty Continents*), 1995
- Erendiz Atasü (b. 1947), *Dağın Öteki Yüzü* (*The Other Face of the Mountain*), 1995
- Nedim Gürsel (b. 1951), *Boğazkesen: Fatih'in Romanı* (*Bosporous Fortress: Mehmet the Conqueror*), 1995
- Mahir Öztaş (b. 1951), *Soğuma* (*The Cooling*), 1995
- Zülfü Livaneli (b. 1946), *Engereğin Gözündeki Kamaşma* (*The Twitch in the Eye of the Viper*), 1997
- Halime Toros (b. 1960), *Halkaların Ezgisi* (*The Dirge of Chains*), 1997
- Aslı Erdoğan (b. 1967), *Kırmızı Pelerinli Kent* (*The Crimson Caped City*), 1998
- Cemil Kavukçu (b. 1951), *Dönüş* (*Return*), 1998
- Orhan Pamuk (b. 1952), *My Name is Red* (*Benim Adım Kırmızı*), 1998
- Murathan Mungan (b. 1955), *Üç Aynalı Kırk Oda* (*Forty Rooms with Three Mirrors*), 1999, stories
- Hasan Ali Toptaş (b. 1958), *Bin Hüznülü Haz* (*The Pleasure of a Thousand Sorrows*), 1999
- Hıfzı Topuz (b. 1923), *Paris'te Son Osmanlılar* (*The Last Ottomans in Paris*), 1999

him as a postmodern writer. In the novel, a Venetian and an Ottoman reveal their worlds to each other until they begin to overlap. The Ottoman theme in his work was picked up again with *My Name is Red* (1998), a complex and fragmented work that redefined the flat two-dimensionality of the Ottoman miniature painting as a living, vital, aesthetic model pertinent to the present day. The novel, combing a number of genres, is a historical murder mystery focusing on the imperial miniaturists' guild and a mysterious book that the sultan has commissioned. The novel furthermore exhibits visual expressions of sixteenth-century Ottoman history, autobiographical self-reflexivity, fragmented points of view, the use of a miniaturist's aesthetic as a model of form, scholarly and philosophical treatises, intertextual use of 'Eastern' forms of the Qur'anic parable, mystic romance, and fable, the revelation of the plot through detective-work, the focus on the everyday, and frequent allegorical references to self and nation. In its multiplicity of narrators and its aesthetic self-consciousness, the novel becomes Pamuk's 'large canvas'.

Latife Tekin's novels reveal a harsh world outside the reach of modernising projects, standardised education and secularism. At times labelled 'magical realism', Tekin's novels such as *Dear Shameless Death* (1983) and *Berji Kristin: Tales of the Garbage Hills* (1984) create a new world through a storm of innovative and unusual language, bringing to life the settings of *gecekondus*, or shantytowns peopled by rural migrants to the city. *Dear Shameless Death* is an account of a young girl, Dirmit, and her traumatic move from a rural village to Istanbul. Dirmit copes with the difficulties of her life through the power of her imagination, which verges on delusion. Over time she begins to express herself through writing. *Berji Kristin* recounts the development of a shantytown community around an urban rubbish dump along with a subtext of the growth of socialist ideology among some members of the community. In her work, the voyage of the privileged Istanbulite taken by Feride of *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, makes its astonishing return journey with Dirmit of *Dear Shameless Death*. Were these two heroines to meet, they would hardly know how to react to each other. Both Pamuk and Tekin are somewhat shocking to the secular establishment because there is nothing standardised or predictable about their use of Turkish or their subject matter. They are significant not least because they are two writers who transcended the limits of the dominant discourses of collective understandings of Turkish nationalism and socialism that had held sway into the 1980s.

The 1980 coup was directed against civil unrest and political extremism on both right and left, but truly targeted the left by purging universities and the press. The intelligentsia referred to this coup as the beginning of

‘depoliticisation’, a first step in reorienting society towards neo-liberalism. In literature, this led to drastic changes as writers responded to the political transformations by moving away from social issues and realism in a manner that questioned the grand narratives of nationalism/Kemalism and socialism through aesthetic experimentation with content and form. Though these trends could be more generally labelled part of ‘postmodernism’, their manifestation in the Turkish context can be further specified as expressions of post-Kemalism post-socialism, and neo-Ottomanism.

A strong Marxist tradition led to a delay and resistance to the representation of ‘postmodernism’, a literary category that was suspect to the practitioners of engaged literature and the literature of witness of the ‘Second Republic’ (1960–80). Ironically, Islamic literati were more welcoming of this change, because it reintroduced repressed themes back into public debates. Postmodernism and its related genres proceeded from the assumption that language did not objectively reflect reality, but created it. Thus, realism didn’t reflect an external reality, but created realism itself. Some postmodern techniques included allegory, magical realism, fantasy and an escape into Ottoman history (literary neo-Ottomanism), including a resurgence of the ‘sufi theme’.

As stated above, this survey considers postmodernism to be part of, rather than a replacement or denunciation of, modernism. When introducing postmodernism, the specific political, cultural and social contexts and contingencies of Turkey need to be made clear. In the Turkish case, the prefix ‘post-’ should be read as code for a movement away from long-held socialist ideals, patriarchy, Anatolianism and meta-narratives, and an ironic return to Ottoman/Islamic history, individualism, existentialism and the city. Furthermore, it aimed to refute the truth-claims of earlier generations guided by Kemalism, which included a strong belief in Ottoman-Islamic backwardness, classlessness, universal ideals and populism. The Turkish postmodern condition emphasised a plurality of perspectives as opposed to the fixed singularity of the early twentieth-century modernist vision that was restricted, ironically, because it was universal and so didn’t take the on-the-ground realities into consideration. Thus, postmodernism in Turkish literature was a movement of *rewriting* and excavating the model forms of the previous fifty years. In other words, it forecast the shortcomings, failures and idealism of various projects of modernisation. It did not, as is sometimes expressed, indicate a dismissal or failure of modernism, but rather introduced multiplicity to a rigid, universal, Eurocentric hierarchy of progress and development.

In a similar vein, neo-Ottomanism implied a reassessment and reappropriation of disregarded cultural history and identity before the First World

War, including manifestations of Islam. Understandings of style and aesthetics changed in this era as authors experimented with form while being drawn to the multi-ethnic, multi-religious settings and characters from various Ottoman walks of life and classes. The limits of nationalism were transcended, historical and cultural borders were crossed. At times re-connecting with the trends of nineteenth-century Ottoman modernist Islam, this movement has also been considered part of a more recent 'liberal Islam'. Thus, in the wake of the 1980 coup, along with non-realist and fantastic genres, both the Ottoman historical novel and the Islamic novel gained currency and legitimacy under this label.

Ottoman history and its postmodern manifestation as 'historiographic meta-fiction' became a favourite theme of writers such as Orhan Pamuk and İhsan Oktay Anar. Novelistic variations on political and liberal Islam also became increasingly prevalent. 'Islamic feminists' such as Cihan Aktaş addressed the predicaments of women who wanted to express themselves through faith and individuality.

'Post-Kemalism' referred to another trend involving the rewriting or rearticulation of values of the cultural revolution, the diminution of the significance of the state in daily life and the qualification of secular identity through alternatives that valorise tradition such as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

### Transnationalism and transgression (2000–present): writing beyond the nation<sup>8</sup>

The novels of the youngest generation of Turkish writers, represented by Murat Uyurkulak, Şebnem İşigüzel and Elif Şafak, are emotionally charged, cynical, violent, and even 'slapstick'. Uyurkulak's *Tol* (Revenge, 2002) is a reassessment, an unofficial history, of the last fifty years of Turkey's history told by poets, revolutionaries and madmen from various generations. The

#### 8 Principal authors and representative works:

- Cem Akaş (b. 1968), *Balığın Esir Düştüğü Yer* (*Where Fish Get Trapped*), trilogy, 2000–1
- Ahmet Kekeç (b. 1961), *Yağmurdan Sonra* (*After the Rain*), 2000
- Rıza Kıraç (b. 1970), *Cin Treni* (*Jinn Train*), 2000
- Cihan Aktaş (b. 1960), *Bana Uzun Mektuplar Yaz* (*Write me Long Letters*), 2002
- Nazan Bekiroğlu (b. 1957), *İsimle Ateş Arasında* (*Between Name and Fire*), 2002
- Perihan Mağden (b. 1960), *İki Genç Kızın Romanı* (*A Novel of Two Young Girls*), 2002
- Murat Uyurkulak (b. 1972), *Tol* (*Revenge*), 2002
- Şebnem İşigüzel (b. 1973), *Sarmaşık* (*Intertwined*), 2002
- Enis Batur (b. 1952), *Kravat* (*Necktie*), 2003
- Yekta Kopan (b. 1968), *İçimde Kim Var?* (*Who is Within Me?*), 2004
- Mario Levi (b. 1967), *Lunapark Kapandı* (*The Amusement Park Closed*), 2005
- Elif Şafak Bilgin (b. 1971), *The Bastard of Istanbul* (*Baba ve Piç*), 2006

fragmented plot revolves around an alcoholic poet ('Poet') and a proofreader, Yusuf, who has lost his will to live. The two are on a train journey from Istanbul to Diyarbakır – two cities representing the opposing poles of modern Turkish schizophrenia: modernity and oppression/dispossession. With a first line that begins 'Revolution, at one time, was a possibility, and it was very good', *Töl* conveys the perspective of frustrated leftist idealism that exacts its revenge against the state through alternative narratives and ways of being. This is something of an underground novel that takes the reader into the world of distraught revolutionaries, their alternative histories and their fantasies of revenge against a system of war, inhumanity and capitalism.

With a sense of violence and sexuality so excessive that it verges on parody, Şebnem İşigüzel's books explore everyday life from extreme, exaggerated perspectives through themes of incest, homelessness and rape. In the novel *Sarmaşık* (Intertwined, 2002), she examines stories of sexual abuse and rape in the context of relationships of love and power. The main story revolves around Ali Ferah, who is the son of a woman who married the man who raped her. The novel is woven out of accounts of sexual violation and the everyday, of the sinister and the mundane, including Hayal's sexual abuse in a school run by nuns and her subsequent mental illness; Ludmilla, who is sexually abused by Boris, a 'friend' of her family, and who later becomes a prostitute; her sister Nadya, who lives (and dies) as the mistress of the first Turkish writer to be awarded the Nobel prize, Salim Abidin; and Sedef and her objectification in an unhappy marriage. The novel might be thematised under the umbrella of victimhood, but unlike Uyurkulak, İşigüzel's characters do not conceive of vengeance as a real or imagined possibility.

This is the generation of EU accession politics and the rise of the Justice and Development Party representing the position of 'Islamic Democrats'. Mostly born in the 1960s and 1970s, and raised in a world of seeming contradictions, the writers of the newest generation don't ascribe to any particular movement in the traditional sense. The idiosyncrasies of these young writers, experimental in terms of form and content, make them difficult to categorise. They are, however, unified in one important respect: their work represents a mixing or crossing of traditional novelistic genres. The boundaries that they cross in their fiction explode the limits of the nation and national tradition as it is traditionally understood through chronological/historical, thematic, gender and genre transgressions. They have learned to live with contradiction rather than trying to resolve it. They represent no particular political position, yet they are not apolitical. They have no conviction in the 'author-intellectual' figure that has been dominant in Turkish letters since the founding of the Republic,

but are content to be authors concerned with craft, style and aesthetics. In the wake of the collapse of grand narratives and in an increasingly consumerist culture, they explore new avenues of cynical narration that might include detective stories, underground fiction, youth subcultures and fantasy.

The first generation to grow up within the neo-liberal system that was established after the 1980 coup, these writers are tacticians of resistance on an individual rather than social or historical scale. These authors have little conviction in monolithic ideologies, but they do have an inkling of the market of identities and a multitude of sites of power influencing one's choices. In short, there is a new relationality in these works, a new way of seeing the regional and international world of which Turkey has become a part. These young authors are redefining what it means to be a 'Turk' beyond national identity.

### Conclusion: politics and aesthetics

These seven periods spanning the 'long' twentieth century correspond to seven main world views. Each period is informed by a particular *telos*, or goal, that is expressed textually as follows: (1) the reform of traditional Ottoman society and the synthesis of modernity and Islam; (2) the establishment of ethno-religious Turkism as the cultural engine of Ottoman social transformation; (3) the creation of a new, future-oriented, ethno-cultural, national and secular society divorced from the Ottoman-Islamic past; (4) the transformation of Anatolian rural life through socialist revolution or the Anatolian reworking of the Turkist cultural revolution; (5) the critique or indictment of national and socialist modernity from the perspective of its victims: women, alienated intellectuals, Islamists and other marginalised populations; (6) the acknowledgement of the collapse of meta-narratives of socio-national progress through the multiplication of perspectives, the ironic revisiting of Ottoman history, formal experimentation and the subversion of realism through fantasy or magical realism; and (7) the violent, extreme or ironic presentation of new perspectives of transnationalism, transgression and border crossing that proliferate and further relativise sites of identification in contemporary Turkish society. Some authors represent more than one category, and a shift is visible in their work, marking a change in ideological focus. A clear politics of representation is at play during each period. This is not to say that aesthetic concerns are not also a factor. The general trajectory both in each period and over the twentieth century as a whole, however, could be described as a movement away from imposed identities (national, social, familial, gender, etc.) and towards



the recognition of contradictory subjectivities whereby collective or individual agency enables the crossing of discursive or ideological boundaries in a non-prescriptive manner.

In short, a canon of the Turkish novel implies many paradoxical things at once. By outlining the forces that have given form to the novel in the twentieth century, this survey has only sketched the beginnings of a critical analysis of the relationships between ideology, history and literary production. The narrative space of the novel is a historicised public arena of contested ideologies and identities. Each generation produces its dominant literary content in concordance with or in opposition to a particular world view. As a record of representations, the novel in Turkish demonstrates the suffering of the dispossessed and the anxiety of identification in a social context where power relations are constantly changing. After cataloguing the work of over a century of writing in Turkish, one question presents itself and remains to be answered: is there a perspective outside ideology – a point of triangulation perhaps – that is not compromised by the passing of time or shifting power relations? The canon outlined in the notes here provides a possible answer, one bound in the power of aesthetics and politics.

One author who valorises aesthetics and style while also engaging history and identity is none other than Orhan Pamuk. The awarding of the Nobel prize to Pamuk was historic for a number of reasons. It was the first prize for a Turkish author and only the second Nobel to be awarded to an author from a Muslim country. It acknowledged the power of Pamuk's complex and lyrical narratives, which intertwine European and Muslim literary traditions. Furthermore, the award was also an indirect vote in favour of Turkey's EU accession. The Nobel committee, in championing the cultural situation of a country that has long been portrayed in the West as 'poor, populous and Muslim' (all code words for Turkey's exclusion from Europe) has helped free Turkey from tired, age-old clichés.

In fact, Pamuk and the award will encourage a 're-reading' of Turkey's past, present and future. In his seven novels and other writings, Pamuk advocates understanding between what at first appear to be contrary, opposing cultural logics. Each of his novels (the eighth, the *Museum of Innocence*, is forthcoming) contains a representation of unstable identity within a specific Ottoman or Turkish historical context. His oeuvre is a catalogue of genres, moving from the realist *Jevdet Bey and Sons* to the modernist *Silent House*; from the postmodern allegory of *The White Castle* to the 'Eastern' and 'Western' intertext of *The Black Book*; from the sufic metafiction of *The New Life* to the historiographic postmodernism of *My Name is Red* and to the violent

ideological conversions of *Snow*. Within this framework, his fiction reveals characters, like the author himself, who are *both* orientalised and nationalised subjects with an inclination to question their (often imposed) identities. Such questioning and interrogation leads his protagonists to attempt to manifest (by writing or painting, for example) other narrative sites of identification. These attempts fail within the confines of the novel's plot itself, but are redeemed by the author's act of narrative 'suture', or perhaps redemption. Every Pamuk book is doubled: a major story of lament and failure is balanced by the quiet birth of a narrative of hybrid or multi-perspectival authority.

Through his work, Pamuk reveals how 'self' and 'other' are dependent, symbiotic, even fluid. His fiction questions the very notion of a national identity based on a single ethnic, religious or cultural characteristic. Aesthetics and politics are implicitly conjoined in his work. His novels reveal a narrative process that reflects transformation and change in Turkish identity. Both Pamuk's fiction and Turkey's delicate EU membership talks are vital for the humanising and accepting of a 'Muslim other', for demonstrating political alternatives to war and violence as a way to 'democratise', and for cross-cultural dialogue that results in mutual political change.

## A brief history of modern Istanbul

ÇAĞLAR KEYDER

### Nationalising the imperial capital

The history of modern Istanbul, like the history of modern Turkey, begins with the end of the First World War and the demise of the Ottoman Empire. The city that became Istanbul was, famously, established as an imperial capital – the new Rome that would take over the functions of the seat of empire from the decrepit old Rome. The geography of the seas and continents surrounding the city made it a natural focus, which in the *longue durée* would assert itself as the centre of networks whose nature and relative weight changed in time, but whose topographies exhibited continuity. Over the thousand years of its Byzantine incarnation the city's fortunes waxed and waned, until it was reduced to a dependency of Genoa after the ravages imposed by the Latins during the Fourth Crusade (1204–61). The Ottoman dynasty revived Istanbul's centrality to the larger Eurasian region and helped resuscitate its economy, not only as a trading post, but also as a centre of what we would today call cultural industries – education, books, the higher arts and exclusive items of consumption for the wealthy. The city's size soon came to dwarf any competitor in the entire Middle East and the Balkans; its imperial riches and the consumption capacity of its inhabitants made it into the largest marketplace in that region.<sup>1</sup>

While the transition from Byzantine to Ottoman centrality was relatively natural and smooth, the status of the city grew somewhat anomalous as Europe gradually came to be dominated by capitalist nation-states. Here was the seat of an old agrarian empire, with many ethnicities living under heterogeneous legal norms. Its economy was swayed by political decree; its merchants and bankers enjoyed none of the freedoms and predictability that their European

1 Stefan Yerasimos, *İstanbul: İmparatorluklar başkenti* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000); John Freely, *Istanbul: The Imperial City* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2002); Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı başkenti İstanbul* (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Vakfı, 2002). More accessible is Phillip Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire* (London: St Martin's, 1998).

counterparts gradually obtained. It fascinated Europeans both because of this difference and because it gave them a taste of the world beyond Europe – a realm of heterogeneity and confusion where mores mixed, and no single language reigned. Accordingly, the salient question of the second half of the nineteenth century was whether the empire could make the transition to modern statehood without losing its imperial diversity.<sup>2</sup> Imperial modernisation, of course, had its contradictions: the more it succeeded in imposing a uniform set of rules, the greater was the risk of social polarisation among different ethnic groups. Checked by the differentiated regulation of the traditional empire, the relative standing of different ethnic groups could be maintained within safe bounds. If rules had to be uniform, and the market was given free rein, unequal development would follow, and economic and social inequalities eventually give way to political demands and independence movements.<sup>3</sup>

It was unclear whether the European powers sincerely wished the success of Ottoman modernisation that they fervently advocated, or whether their counsel was meant to serve only to postpone the inevitable imperialist struggle over the estate. Whatever the motivations, the Western impact had wide-ranging consequences for Istanbul. Along with the experience of modern economic growth, political, legal and institutional changes transformed the city into a reflection of the colonial model. The penetration of the Western powers became palpable with their embassies, which paraded Western architectural styles, while imperatives of trade and technology helped create the docks and the warehouses. In the 1850s, especially after the Crimean War, a new population of foreigners and locals alike started to live in the style of the burghers of European cities, with boulevards, trams, shops and apartment buildings; the bureaucrats of Istanbul responded by thinking about reforming and planning the city.<sup>4</sup>

Unequal accommodations to economic transformation, along with greater presence of foreign powers, were reflected in new population balances. Istanbul acquired a new demographic profile in which the non-Muslim population

2 Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Also Eric Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994; repr. 2004).

3 See Kemal H. Karpat, *An Inquiry into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Millets to Nations, from Estates to Social Classes* (Princeton: Center for International Studies, 1973), for the transition of ethnic conflict to nationalist movements.

4 Murat Gül and Richard Lamb, 'Mapping, Regularizing and Modernizing Ottoman Istanbul: Aspects of the Genesis of the 1839 Development Policy', *Urban History* 31, 3 (2004); Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986).

began to dominate. On the eve of the Balkan Wars, foreigners accounted for 15 per cent of an estimated population of close to a million, while Greeks comprised 30 per cent, and Armenians and Jews another 15 per cent.<sup>5</sup> With the influx of refugees during and after the wars, the balance tipped in favour of Muslims. Population movements during the Great War were complex: some Christians fled the empire; some arrived in Istanbul from Anatolian cities and took refuge there. Muslim inhabitants left the city for smaller towns where food would be more readily accessible, but there were also waves of refugees from far corners of the empire. The universal conscription instituted in 1909 led to the departure of some Christians before and during the war. The massacres of 1915 mostly took place in the eastern half of Anatolia and generally spared the Armenian inhabitants of the capital. With the revolution in Russia, there was a mass influx of 'white' Russians, fleeing the Bolsheviks across the Black Sea. This new element in the population swelled to substantial size under the allied occupation of the city following the Ottoman surrender. But Istanbul was mostly a way station: most refugees left once the war was over. The population that had surpassed the one-million mark during the war had shrunk to 700,000 in 1927.<sup>6</sup> In addition to all the foreigners, almost half of the Christians had also departed; now two-thirds of the population were Muslim.

During the late imperial period, the city had been clearly divided: Muslims predominated in the old city inside the walls, and foreigners and the newly wealthy Christian families moved to Pera, on the other side of the Golden Horn, to neighbourhoods that had been settled by the Genoese during Byzantine times. While the foreign population expanded, as it did in all port cities during the late nineteenth century, the city had also acquired a new centrality for Muslims in terms of its cultural and political status. Turks and other Muslim nationalities from the Russian empire, as well as Albanians, Bosniaks, Arabs and other peoples from far corners of the empire came to the capital city to attend its schools and to engage in cultural and political life. There were reformers, revolutionaries, modernists, nationalists, Marxists, members of various religious orders, mystics and dilettantes, in truly cosmopolitan diversity, making the city their home. Coinciding with the beginnings of the great

5 Population figures relying on Ottoman censuses are found in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

6 T. C. İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, *1930 İstatistik yılı* (Ankara: T. C. İstatistik Umum Müdürlüğü, 1930), p. 64. Muslims were 448,000 out of a total of 690,000. On the exchange of populations with Greece, see Kemal Arı, *Büyük mübadele* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995); also Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: The consequences of the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003).

questioning of matters of culture and civilisation, of modernisation and native values, this was the period when the spatial construction of the city came to parallel the social divide. There is an established genre in Turkish literature and cinema that maps the neighbourhoods of the city onto the attitudes and emotional charges of the separation between the Westernisers and the defenders of cultural authenticity.<sup>7</sup>

When the nationalists, following the expulsion of the Greek army from Anatolia and the departure of the last British forces, entered Istanbul in October 1922, they put an end to the cultural debate. From then on, nationalism was to provide the accepted narrative, attempting to reconcile cultural nativism with Westernising zeal, while keeping Islam out of the picture. In the Turkish version, and especially under the influence of inter-war authoritarian regimes, nationalism took on a strongly statist and relatively ethnic colouring, which dictated that the Europe-oriented remnants of the Ottoman Christian bourgeoisie had to be excised from the body national in order for the nation-state to begin anew on a healthy basis.<sup>8</sup> It was only grudgingly that the new government accepted, as stipulated in the Exchange of Populations annex of the Lausanne treaty, that the Greeks who could prove their residence in Istanbul be allowed to remain in the country. The nationalists resented not only the cosmopolitan empire, which had naively entertained the dream of surviving in the modern world with its diversity intact, but also the imperialist engineers, some of whom continued to harbour international fantasies in the immediate post-war period. As a prelude to that other stalled project, the League of Nations, the British and French occupation authorities who ruled Istanbul for three years had briefly entertained the notion of turning it into an international city housing the future offices of a world government.<sup>9</sup> This, of course, was a flattering conceit, and a more confident state might even have capitalised on it; but Turkey was too hurt, too green and too humiliated – even with the victory of the nationalists. The nationalist regime was afraid and anxious,

7 The classical novel is Peyami Safa's *Fatih-Harbiye*, referring to two neighbourhoods on either side of the divide. As to films, there are several from the 1960s and the 1970s that treat love affairs between rich, spoiled, but eventually repentant young women who dance to Western music, and proud and handsome men from the poorer, traditional, and later *gecekondu* neighbourhoods. See Mehmet Öztürk, 'Türk sinemasında gecekonducular', *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, thematic issue 1 (2004), [www.Tejs.org/document94.html](http://www.Tejs.org/document94.html).

8 Çağlar Keyder, 'The Consequences of "the Exchange of Populations" for Turkey', in Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean*.

9 For the occupation period, see Nur Bilge Criss, *Istanbul under Allied Occupation, 1918–1923* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999); also Clarence Richard Johnson (ed.), *Constantinople Today or the Pathfinder Survey of Constantinople – A Study in Oriental Social Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

inclined to close itself off to the outside and suspicious of citizens who might harbour relations with the external world. The war and the partitioning of the empire meant that Istanbul would no longer play its former metropolitan role towards the territories in the Balkans, or in the Middle East: Palestine, Syria and Iraq. The Ottoman sultan, who had also served as a symbolic caliph for the world's Muslims (especially when anti-colonial sentiments began to stir towards the end of the period), was no longer sovereign. With the abolition of the caliphate, Istanbul ceased to hold any particular interest for the Muslims of the world; Islamic intellectuals would no longer look at the city as a site of cultural and political pilgrimage.

From 1923 until the end of the Second World War, Istanbul survived in relative obscurity, a provincial backwater in a preoccupied world where populations turned inward. The nationalist animus of the Ankara regime, however, softened in time. Mustafa Kemal visited the city after an undeclared boycott of five years. As a sign of the eroding *asabiyya* of the new capital in the steppes, Ankara bureaucrats and the business circles of the old capital discovered mutually beneficial accommodations. The years of the Great Depression brought a series of bankruptcies and widespread poverty, unallayed by the agrarian populism of the Ankara government. Although Turkey remained unaligned, the war period was even more trying: there were shortages, mass conscription of the young and a general decline in welfare. Politicians reacted by reanimating the ethnic and religious adversity that had seemed to have ended with the foundation of the Republic. They instituted a wartime 'wealth levy' expressly designed to bankrupt the non-Muslim businessmen of Istanbul.<sup>10</sup> This tactic was effective: after the end of the war, many Christian and Jewish businessmen left the country when they found the opportunity to do so. Istanbul was launched on its national developmentalist script with an almost clean slate in 1945.

The high Republican period of 1923–50 had imposed on Istanbul the nationalist project of the Ankara elites. The most important dimension of this imposition was the translation of anti-colonial sentiments to the ethnic purification (unmixing of the peoples of the old multi-ethnic empire) that accompanied the establishment of the new Republic. The political orientation of the Republic in terms of its ethnic regulation paralleled the gradual cleansing of 'non-nationals' from the city. Institutional mechanisms, such as restrictions on property ownership of church endowments, and strict regulations imposed on Greek and Armenian schools, helped achieve this task. Greeks

<sup>10</sup> Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık vergisi ve Türkleştirme politikaları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000).

and Armenians had acquired the legal status of minorities in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, according them protection; but, in many ways, the legal regime became a constriction that forced them out of the country. In addition to the compulsory exchange of populations and the punitive wartime tax targeting non-Muslims, a pogrom organised by the government in 1955, known as the 6–7 September Events, led to the destruction of commercial property belonging to Christians;<sup>11</sup> a decree in 1963 required all Greeks who had Greek citizenship to leave the city within a few weeks.<sup>12</sup> The undeclared policy of driving out the non-Muslim population continued in subsequent decades. The Republican state's nationalism was ambiguous in defining the constituent coordinates of nationhood: it mostly veered toward an ethnic definition rather than a constitutional one, and when ideological bolstering was required, religion could function as a defining element despite the state's avowed secularism. The number of Christians declined from about 450,000 in 1914 to 240,000 in 1927. As Turkish censuses have not recorded ethnic or religious background since 1965, there are no reliable figures on the current scale of minority populations. The estimates suggest that by the 1980s the Greek population had dwindled to between 2,000 and 3,000, the Armenians to 50,000 and the Jews to 25,000. Istanbul came to reflect the ethnic balances of Turkey as a whole, where the population is more than 99 per cent Muslim.<sup>13</sup>

During the first two decades of the Republic, the demographic losses and the shifts in population deprived the city of a large number of its merchants, businessmen, artisans and shopkeepers. The subsequent move of the seat of government to an undistinguished market town in the Anatolian steppes meant that the larger portion of the new Republic's physical and cultural investment would be made in Ankara, to the detriment of Istanbul. The headquarters of the national radio network was established in the new capital; and the semi-official print media were also moved there (although the bulk of the newspaper circulation and other nationally diffused printed matter still originated in Istanbul). A national opera company, symphony, state ballet and theatre were founded: Istanbul was left to wallow in more plebeian entertainment. Ankara was being constructed as the showcase of the new Republic and Istanbul was left to stagnate. The founders of the Republic in the new and culturally uncontaminated

11 Dilek Güven, *6–7 Eylül olayları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2006).

12 Hülya Demir and Rıdvan Akar, *İstanbul'un son sürgünleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002); also A. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek–Turkish Relations, 1918–1974* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983).

13 This figure is misleading; it counts all who are not Christian or Jewish as Muslim. There are different sects within Islam, some too heterodox to consider themselves fully Muslim, and of course there are non-believers.



capital were hostile to Istanbul's potential autonomy, and suspicious of imperial remnants. There were no elected posts of urban government: Istanbul's highest official was the governor, appointed directly by the prime minister.<sup>14</sup>

### Primacy in national development

The story of Istanbul from the end of the Second World War is one of a Third World primate city that served as the portal to the economic growth of the country as a whole, nourishing a new bourgeoisie and transforming peasants into workers. Shortages during the war and black market profits had created a new group of wealthy provincials, who arrived in Istanbul seeking the good life and social status. Many among them constituted the nucleus of Istanbul's financial and industrial bourgeoisie. They were the vanguard of a migration that continued for half a century, although in time immigrants were drawn from the poorer segments of the rural population, and they sought employment rather than civil status. Their penetration of the complacent social life of a city proud of its past glamour signalled an irreversible momentum of nationalisation of the metropolis.

The new business groups effortlessly melded with old money, signalling the transformation of an enclave economy to something more autochthonous with deeper penetration of its hinterland. Istanbul's share of the country's production and income increased. In the imperial imagination of past years, the city had never been rivalled. It was easily more than four times the size of its nearest competitors (Salonica, Izmir) even during the port-city boom resulting from the commercial development of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Now, in the heyday of national development, both producers and consumers accumulated within its gravitation and issued an invitation to the migrants seeking to participate in the quest, causing a seemingly unstoppable aggrandisement – from a population of 1.1 million in 1950, to 2.8 million in 1970, and 6.5 million in 1990. While about 5 per cent of Turkey's total population lived in Istanbul in 1950, this proportion rose to 14 per cent in 2000.<sup>16</sup> Under developmentalist policies, the city became the privileged location of a new generation of large-scale, private manufacturing enterprises, protected from world competition

14 On local government see M. N. Danielson and R. Keleş, *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985); and Metin Heper, *Local Government in Turkey: Governing Greater Istanbul* (London: Routledge, 1989).

15 Çağlar Keyder, Eyüp Özveren and Donald Quataert (eds.), *Port-cities in the Eastern Mediterranean*, special issue of *Review* (Winter 1993).

16 Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *İstatistik yıllığı* (Ankara, various years).

and encouraged through financial incentives. Thus, in the 1970s more than half of all private manufacturing employment in Turkey was located in Istanbul.<sup>17</sup> This growth was due to large import-substituting industrial establishments, but also to a higher number of labour-intensive, small-scale manufacturing and commercial enterprises in and around the city core. Needless to say, the biggest concentration of middle-class demand for the products of import-substituting industry was also located in the city. This unchallenged primacy continued along the same dimensions until the 1980s, when macro-economic changes (structural adjustment policies) provided new opportunity for provincial centres to develop export industries.

Throughout these decades of rapid economic expansion and chaotic growth, Istanbul's progressively deteriorating physical infrastructure and declining financial resources failed to generate action on the part of national governments in Ankara. In the national political arena, the overriding theme was the incorporation of the peasantry into electoral politics, mainly via providing various subsidies to urban immigrants. While such subsidies accelerated rural transformation, one of the consequences was rapid urbanisation and the growth of shantytowns – especially in Istanbul. In fact, most of the new housing was illegal. In some cases the squatter dwellings (*gecekondu*) were constructed on public land or on land belonging to private owners, in others their construction violated zoning regulations or was carried out without regard to municipal ordinances, without the proper inspection and permits, and disregarding the engineering, sanitary, aesthetic or habitation norms set by the authorities. What is clear is that Istanbul's growth from 1 million to almost 10 million during the second half of the twentieth century was primarily due to the expansion of 'illegal' housing.<sup>18</sup>

Before the 1950s, there was no pressure to acquire the public or empty land surrounding the inhabited urban area. Urban population between the 1920s and 1945 remained stable and, in most cities, below the pre-First World War totals. It was quite common in Istanbul during that period to find large areas of garden plots or dairy farms interspersed within the urban fabric. Most of this urban agriculture was located on abandoned plots, land belonging to departed Christians, or now defunct *vakıfs* where property had reverted to public

17 Süleyman Özmucur, 'İstanbul ili gelir tahminleri, 1950–74', *BU Ekonomi Dergisi* 4–5 (1976).

18 Peter Suzuki, 'Peasants without Plows: Some Anatolians in Istanbul', *Rural Sociology* 31 (December 1966); Kemal H. Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Sema Erder, *İstanbul'a bir kent konu: Ümraniye* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996); Tahire Erman, 'Becoming "urban" or Remaining "Rural": The Views of Turkish Rural-to-Urban Migrants on the "Integration" Question', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30, 4 (1998).

ownership. In fact, compared to the within-the-walls density of pre-modern European cities, Istanbul had always presented a picture of non-compactness, a sparseness – a fact upon which many a traveller remarked. When the city's population began to increase, it was the empty spaces within the inhabited city that were first filled with illegal squatter housing. The potential supply of this inner-city land, however, was far too little to satisfy the needs of the vast wave of migrants that began to arrive in the city after the end of the war. Moreover, building houses that were too much in the public eye was not always desirable for squatters. Hence, the natural space for expansion became the immediate perimeter of the settled area: land that was primarily public, i.e. de facto ownerless, took priority. Fields outside the urban area, zoned for agriculture or left for grazing, constituted the next category.

The picture that emerged when immigrants started settling in the city was a jigsaw pattern of established private property, abandoned non-Muslim holdings, *vakıf* land without claimants, former agricultural holdings and, above all, various kinds of publicly owned land, translated to a similarly unpredictable intertwining of zoned and *gecekondu* settlements, resulting in a surprising juxtaposition of villas and expensive blocks of flats with shacks, even in the wealthiest neighbourhoods of the city. The principal factor permitting this development was the inability – or the unwillingness – of the state either to provide housing to the immigrants or to institute a regime of enforceable private property. Public authorities simply yielded to inertia, a strategy which contributed to the chaotic development of the city and to the emergence of the legal–illegal dichotomy. 'Illegal' settlement occurred in places where squatters encountered the least resistance. Accordingly, the pattern of settlements has resulted in one of the most dispersed and low-density habitations in the world. The Istanbul metropolitan area now extends almost 100 kilometres on an east–west axis paralleling the shores of the Marmara Sea, in a band whose width varies between 10 and 20 kilometres.

The high proportion of 'illegal' housing shows that official recognition was not easily granted. Except in the old city or middle-class neighbourhoods existing within 'modern' property regulations, the issue of whether a construction was actually finished was always open to question. Following political signals, usually on the eve of an election, hurried construction activity would often add new floors to existing buildings. Municipal services usually arrived soon after a neighbourhood evolved. There were very few cases of ongoing official vigilance against illegal construction: all sides were aware that once a neighbourhood or even a single house was inhabited, the likelihood that the authorities would tear it down decreased drastically. With the addition of new

floors as circumstances permitted, the life cycle of a squatter neighbourhood was such that, after a few elections, it could become an area of multiple-storey apartment buildings. In the periphery of the city, shantytowns of such apartment buildings have evolved as quasi-autonomous settlements where they provide employment and supply most of the middle-range functions and services expected of second- or third-order nodes in an urban hierarchy. In fact, it would not be too inaccurate to think of Istanbul as a conglomerate of such *gecekondu* districts with limited organic unity.

Along with population increase, economic transformation brought about by national development, and a greater exposure to post-war consumption norms, the 'legal', zoned, urban area also expanded, responding to middle-class demand. This was a trend that consolidated social differentiation where the movement was from heterogeneous neighbourhoods in the old city to newly created, more homogeneous neighbourhoods reflecting a spatial division consonant with an increasingly complex economy. As Istanbul quickly became the growth pole of a relatively successful process of national development based on import-substituting industrialisation, incomes increased, consumption patterns changed and the growing middle class began to purchase consumer durables widely. These processes led to a new pattern of demand for housing. Larger kitchens and bathrooms, constructed with the products of a booming construction materials industry churning out ceramic goods, tiles, and chromed fixtures, began to set the standard, requiring blocks of flats, preferably in newly emerging 'middle-class' neighbourhoods.<sup>19</sup>

The evolution of middle-class neighbourhoods was specific in terms of urban geography. Parcellisation of gardens belonging to old Ottoman summer houses occurred mostly along the Marmara shore, and dominantly on the Asian side, while cooperatives developing public land operated predominantly in the highlands of the European side. These centres of gravity of middle-class habitation emerged as the counterweight to *gecekondu* development within the urban ecology of Istanbul. The old city neighbourhoods, which were left behind when those who could afford flats in the new developments moved

19 Uğur Tanyeli, *Istanbul 1900–2000: konutu ve modernleşmeyi metropolden okumak* (Istanbul: Akın Nalca Yayını, 2004); Çağlar Keyder, 'The housing market from informal to global', in Ç. Keyder (ed.), *Istanbul between the Global and the Local* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999). A crucial factor in the middle-class construction boom was a new law permitting independent ownership of apartments (condominium) in a residential building. Until then, ownership of flats had existed on a cooperative basis, with individuals holding shares in the land on which the building was constructed. With the new legal situation, the growing middle classes became full owners of their homes. During the 1960s, ownership of a newly built flat (rather than a house in the suburbs) became the middle-class aspiration.

out, turned into less desirable areas, providing housing to the old, downwardly mobile urban population. Even the highest-rent areas near Beyoğlu succumbed to this process of declassment until they returned as desirable spaces through gentrification in the 1990s.

The residential development that changed the face of the city meant that the vast majority of the housing stock in Istanbul is the product of recent decades, with specimens of nineteenth-century urbanism being confined to a few districts. This wave also signalled an enormous potential for accumulation where urban rent, the increasing value of real estate, gave something to everyone who participated in the rush. The old inhabitants of Istanbul gained from their earlier access to opportunities: the minority who owned detached houses with gardens had apartment buildings constructed on the land where they could sell the flats; others had links to surrounding rural areas where land could be subdivided into building lots and sold to new inhabitants. The new immigrants to the city benefited, in proportion to the time of their arrival, from having settled in relatively more central districts. Especially after the authorities relented in the 1980s, and permitted formalisation of titles making it possible to convert the original shanties to relatively sturdy apartment buildings, the gains accruing to the original owners were substantial.<sup>20</sup>

All this construction activity allowed for economic opportunity in various fields. New immigrants without education or skills often found their first, informal, employment in construction sites, especially when there was some relationship such as distant kinship or a shared province or region of origin with the small-scale contractors who organised the construction. Thus, Istanbul's population explosion and construction boom, as in all rapidly growing cities, became a huge machine for integrating the new inhabitants through job creation, and for permitting the old inhabitants to access some of the new wealth that was being generated through the growing demand and higher prices for better located real estate. This pattern implausibly survived through many decades, validating the old adage that 'Istanbul's streets are paved with gold'. Only after the 1980s, under the impact of the discipline imposed by globalisation, did the exigencies of the capitalist market put an end to the perpetual flow of value to everyone involved, and the continuous possibility of integrating the new immigrants.

Istanbul was a fairly typical Third World sprawl in 1980. The old city retained most of its glory and the older neighbourhoods some of their charm, but the overwhelming impression was one of dilapidation and crowdedness.

20 Melih Pınarcıoğlu and Oğuz Işık, *Nöbetleşe yoksulluk* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2005).

Environmental degradation in the industrial periphery of the city<sup>21</sup> was matched by the lack of urban amenities in the shantytowns; a constant activity of construction produced the ever-present mud and dust that plagued the streets, and there was an unavoidable gloom of air pollution emanating from old cars and cheap coal. But the city attracted investment and immigrants, and served as the premier engine of growth for the country. Its bustle was real even if it could not be maintained in the face of market liberalism. Furthermore, it became the principal transmission mechanism for the urbanisation and 'modernisation' of the peasantry. At any given time no more than one-third of its employment was in the formal sector; but most households held one person who was formally employed and could therefore guarantee some stable income and access to social services. There was a widely shared belief that informal employment was temporary, that eventually all (male) heads of household would attain formal status. Istanbul was responsible for the absorption of a quarter of the new urban population in Turkey during the period from 1960 to 1980.

### Under the impact of globalisation

The most recent phase in the city's history can best be narrated through the construct of globalisation. This is not necessarily to argue that Istanbul has become a 'global city', but that its transformation has been inescapably dominated by accelerated dynamics characteristic of the flows and networks defining the new world.<sup>22</sup> These are economic networks that create urban spaces to accommodate the logic of capital, and cultural networks that seem to dictate tastes, dispositions, claims to status and, more mundanely, consumption habits. In all fields governing social conduct, there are transformed structured hierarchies aligning according to the dictates of global vocabulary. The upheavals are traceable in the separate but combined fields of the art world, culinary practices and academia, as well as in professions and the media. The new orderings are consolidated through distinctions carefully produced in residential choice and material consumption.

The new global networks penetrate urban life and restructure the economy, introducing new types of employment and levels of income for some that are commensurate with the wealthier areas of the world. As in other

21 The best treatment of the subject is Latife Tekin's novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1992).

22 For an early diagnosis see Çağlar Keyder and Ayşe Öncü, 'Globalization of a Third-World Metropolis: Istanbul in the 1980s', *Review* (Summer 1994).

globalising cities of the Third World, Istanbul has experienced the shock of rapid integration into transnational networks and markets and witnessed the emergence of new social groups since the 1980s.<sup>23</sup> A thin social layer of a new bourgeois and professional class has adopted the lifestyle and consumption habits of their transnational counterparts. Globalised lifestyles, shopping malls, gated communities and gentrified neighbourhoods that replicate similar ones in other globalising cities are stock features of the literature on the new city.<sup>24</sup>

Istanbul was already the centre of high-level services oriented to the national economy during the period when it served as the primate city. Trade and finance were centred in the city, as were the small communications and media sectors catering to the country as a whole. The latter sectors included publishing and cinema. Television had only started to broadcast in the mid-1970s, and consisted of three public channels based in Ankara. During the 1980s there was an explosion of media: with de facto deregulation following some years of 'pirate' broadcasting, the number of television channels reached twenty. The number has subsequently climbed to perhaps twice that, and many production companies have developed. A similar trend can be observed with radio stations, which also exploded in numbers following deregulation. The music industry owes its rapid growth to the proliferation of cassettes, again in the 1980s, and has now matured and entered into partnerships with global media giants.<sup>25</sup> The growth spurt in publishing came later, with the increase in consumption of magazines and books towards the end of the century. Cinema, which had entered a period of stagnation following its exuberant activity during the 1970s, has revived most successfully, again in the late 1990s. Turkey now has the highest proportion in Europe of local film revenues in the box office. In addition to capturing national audiences, Turkish films have also become perennial favourites in world festivals. As incomes increased, so did the proportion of employment in culture industries and advertising, and Istanbul naturally monopolised these sectors, providing the entire country with

23 Istanbul's mayor in the 1980s, Bedrettin Dalan, was a bold public entrepreneur who launched an urban renewal campaign dislocating thousands of 'old economy' shops and workshops and opening swaths of Golden Horn, Bosphorus and Marmara waterfront to parks and footpaths. His tenure marked the beginning of what has become a consistent theme in urban government: the need to boost Istanbul as a global city attracting business and tourists. See Oktay Ekinci, *Istanbul'u sarsan on yıl: 1983-1993* (Istanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar, 1994).

24 N. Tokatlı and Y. Boyacı, 'The Changing Morphology of Commercial Activity in Istanbul', *Cities* 16, 3 (1999); Ayşe Öncü, 'The myth of the "Ideal Home" travels across cultural borders to Istanbul', in Ayşe Öncü and Petra Weyland (eds.), *Space, Culture and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities* (London: Zed Books, 1997).

25 Martin Stokes, 'Sounding out: the culture industries and the globalization of Istanbul', in Keyder (ed.), *Istanbul*.

its vision, narrative and taste. Newspapers, magazines and 'reality' programming on television disseminate the liaisons and concerns of its celebrities to the entire country.

Tourism is another sector that has expanded rapidly during the most recent period. Visitors to Turkey often spend a day or two in the city and move on to the Mediterranean coast; the real potential for Istanbul and the higher value added is in conference tourism. This potential first came to attention during the UN Habitat meeting of 1996; the city has since steadily improved its position, with convention halls, five-star hotels, restaurants and other venues multiplying. Nonetheless, boutiques, cafés, upscale eateries – the usual accoutrements of the city as a consumption artefact – represent only a small fraction of the city's employment base.<sup>26</sup> The tourism sector could be expected to constitute a substantial source of employment, but this is a project that remains to be realised – possibly in the near future.

Globalisation of Istanbul did not proceed at a sufficient pace to provide momentum for highly remunerated professional employment in global sectors, such as finance and business services. Despite the inflow of foreign capital in the new millennium, the city has not emerged as a regional centre. The predominant orientation of its business service sectors is still the national market, which limits the scope of employment generation in the city. Most of the new jobs that are supposed to substitute for the loss of employment in manufacturing are in personal services. Yet, without a sufficient weight of the population (high-income professionals) whose consumption pattern would justify the expansion of such personal services, this rubric remains limited in scope. In fact, in the new service sectors in Istanbul, notably the new shopping centres, large retail complexes and tourism-related hotels, restaurants and shops, a new feature is the employment of young women. These are mostly secondary-school graduates, and their entry into the labour force is a novel phenomenon signalling the major shift in employment opportunities from manufacturing to services, from male to female, from brawn to cultural capital, and from local to global.<sup>27</sup>

At the other extreme are inhabitants of the city who no longer have the possibility of successfully incorporating themselves into the transforming structures

<sup>26</sup> Asu Aksoy, *Küreselleşme ve İstanbul'da istihdam* (Istanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı, 1996).

<sup>27</sup> Over 42 per cent of the labour force in Istanbul is still in industry, accounting for 28 per cent of Turkey's industrial labour: see Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *Türkiye istatistik yılı* (Ankara: TÜİK, 2006), p. 163. This figure may be misleading, however, since it is based on a total labour-force figure of 3.5 million which implies that only one out of three persons is working or seeking employment. It is likely that the number of jobs in the motley category of services is underestimated.



of employment produced by processes of globalisation. The outward signs of income and consumption polarisation, results of difficulties in incorporation, are difficult to ignore. Poverty has become visible during the last decade, as have obscene displays of wealth. Practices more often associated with Latin American levels of income inequality, such as scavenging in garbage bins, the *cartonero* phenomenon of collecting salvageables in wealthier neighbourhoods, begging, and street children in busy intersections attacking SUVs with squeegees, have become more common. In certain neighbourhoods at night, it looks as if the largest category of employment is valet parking and bodyguards. Istanbul has lost its relatively homogeneous character and assumed one more commonly associated with extreme disparities of income, wealth and power.<sup>28</sup>

These disparities parallel similar developments in other globalising cities around the world. The situation in Istanbul was exacerbated by the migrations of the 1990s, which predominantly originated in the war-torn areas of eastern and south-eastern Anatolia.<sup>29</sup> This movement was primarily due to forced migration of the mostly Kurdish population, and the newcomers enjoyed none of the built-in mechanisms for alleviating the problems of integration that had been characteristic of the migration experience of the previous period: with the end of the era of successful developmentalism, the mechanisms of incorporation had begun to fail. Changes in the labour market and employment opportunities resulted both from the national trend in the relative decline of the formal sector and from the deindustrialisation of Istanbul's economy. Import-substituting industries of the developmentalist era gave way to less structured patterns of employment, and the formal sector began to lose its relative weight.<sup>30</sup>

A parallel development was the gradual privatisation and commodification of land under the impact of a demand generated through the transformation of the urban economy, partly through globalisation and in part as a function of more entrenched market relations. After almost half a century of accommodation, during which populism protected the new immigrants and public land was ambiguously transformed into private property, land has finally become a

28 Çağlar Keyder, 'Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, 1 (March 2005).

29 Dilek Kurban, Deniz Yüksek, Ayşe Betül Çelik, Turgay Ünal and A. Tamer Aker, 'Zorunlu Göç' ile yüzleşmek: Türkiye'de yerinden edilme sonrası vatandaşlığın inşası (Istanbul: TESEV, 2006).

30 See Jenny White, *Money Makes us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994); Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder, *New Poverty and the Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey* (Ankara: UNDP, 2003).

jealously guarded commodity. The consequences are evident: the possibility of land occupation and informal housing construction no longer exists. As most of the immigration since the 1990s has been of a forced nature – the result of being driven out or running away from the war – most of these migrants have no place to go back to. Their villages of origin have been razed to the ground or have ceased to exist as economic units. More importantly, ‘social capital’, ordinarily available to new immigrants, is likely to be limited in the absence of a more continuous pattern of chain migration. The new immigrants have to enter the city as tenants, and often into the least desirable, the cheapest and the meanest dwelling units.

Of all the non-formal dimensions of social welfare, the most effective during the entire developmentalist era had been the implicit policy permitting land occupation and construction of informal housing for the new immigrants.<sup>31</sup> With the disappearance of such a crucial element of social integration at economic, political and cultural levels, there is now a real possibility that an ossified underclass may develop. Without the grounding accorded by a socially constituted neighbourhood, the new immigrants cannot count on the information, the mutuality and generalised reciprocity enjoyed during the earlier era of urbanisation. There is, of course, a mismatch between the kind of employment created in a globalising city and the skills and cultural capital of these new immigrants. Under these circumstances, socio-economic integration through wage employment seems a more remote possibility for the new immigrants than it was for earlier settlers.

Added to these material constraints is the political shift away from populism and towards the acceptance of the market as the arbiter of allocation – a new social and legal imaginary that has been internalised by politicians and residents alike.<sup>32</sup> Hitherto seen as poor people without resources to find adequate shelter, the migrants are now regarded as invaders of public property and beneficiaries of unfair privilege. National and local politicians are both less willing and less able to engage in a clientelistic exchange with them. The authorities’ newfound concerns for the environment may be mentioned in this context to illustrate the sea change. There have been several cases where the mayor and other officials have condemned illegal housing that conflicts

31 Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder, ‘Turkey’s Welfare Regime in Transformation’, *Journal of European Social Policy* (August 2006).

32 Ziya Öniş, *State and Market: The Political Economy of Turkey in Comparative Perspective* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 1998); Neşe Balkan and Sungur Savran (eds.), *The Ravages of Neo-Liberalism: Economy, Society, and Gender in Turkey* (Huntington, NY: Nova Science Press, 2002).

with environmental concerns, such as shanties built on creek beds. Already in the 1990s, the occupation of new lands had practically stopped. The principal dynamic was instead the conversion of shanty houses to multi-storey apartment buildings. The change was due, however, not to greater vigilance of the legislature or the judiciary, but to the reluctance of the local power holders to aid and abet in the illegal settlement of newcomers. Crucially, there was a change of mood among the locally elected mayors, who no longer based their political fortunes on the number of votes the new settlers would provide. The situation in the new millennium reflects a more thought-out and concerted strategy, implemented in all of Istanbul, which arguably is an extension of an attitudinal change at the level of national policy. It seeks to re-regulate land that was already ceded to the squatters; it attempts to create a 'lawful' city out of the chaotic string of villages whose agglomeration Istanbul has become. New legislation (*Kentsel Dönüşüm* – Urban Transformation – enacted in 2005) gives extraordinary powers to municipalities to clear illegal construction and forcibly move their inhabitants to designated neighbourhoods. The Istanbul municipality has announced its plans to demolish 85,000 *gecekondu*s and move their inhabitants to mass housing.

The new attitude is partly the result of a growing demand for land more typical of a consolidated urban economy than of a rapidly growing Third World agglomeration. Istanbul's global links increase the need for the kind of land use that reflects its location on some of these intensifying networks. This trend should also be interpreted as part of the new optimism for EU accession, which creates incentives to engage in future-oriented projects and attempts to upgrade the city for positioning various components of the urban fabric – infrastructure, educational institutions, tourist sites and, most crucially, the legal framework – to better accommodate the expected intensification of relations with Europe and the world. The other source of this development is the new urban coalition, which would like to consolidate the city around their image of gentility – a gentrification not only of chosen neighbourhoods, but also of the urban space as a whole, effected through its arteries, public arenas, and buildings. The city looked more finished at the end of the century, with proper pavements, street lights and well-tended green spaces. There was a general upgrading of buildings and shops, new cafés and restaurants, and an apparent desire to paint buildings, which was a radical change from the drab, unfinished façades of the previous period.

The change in the attitudes of the urban establishment is widespread: the city government, real estate concerns, the bourgeoisie in its manifold manifestations, and the top echelons of the civil society, including the media and

the city-boosting foundations funded by businessmen, share it.<sup>33</sup> During the initial period, in the 1950s and 1960s, this elite regarded the newcomers not so much with suspicion as with disdain. Even as they gradually became the majority and elected their own candidates to political office, the shantytown-dwelling migrants still treated the city anomalously as a temporary abode, in a more or less accepted permanent metic status. During this period, the migrant population succeeded in taking over urban government, resulting in a succession of populist mayors who saw the city as an ever-expanding arrival hall with attendant business opportunities. Urban growth coalitions in Istanbul have been committed to the image of the global city as an ideal and a project, with policies aimed at making Istanbul a gentrified city pleasing to the tourist gaze. This transformation, in fact, started in the 1980s, but was halted under weak governments and populist mayors. It was not until the 1990s that urban entrepreneurship, civic pride and the attitude that the city was a resource that had to be protected became more prevalent, with business associations, international agencies and the central government subscribing to the agenda. The coalition members have invested in tourism (conferences, festivals and exhibits), services oriented to the global market (hospitals, upscale shopping centres) and expensive real estate, both as new construction and gentrified neighbourhoods. One consequence has been the acceleration of de-industrialisation or, more accurately, the expulsion of factory production to new centres developed outside Istanbul. There is, however, thriving workshop- and home-based manufacturing activity in the poor and peripheral neighbourhoods, which benefit from proximity to retail and export hubs, but are distant enough from the middle-class centre to still enjoy a relatively low cost of living. This polarity is visible in space as well, with most of the city centre becoming primarily middle class, expensive and marginalising, while the peripheries look no different from Anatolian small towns. For the moment the objectives of urban upgrading cannot reach these outer circles, and it is unlikely that the economy will receive sufficient economic boost in its global orientation to capture the excluded geographies.

Urbanisation dynamics and population prospects have definitely changed for the city. While the growth rate of Turkey's population has declined overall, to slightly higher than 1 per cent, de-ruralisation will continue for several more decades. But it is not likely that Istanbul will remain the most favoured destination. In addition to the relatively inhospitable environment for migrants,

33 Sibel Yardımcı, *Küreselleşen İstanbul'da bienal. Kentsel değişim ve festivalizm* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005).

the cost of living in the city is easily double or higher than that in small towns in the provinces. A number of cities are developing as regional centres, and these medium-sized towns with populations of around a million are the most rapidly growing settlements. Some of the more recent migrants may return to their regions, even if not to their villages. They might not have come to Istanbul in the first place had it not been for the forced and hasty movement out of war zones. There is also a new outflow of retired people moving to coastal areas where the climate and the prices are more manageable, in addition to a movement of entrepreneurs attracted by the tourist trade in coastal areas of the south. As a result, the growth of Istanbul's population has slowed down. These trends signify a future that is closer to the European model, with the city centre as the tourist showcase, full of restaurants, cafés and entertainment venues, which share the space with upscale residential neighbourhoods. There are sections of the urban geography, just outside the central areas, that have evolved as the site of office towers, where modern business services and culture industries, along with urban malls housing shops catering to the middle class are located (Levent, Maslak). Circumscribing the centre are the old and new peripheral neighbourhoods, ranging in income and prestige more or less in correlation with the time of establishment.

### The largest city in Europe?

Turkey's unresolved bid for membership in the EU has of course affected Istanbul's fortunes as well. The current trends in Europe point to an accelerated movement, especially of young people, to all the 'fun' spots within the Union. There is also a growing demand, from a somewhat older set, for second homes in fashionable cities. Istanbul has entered the sights of such mobile cosmopolitans: there is a growing population of students, summer travellers, young entrepreneurs opening cafés or making films, and an older population investing in the newly gentrifying neighbourhoods such as Cihangir, Tünel, Arnavutköy and Kuzguncuk. The number of expatriates increases, while realtors wait in anticipation. At the same time, there are visible signs of a cosmopolitisation from below, with the arrival of illegal immigrants and refugees from the less developed lands of Asia and Africa. Despite the difficulty involved in becoming an EU country, immigrants think of Istanbul as a way station from which to launch a bid for entry into a richer country. Finally, there is an increasing population of immigrants, especially women, from the former Soviet-bloc countries of Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia and the Ukraine, who come to the city as tourists and overstay as workers. They are employed in

the so-called suitcase trade as shop assistants because they know the languages spoken by the buyers who come to Istanbul to shop for garments to resell in the former Eastern Bloc countries. There is also a sizeable market for the now-unemployed teachers and nurses of former socialist regimes (of Eastern Europe as well as Central Asia) as domestic workers taking care of children and the elderly in middle-class households. As can be imagined, the numbers of such workers in shops, nannies, maids and caretakers (perhaps a hundred thousand illegal and much fewer legal foreign nationals), while attracting media attention, really constitute a very small percentage of the total population, which exceeds 10 million. All these flows have, however, made Istanbul into a pole of attraction and increasingly created areas that resemble the trendy 'old city' neighbourhoods of European cities.

If the European vocation succeeds, Istanbul will have completed a full cycle in its passage, reborn as part of a new empire, anchoring the eastern end of the Union. In the era of global flows, its economic vitality is a promise that transcends its role as engine of growth for the country; it presages an independence and autonomy waiting to be harnessed into larger networks.

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