

missing political perspective or what could be interpreted as a romantic plea for a unified Turkic identity. In 1992 the Turkish president of that time, Turgut Özal claimed:

We are from the same root, we are a large family. If we make no mistakes, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be ours. (Pope 2005: 369)

“He who lives will see,” could be a humble comment on this statement. According to Samuel P. Huntington in his highly controversial and often debated book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 1997), Turkey, having rejected Mecca and being rejected by Brussels, seized the opportunity in the early nineties to turn toward Tashkent. Turkish leaders including Turgut Özal held out a vision of a community of Turkic peoples and particular attention was directed to Azerbaijan and the four Turkic speaking Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Even with regard to Turkey’s ambition to develop its links with the Turkic former Soviet Republics, and by doing so putting the Kemalist secular identity under challenge, Huntington’s own conclusion was that Turkey did not meet all the minimum requirements for a thorn country to shift its civilizational identity.<sup>1</sup>

Of course this could be viewed as a qualified truth, as well as the often outspoken doubts from some European political figures that Turkey does not belong to Europe. However, in the foreseeable future the modern Republic of Turkey with its strong Kemalist mindset is a political reality like the ongoing negotiations, even though slow, between Turkey and the EU on a Turkish membership. It should be a rather unquestionable assumption that the EU negotiations have been and still are the real engine of the political reform process in Turkey.

During the political and constitutional crisis in Turkey in 2007-2008 we have maybe been witnessing the first real challenge to the secular establishment in terms of a promising step in consolidating Turkey’s fragile and guided democracy. Bearing this in mind, a unified Turkic political identity and configuration among Turkic speaking people seems neither realistic, nor urgent.

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### Endnotes

1. See the discussions on Turkey in Huntington 2002 in chapter 6 on *The Cultural Reconfiguration of Global Politics* (The Free Press 2002, as an imprint of Simon & Schuster UK Ltd 1997).

## Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People’s Party, Secularism and Nationalism

By *Sinan Ciddi*

London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 196 pp., ISBN 9780415475044.

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The title of this book is a misnomer: the title should have been “The Republican Peo-

ple Party and Kemalism” for the book aims to unravel why this leftist political party in

Turkey has consistently garnered a number of votes less than centre-right political parties have, and this failure is attributed to the party's close relationship with Kemalism rather than with the genuine left.

The book has an introduction, eight chapters, and a conclusion. In chapter one, it is noted that Kemalism has constituted a road block to the flourishing of leftist politics as a mainstream political movement in Turkey. In the following two chapters, it is pointed out that when in the 1970s the Republican People's Party (RPP) managed to be successful at the polls it was not due to its propagation of a genuine social democratic ideology; it was rather a consequence of clientalism and patronage supported by leftist slogans. In chapter four, it is indicated that the 1980 military intervention practically put an end to the left in Turkish politics, and the introduction of market economics and transformation of Turkish voters into a new generation of consumers in the 1980s added salt to the injury. In chapters five and six, the author argues that in post-Cold War Turkey, religiosity and ethnicity have become determinants of voter preferences, and during this period, instead of coming up with electorally attractive party programs and looking at government performance, the RPP has subscribed to "ultra-nationalism" and "ultra-secularism". Chapter seven shows that the party has been unable to maintain even the backing of the Alevis (which have always appreciated secular politics because of the Sunni threat to them), the trade union movement, and urban dwellers. In chapter eight and the conclusion, the author delineates how social democrats in Europe have moved from their attempts to undermine

the capitalist system to their coming to terms with global and competitive forces, and how the RPP has not been able to leave behind the "Kemalist roadmap" it has adopted all along.

This is a useful book for people trying to make heads or tails of the trials and tribulations of Turkish politics since the inception of the Republic (1923). It clearly shows how the RPP, which had set up the Republic, introduced important Westernizing reforms (under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), made significant contributions to ensuring the military interventions lasted relatively short periods of time (under İsmet İnönü), and then tried to distance itself from the centre (under Bülent Ecevit), and how in recent years the RPP as the main opposition has hardly developed socio-economic policies, let alone policies with a social democratic slant, and how it has instead focused on matters of political Islam and ethnic issues from radical secularist and ethnic nationalist perspectives, respectively (especially under Deniz Baykal).

On the other hand, it is not possible to agree with the author on several points regarding the way in which he endeavors to substantiate his basic argument mentioned above. Let me give only a few of such infelicities.

Some conceptual approaches of the author may be problematised. Above, this reviewer has suggested an alternative title for the book, keeping in mind what the author tries to do in his book and the meaning he attributes to Kemalism. There are problems with Kemalism itself, too, that is, with the manner in which the author (as well as some other students of Turkish politics)

employs this word/concept. First, it is not often realized that in the 1923-1938 era, the so-called 'Kemalists' did not use the word 'Kemalism'; in fact, there was no reference to that word/concept in the civics books of the era.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, in the book under review, Atatürk, İnönü, and Recep Peker are all placed in the same basket when it comes to Kemalism; however, on some matters these statesmen set for themselves different goals and thus they had somewhat different notions of Kemalism. Thirdly, Atatürk was careful not to turn the principles he had formulated into a closed ideology, and thus he diligently kept his distance from any kind of 'ism'. As the present author has suggested elsewhere, Atatürk's views, that is his world view, were turned into a closed ideology by the post-Atatürk intellectual-bureaucratic elite.<sup>2</sup>

There are some inconsistencies in the reporting of some issues. In regard to the efforts for the institutionalization of the Westernized reforms, on the one hand it is pointed out that some citizens were "punished by death sentences and executions dished out by the roaming Independence tribunals" (p. 25) and on the other hand it is noted that "compared with other regimes changes, the Turkish experience was relatively bloodless" (p. 28).

There are some critical omissions in the narrative offered: The 1960 Constitutional provisions concerning the powers of the National Security Council were amended so as to increase its powers not only in the post-1980 military intervention period, but also in the post-1971 military intervention period (p. 68). To the state institutions mentioned on p. 145, second paragraph, the author should also have added the Con-

stitutional Court and the Council of State. There are no endnotes for the conclusion, although the author did make references.

Some factual statements made are not correct. "Two of the main determinants of voting in post-Cold War Turkey" have *not* been "religiosity and ethnicity" (p. 8). If it was religiosity, the votes of the religiously oriented political parties in that country would not have decreased from time to time from 1971 to 2002, and the Felicity Party, which is more religiously oriented than the Justice and Development Party, would have garnered more votes than the latter in the 2002 and 2003 national elections. If another main determinant of voting in the same period was ethnicity, all of the ethnically oriented political parties would have cleared the 10% election threshold in all the elections at which they competed, which did not turn out to be the case, and at the 2002 and 2007 national elections, the Justice and Development Party could not have been so successful in the southeastern region of Turkey as it was. In the wake of the 1980 military intervention, political leaders were not sent off to "remote parts of the country", but to the same town (p. 69). The Welfare Party's success at the polls in 1994 was due the successful performance of the municipalities it controlled at the time, not because the key determinants of vote at the time were "religiosity and ethnicity" (p. 142). Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was imprisoned for a speech he had made in Siirt, not in Sivas (p. 180, note 66).

Related to the above, at places the author reports some past events as if they still continue. The third paragraph on p. 107 gives the impression to the uninitiated that Ecevit is still the chairman of the Demo-

cratic Left Party; Ecevit left that party in 2002 and died in 2006. One comes across to a similar situation on p. 108, third paragraph.

There are also some simple mistakes: “Fetullah Gülen” should have been spelled as “Fethullah Gülen” (p. 101). “[M]uassır medeniyet” should have been translated as “contemporary civilisation”, not as “advanced civilisation” (p. 103). The author should not have referred to all leftists in Turkey as socialists (p. 131).

Finally, a matter of style: one should remain faithful to the original spelling when quoting or giving a reference; thus, one should not change “Behavior” to “Behaviour”, as the author does on p. 180, note 58. The journal there is an American journal,

thus the American spelling of the word in question had been used.

Despite these reservations, as already noted, the book under review is a very useful addition to the literature on Turkish politics. It is recommended to both the uninitiated and the long-time student of Turkish politics.

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### Endnotes

1. Türker Alkan, “Turkey: Rise and Decline of Legitimacy in a Revolutionary Regime”, *Journal of Southeastern and Middle Eastern Studies*, 4 (1980): 37-48.

2. Metin Heper, “Political Modernization as Reflected in Bureaucratic Change: The Turkish Bureaucracy and a ‘Historical Bureaucratic Empire’ Tradition”, 7, no. 4 (1976): 507-521.

## The Museum of Innocence

By **Orhan Pamuk**, translated by **Maureen Freely**

New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, 536 pp., ISBN 9780676979687.

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One of the most distinctive things about Orhan Pamuk’s writing is the playful way he tantalizes his readers by constantly blurring the boundaries between truth and fiction. By having his first-person narrators include many well-known aspects of the novelist’s own life in their tales, he keeps us guessing about which parts of the story actually happened and which are imaginary. When he published his first few novels, only people who were personally acquainted with the author or his family could participate in this guessing game. As he has become increasingly famous—and especially since the publication of his memoir *Istanbul: Memo-*

*ries and the City*—many more of his loyal readers have been drawn in. Not only have his parents, his brother, his grandmother, and even the family servants become familiar figures, but fictional characters from his early novels, such as the wealthy merchant Cevdet Bey and the newspaper columnist Celal Salik turn up with such regularity in later works that they have come to seem equally real. With *The Museum of Innocence* Pamuk has taken this game to another level. The cover of the novel features a photo of four people parked beside the Bosphorus in a 1956 Chevrolet just like the one described in the novel as belonging to