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Edited by Resat Kasaba

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I

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'.¹ 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'.²

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.

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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.

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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 1972.³

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.

³ See Levent Soysal's chapter below (chapter 8).

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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

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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PART I

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OTTOMAN BACKGROUND
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2

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’.¹ 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.²

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.