KEREM ÖKTEM

ANGRY NATION

TURKEY *since* 1989

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Nicholas Guyatt is assistant professor of history at Simon Fraser University in Canada.

About the author

Kerem Öktem is research fellow at the European Studies Centre, St Antony's College, and teaches the politics of the Middle East at the Oriental Institute. He read modern Middle Eastern studies at Oxford, where he also completed his DPhil thesis at the School of Geography in 2006. In the thesis, he explored the destruction of imperial space in the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent construction of an exclusively Turkish national territory. His research interests range from the history of nationalism, ethno-politics and minority rights in Turkey to debates on history, memory and trauma, and to Turkey's conflicted relations with Armenia and Greece. More recently, he has started a research project on the emergence of Islam as a central discursive category in European public debates.

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Kerem Öktem

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Contents

Acknowledgements | vi Overview of political parties in Turkey | viii Key moments in Turkey's history | x
Note on orthography and pronunciation | xix
Explanatory note | xx Preface | xxiii Map | xxvi

Introduction 1

The workings of the guardian state | 7
Life-world transformations | 10

1 Empire and nation before 1980: the late Ottoman state and the Turkish Republic 14

Reform and imperial dissolution | 15
The Kemalist one-party state (1920s–1946) | 24
The guardian state's incomplete democracy (1946–80) | 40

2 The Özal years: rupture, promise and missed chances (1980–91) 56

Silence and torture: 12 September 1980 | 58
Motherland promise: wealth and stability | 66
Re-engagement with the world: the US, Europe and 1989 | 75

3 The 'lost decade': wars, crises and weak coalitions (1991–2002) 84

State of emergency in the east: the Kurdish war in the 1990s | 88
Fighting terror: the guardian state in western Turkey | 96
Postmodern coups and cracks in the system (1997–2001) | 105
Crises, hopes and saviours (2000–02) | 114

4 Justice and development: 'Islamic Calvinists' versus the guardian state (2002–07) 122

Islamic Calvinists in office | 126
War and peace in Kurdistan | 140
Memory and reality: the return of the guardians | 144

5 Another nation: moving towards the present (2007–10) . . 157

The guardian state exposed | 159
Home affairs: Kurdish, Alevi and human rights | 164
Engaging with the world | 170
Turkey's possible futures | 185

Postscript 190

Sources | 192 Index | 201

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Overview of political parties in Turkey

	Political tradition	Party name in Turkish	Party name in English	Estab-lished	Closed down	
ITC	Proto-Kemalist	İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti	Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)	1906	1920	Court martial
CHP	Kemalist	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi	Republican People's Party (RPP)	1923	[1981]	1980 military coup Relaunched in 1992
HP	Kemalist	Halkçı Parti	Popular Party	1983	1985	Merged with SODEP
SODEP	Social democrat	Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi	Social Democracy Party	1983	1985	Merged with HP
SHP	Social democrat	Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti	Social Democrat Popular Party	1985	—	
DSP	Social democrat	Demokrat Sol Parti	Democratic Left Party	1985	—	
TKP	Left/socialist	Türkiye Komünist Partisi	Communist Party of Turkey	1920	1921	Illegal since 1921 Re-established in 1987
TIP	Left/socialist	Türkiye İşçi Partisi	Labour Party of Turkey	1961	1971	1971 military coup
ÖDP	Left/socialist	Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi	Freedom and Solidarity Party	1993	—	Split in 2009
DP	Conservative	Demokrat Parti	Democrat Party	1946	1960	1960 military coup Re-established in 2002 and 2007
AP	Conservative	Adalet Partisi	Justice Party	1961	1981	1980 military coup Relaunched in 1992
DYP	Conservative	Doğru Yol Partisi	True Path Party (TPP)	1983	2007	Voluntary liquidation Re-established in 2007

ANAP	Conservative	Anavatan Partisi	Motherland Party	1983	2009	Voluntary liquidation and merger with DP
MNP	Islamist/ national view	Milli Nizam Partisi	National Order Party	1970	1971	1971 military coup Constitutional Court
MSP	Islamist/nat. view	Milli Selamet Partisi	National Salvation Party	1972	1981	1980 military coup
RP	Islamist/nat. view	Refah Partisi	Welfare Party	1983	1998	Constitutional Court
FP	Islamist/nat. view	Fazilet Partisi	Virtue Party	1997	2001	Constitutional Court
SP	Islamist/nat. view	Saadet Partisi	Felicity Party	2001	—	
AKP	Post-Islamist	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi	Justice and Development Party	2001	—	
CKMP	Nationalist	Cumhuriyet Köylü Millet Partisi	Republican Peasants Nation Party	1958	1969	Voluntary liquidation Becomes MHP
MHP	Nationalist	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	Nationalist Action Party	1969	[1981]	1980 military coup Relaunched in 1993
MDP	Nationalist	Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi	Nationalist Democracy Party	1983	1986	Pro-coup party Voluntary liquidation
MÇP	Nationalist	Miliyetçı Çalışma Partisi	Nationalist Working Party	1983	1993	Voluntary liquidation
BBP	Nationalist/ Islamist	Büyük Birlik Partisi	Great Unity Party	1993	—	
HEP	Pro-Kurdish	Halkın Emek Partisi	People's Labour Party	1990	1993	Constitutional Court
DEP	Pro-Kurdish	Demokrasi Partisi	Democracy Party	1993	1994	Constitutional Court
HADEP	Pro-Kurdish	Halkın Demokrasi Partisi	People's Democracy Party	1994	2003	Constitutional Court
DEHAP	Pro-Kurdish	Demokratik Halk Partisi	Democratic People's Party	1997	2005	Constitutional Court
DTP	Pro-Kurdish	Demokratik Toplum Partisi	Democratic Society Party	2005	2009	Constitutional Court
BDP	Pro-Kurdish	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi	Peace and Democracy Party	2009	—	

Currently active parties are shown in **bold**.

Key moments in Turkey's history

Turkey before 1980

1839 Announcement of the Tanzimat, the era of reorganization, i.e. military and legal reforms.

1875 Ottoman Empire defaults on its European creditors.

1876 First period of constitutional rule, soon aborted by Sultan Abdülhamit.

1878 The British Empire acquires Cyprus from the Ottomans.

1908 Constitutional revolution, Young Turks reinstate the constitution of 1876.

1912–13 and 1914 Balkan Wars end the presence of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans ('Turkey in Europe'); 400,000 Muslims flee to the capital.

1914 Start of First World War.

1915 Gallipoli campaign, British and Commonwealth forces lose against the Ottoman army.

1915–16 Armenian genocide executed by parts of the Ottoman army and bureaucracy, under the direction of the Committee of Union and Progress.

15 May 1919 Occupation of Smyrna by Greek troops. The event sparks national feelings among Muslims and Turks and triggers the 'War of Independence'. Greek troops foray deep into Anatolian territory.

23 April 1920 The Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi), the parliament of the nationalist movement, has its constitutive meeting in the future capital Ankara.

1 November 1922 Abolition of the Sultanate clears the way for the emerging Turkish Republic.

9 September 1922 Turkish troops march into Smyrna and terminate the Greek occupation. The great fire of Smyrna consumes the Greek, Armenian and central quarters of the city.

24 July 1923 The Treaty of Lausanne formalizes the conditions of Turkey's statehood and of the population exchange between Greece and Turkey.

29 October 1923 Establishment of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal becomes first president.

3 March 1924 The Turkish Grand National Assembly decides the

abolition of the Caliphate and thereby ends one of the most important institutions of Sunni Islam.

February 1925 A rebellion under Sheikh Sait Piran in Bingöl and Diyarbakır marks the first Kurdish uprising against the republican government.

1924–1930s Period of top-down bureaucratic reforms and legal changes (also called Kemalist reforms or revolutions).

1931 Turkey officially becomes a one-party state with the Republican People's Party and Mustafa Kemal as 'eternal leader'.

18 July 1932 The Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) mandates the Arabic call to prayer (Ezan) to be delivered in the Turkish language.

October 1933 Mustafa Kemal delivers his 'Speech' (Nutuk), in which he gives a personal account of the history of the War of Independence.

25 December 1935 The 'Tunceli Law' prepares the legal framework for the destruction of Alevi tribesmen in the province of Dersim.

March 1937–December 1938 Ethnocide of Alevis in the eastern province of Dersim (later renamed Tunceli). The Turkish air force and Mustafa Kemal's adopted daughter, the female pilot Sabiha Gökçen, bombard towns and villages, while soldiers attack the villagers. Tens of thousands of men, women and children are tortured and killed.

15 November 1937 Seyit Rıza, the leader of the Dersim tribes, is executed together with his son, despite his old age. During the course of the year, all leading Dersim tribesmen are executed.

10 November 1938 Mustafa Kemal dies. He is succeeded by Ismet Inönü as second president of the republic.

September 1939 Start of Second World War. Turkey remains neutral until the end of the war.

November 1942 Wealth tax levied on all non-Muslim citizens. Many Armenians, Greeks and Jews, who fail to pay exorbitant tax dues, are deported to eastern Anatolia.

February 1945 Turkey joins Allied forces in a symbolic gesture and declares war on Germany.

21 July 1946 First multiparty elections take place with allegations of vote-rigging and heavy manipulation. The Republican People's Party remains in power.

12 March 1947 The USA declares the Truman Doctrine and supports Turkey and Greece as front-line states against Russia.

9 August 1949 Turkey becomes member of the Council of Europe.

14 May 1950 Election of the Democrat Party under Prime Minister Adnan Menderes brings to an end three decades of Kemalist rule.

16 June 1950 The Arabic call to prayer is reinstated by the Democrat government.

18 February 1952 Turkey enters NATO and officially becomes part of the 'West'.

6/7 September 1955 September Pogroms (Septemvriana) against non-Muslims devastate large parts of Istanbul and trigger a wave of emigration by Istanbul Greeks.

31 July 1959 Turkey applies for membership of the European Economic Community. The EEC initiates an interim association agreement before full membership.

27 May 1960 The first military coup after the introduction of democratic elections in 1946 goes hand in hand with the drafting of a new constitution that strengthens military control over politics.

19 August 1960 Cyprus becomes an independent republic, after almost a century of British colonial rule. Turkey and Greece are among the guarantors of the new republic.

16 September 1961 Former prime minister Adnan Menderes is executed on behest of the putschist generals, after a show trial and a hate campaign in the state media and newspapers.

31 October 1961 Turkey and Germany sign immigration treaty, marking the start of mass immigration from Turkey to western European countries.

12 September 1963 Turkey and the European Economic Community sign the Ankara Agreement, which sets out a time frame for Turkey's gradual integration into the EEC and the realization of a customs union. The goal of full membership is spelled out in the agreement.

1963 Conflicts between Greek Cypriot nationalists (EOKA) and Turkish nationalists lead to the establishment of Turkish safe zones and ethnic cantons. The capital (Levkosia or Nicosia) is divided into a Turkish part in the north and a Greek part in the south.

20 February 1965 Democracy is restored with the election of the Justice Party under Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel. The Labour Party of Turkey also enters parliament.

16 February 1969 Bloody Sunday; three student leaders killed in Istanbul's Beyazıt Square.

12 March 1971 With a military memorandum, the acting generals force Prime Minister Demirel to form a new cabinet.

30 March 1972 Massacre of the student leaders of the People's Liberation Army in Kızıldere.

6 May 1972 Deniz Gezmiş, leader of the socialist youth movement, is executed in Ankara, together with two of his companions.

14 October 1973 Elections produce unstable coalition governments, while political violence becomes normalized.

29 October 1973 The first Bosporus Bridge connecting Europe and Asia is inaugurated in Istanbul.

20 July 1974 Turkish forces invade Cyprus to protect the Turkish-Cypriot community. A second invasion results in the occupation of a third of the island by Turkish forces.

1 May 1977 Bloody May Day; thirty-four demonstrators are killed in Istanbul's Taksim Square by covert security agents acting on behalf of the state.

19 December 1978 Maraş massacres against Alevis. More than one hundred people are confirmed dead officially, while eyewitnesses speak of up to five hundred deaths.

27 December 1979 Memorandum of general staff warning the government to re-establish order and security.

Turkey since 1980

24 January 1980 Important decisions on Turkey's economic future, also called the '24 January Decisions'.

9 July 1980 The military descends on the eastern Black Sea town of Fatsa in a show of strength against the socialist mayor and his local experiment of a socialist democracy.

6 September 1980 Massive protests against the declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in the conservative city of Konya. Used by the generals as a pretext for the looming intervention.

12 September 1980 Military coup under the leadership of General Kenan Evren. Evren becomes president and signs a warrant for the torture of hundreds of thousands of citizens.

9 November 1982 Generals impose a new constitution that severely limits human rights after a tightly controlled referendum held under military law.

1980–83 Reign of the military. Hundreds of thousands are tortured and many executed extralegally as well as imprisoned. The terror of the armed forces and police is particularly grave in the Kurdish provinces.

6 November 1983 First post-coup elections lead to the victory of the Motherland Party, a choice not condoned by the generals. Turgut Özal becomes prime minister.

15 November 1983 Turkish Cypriot leaders declare the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' with the support of Ankara.

1984 The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) starts a guerrilla war against the Turkish Republic with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdistan. The state responds with heavy military campaigns.

17 July 1986 The Turkish Human Rights Association is established.

28 January 1987 The Turkish Grand National Assembly ratifies the rights of individuals to apply to the European Court of Human Rights.

14 April 1987 Turkey applies for membership of the European Community.

17 May 1987 Women's march in Kadıköy, Istanbul. First major public demonstration after the coup in western Turkey.

3 July 1988 Second Bosporus Bridge (named after Fatih Sultan Mehmet) is inaugurated by Prime Minister Turgut Özal.

October 1988 Turkey's first shopping mall, called Galleria, opens in the Istanbul suburb of Ataköy.

May 1989 Bulgarian Turks are allowed to leave Bulgaria after a five-year campaign of enforced assimilation. Around 300,000 rush to the Turkish border. The Zhivkov government euphemistically calls this flight the 'grand excursion'.

26 May 1989 First private Turkish TV channel, STAR 1, starts broadcasting from Germany despite a ban on private broadcasting in Turkey. Many other channels follow in the coming years.

9 November 1989 The fall of the wall in Berlin marks the end of communist rule in Europe. In Turkey, Turgut Özal is elected the first civilian president of the Turkish Republic. A period of proactive foreign policy begins.

20 December 1989 The European Commission postpones a decision on Turkey's membership application on the grounds of the political situation but reinstates the goal of full membership.

2 August 1990 President Turgut Özal supports US war efforts in the First Gulf War with an eye on increasing Turkey's role in the Middle East.

5 July 1991 The Kurdish activist and political leader Vedat Aydın is killed by counter-terrorism operatives in Diyarbakır. Dozens are killed during his funeral, when counter-terrorism forces open fire on the crowd.

25 June 1992 Establishment of the Black Sea Economic Corporation Council with its seat in Istanbul.

19 August 1992 A PKK unit attacks the Kurdish town of Şırnak. In response, army units raze the town.

24 January 1993 The investigative journalist Uğur Mumcu, who was researching allegations of the 'deep state' (see Preface), is assassinated.

17 February 1993 The commander of the Gendarmerie, General Eşref Bitlis, known for his efforts to find a solution to the Kurdish problem, is killed in a plane crash under suspicious circumstances.

17 April 1993 President Turgut Özal dies unexpectedly of heart failure,

sparking rumours that he might have been poisoned. He is succeeded by Süleyman Demirel.

25 June 1993 Tansu Çiller becomes Turkey's first female prime minister.

2 July 1993 The Sıvas Massacre results in the incineration of thirty-five mostly Alevi and leftist activists and intellectuals in the eastern Anatolian town of Sıvas after attacks by an angry Islamist mob.

27 March 1994 The Islamist Welfare Party wins the local elections in major cities like Istanbul and Ankara with around 20 per cent of the votes, after the two social democrat parties fail to act together.

3 November 1994 Tansu Çiller becomes the first Turkish prime minister to visit Israel. Start of a strategic military and security partnership between the two countries.

1995 The Kurdish provinces are effectively ruled by counter-terrorism officers and covert operatives. Thousands of activists are detained, tortured and killed.

12 March 1995 'Gazi events'; police attack and kill Alevi youth in Istanbul's Gazi neighbourhood.

26 December 1995 Sixteen teenagers are apprehended and tortured in the Aegean town of Manisa.

December 1995/January 1996 A dispute over the uninhabited islet of Imia/Kardak in the Aegean brings Turkey and Greece close to war.

1 January 1996 Turkey enters customs union with the European Community.

June 1996 The Manisa trials begin and expose the torture of innocent university students by regular policemen.

5 November 1996 The Susurluk incident exposes links between police, mafia and crime networks.

30 January 1997 'Jerusalem night' in the Ankara suburb of Sincan is seen as a provocation by the military.

1 February 1997 The citizens' initiative 'One minute of darkness for enduring light' takes on the character of a mass protest with several million participants all over the country, in part as reaction to Susurluk.

28 February 1997 Bloodless military intervention against 'Islamist' reaction and the Islamist government of Necmettin Erbakan, also called the 'Postmodern Coup'.

30 June 1997 Prime Minister Erbakan resigns after pressure from military and opposition.

12/13 December 1997 European Council in Luxembourg refuses to classify Turkey as candidate state.

16 January 1998 The Constitutional Court bans the Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan. The Virtue Party, established a year earlier, comes in its stead.

15 February 1999 The leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, is captured in Kenya.

17 August 1999 During the Marmara earthquake east of Istanbul, at least 17,000 are killed. A large proportion of Turkey's industrial heartland is destroyed.

10 December 1999 European Council meeting in Helsinki declares Turkey a candidate for EU accession on equal footing with other candidate countries.

16 May 2000 Ahmet Necdet Sezer, chair of the Constitutional Court, is elected president by the Turkish parliament.

November 2000 First signs of a financial crisis; the Turkish lira is devalued by a third.

February 2001 A stand-off between President Sezer and Prime Minister Ecevit sparks a severe economic crisis, which leads to the collapse of the banking sector and the destruction of a million jobs.

3 March 2001 Prime Minister Ecevit appoints former World Bank vice-president as minister of economy.

22 June 2001 Constitutional Court bans Virtue Party. Virtue is succeeded by the Felicity (Saadet Partisi). Reformist members establish the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

11 September 2001 The 9/11 attacks on New York's World Trade Center.

1 January 2002 New Civil Code comes into force and introduces complete legal equality of men and women.

3 August 2002 The Turkish Grand National Assembly abolishes the death penalty in peacetime.

3 November 2002 Justice and Development Party (AKP) wins landslide victory.

11 November 2002 The United Nations announces a new plan for a comprehensive solution in Cyprus (also called the Annan Plan).

12 December 2002 European Council meeting in Copenhagen sets timetable for start of accession negotiations.

27 February 2003 February Uprising: close to 80,000 Turkish Cypriots march in Nicosia to demonstrate in favour of the Annan Plan, a united Republic of Cyprus made up of two constituent states, and against the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash.

1 March 2003 Parliament refuses authorization for the use of Turkish territory and airspace by US troops for the invasion of Iraq.

9 March 2003 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is elected in a by-election in Siirt province. Five days later he becomes prime minister.

23 April 2003 After massive protests in the north, the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash opens the first border crossing between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish north.

15 and 20 November 2003 Istanbul attacks on British interests, banks and synagogues in Istanbul by a group with al-Qaeda contacts;

fifty-seven residents including the British consul general, Roger Short, are killed.

24 April 2004 Referendum on the unification of Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots vote for, Greek Cypriots against, reunification.

1 May 2004 Cyprus joins the European Union with eight eastern European countries and Malta.

December 2004 European Council agrees to open EU accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005.

1 January 2005 New Turkish lira is introduced with six zeros stripped from denominations.

3 October 2005 Turkey and the European Union begin membership negotiations. The first six chapters of the Aquis are opened.

9 November 2005 The Şemdinli affair; gendarmerie officers are caught in the act of committing a terrorist attack.

10 November 2005 In the case of Leyla Şahin v. Turkey, European Court of Human Rights decides that Turkey can exclude women with headscarves from university education.

5 February 2006 A sixteen-year-old high-school student kills the Italian Catholic Father Santoro of Trabzon.

17 May 2006 Alpaslan Aslan, member of an extreme nationalist-Islamist group, murders the prominent judge Mustafa Yücel Özbilgin, allegedly for his anti-headscarf rulings.

3 July 2006 Turkish parliament passes Anti-Terror Law that leads to the detention of hundreds of 'stone-throwing' Kurdish children.

11 December 2006 Foreign minister of the European Union freezes eight acquis chapters over Turkey's refusal to open its ports and airports to Cypriot vessels.

20 January 2007 Armenian-Turkish journalist and public intellectual Hrant Dink is assassinated by Ogün Samast in front of the offices of the Armenian *Agos* newspaper.

23 January 2007 100,000 mourners attend Hrant Dink's funeral, which turns into a statement of civil disobedience against the manipulations and murders of the deep state.

April 2007 Republican marches against the presidential candidacies of Erdoğan and Gül.

18 April 2007 Three Christian missionaries are tortured and murdered in the south-eastern city of Malatya.

24 April 2007 E-memorandum; the website of the Chief of the General Staff declares that the election of a non-secular president would be considered a reason to start a military intervention.

22 July 2007 AKP wins early parliamentary elections.

28 August 2007 Turkish parliament elects Abdullah Gül as president.

30 July 2008 Constitutional Court narrowly decides not to close down the AKP, Turkey's governing party.

October 2008 The effects of the global financial crisis reach Turkey. Over the course of the next twelve months, the economy contracts by a massive 12 per cent.

20 October 2008 First Ergenekon trial of retired generals, journalists and university rectors begins in the Silivri courthouse.

May 2009 The AKP government initiates a 'Kurdish Opening', whose content remains very vague. Opposition parties – Republican People's Party and National Action Party – accuse the AKP of splitting the country.

9 July 2009 Legal changes allow for serving officers to be tried in civilian courts in cases of organized crime and military interventions.

10 October 2009 Turkey and Armenia sign protocols on improving relations. Both parliaments, however, refuse to ratify the protocols.

January 2010 Investigations into and court case against the 'Sledgehammer', 'Blonde Girl' and 'Moonlight' conspiracies to overthrow the elected AKP government. Retired and serving officers are heard in a civilian court.

April 2010 Start of the constitutional reform debate in the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

31 May 2010 The ferry *Mavi Marmara*, laden with food and technical supplies for the Gaza Strip, is raided by Israeli Defence Forces. Israeli commandos kill nine activists of the 'Humanitarian Help Foundation' (IHH). Political relations between Turkey and Israel are severely disrupted.

June 2010 Turkey's economic growth accelerates to almost 12 per cent.

12 September 2010 The government's proposal for constitutional reform is accepted with a vote of 58 per cent in a nationwide referendum, after a divisive campaign. The changes open the way for the trial of the generals and torturers of the 1980 coup. Hundreds of court cases are opened.

15 September 2010 The European Court of Human Rights convicts Turkey for the murder of Hrant Dink and for failing to grant a fair trial. The government does not appeal against the decision.

19 September 2010 An Armenian apostolic mass is held on the Ahtamar island of Van in the reconstructed Surp Khach (Holy Cross) Church. The first such service since 1915, the event is visited by thousands, but also boycotted by some Armenian diaspora organizations, which believe this to be a publicity stunt on the part of the Turkish government.

October 2010 Cross-party talks on a new constitution begin.

Note on orthography and pronunciation

This book uses the modern Turkish orthography based on Latin letters.

The following letters differ from the English alphabet and are pronounced as shown below:

Ç, ç	'ch' as in 'China'
ğ	when at the end of a word, or before a consonant, lengthens the preceding vowel; when between two vowels, not pronounced
I, ı	the sound represented by 'a' in 'among'
Ö, ö	Umlauted 'ö' as in German 'Köln'
Ş, ş	'sh' as in 'ship'
Ü, ü	Umlauted 'ü' as in German 'München'

Explanatory note

As I was writing *Turkey since 1989: Angry Nation*, Turkey was going through an unprecedented flurry of revelations about the workings of the 'guardian state', the network of 'deep state' actors, including the military and the judiciary, which has effectively run the country through much of the twentieth century. Some of the disclosed information – about the role of the police and the military in creating havoc, assassinating public personages and engaging in torture and murder – was spine-chilling. After years of failing to make sense of the unexpected twists and turns in Turkey's history, of the many instances of abrupt outbursts of mass violence and eruption of hatred between communities that had lived peacefully side by side for centuries, a new and clearer image of Turkey's recent history emerged.

However, some of the allegations, which were disclosed by leaks from investigations and court cases, have been shown to be based only on limited evidence. Prosecutors involved in the investigation of conspiracies and military plots have often worked with the same biased methodologies with which their counterparts in the high judiciary, one of the key actors of the guardian state, have whitewashed arbitrary state action throughout the decades. Nor has the AKP government been able to withstand the lure of power: it has not been acting as disinterested arbiter waiting for the final defeat of the 'guardian state', but has used these investigations to settle scores with its political enemies. All these interferences have hence complicated the already complex process of understanding the morass that is Turkey's recent history. The empirical material on which this book rests is hence provisional, but as accurate as it can be in a time of great ruptures and ongoing revelations about a parallel authoritarian regime based on 'state reason' rather than legitimate political process.

A second note is appropriate with regard to terminology. As in some of its neighbouring countries – think of Greece's staunch opposition to the very name of the Republic of Macedonia – many words in Turkey are contested. Even ostensibly innocent historical terms can take on

high political meanings and occasionally lead to judicial inquiries and even convictions. The use of words like 'Kurdistan' and 'Armenia', when applied to the region of south-east Turkey, caused serious vexations in the recent past, and might do so today, even for academics. The Turkish sociologist Ismail Beşikçi, for instance, was incarcerated for a total of seventeen years on trumped-up charges for his pioneering work on Kurdish identity. And another sociologist and feminist, Pınar Selek, has been repeatedly subjected to court cases, prolonged detention and ill treatment for her remarkable studies on Turkish masculinities, transsexuals and Kurds. At times, even book titles containing regional assignations like 'Cilicia' were confiscated. Like everything else in the social world, however, all these terms are conventions that have taken on different meanings over time. Ottoman emperors, in line with the worldview of traditional universalist empires, were happy to have fuzzy borders, locally diverse administrative arrangements and multilingual place names. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was an Ottoman province of Kurdistan and the official name of the eastern Black Sea province of Rize until 1921 was Lazistan (Land of the Laz, a community related to the Georgians). In the mid-1930s, however, the usage of both names was forbidden by what was now the Turkish Republic, and a ban imposed on the importation of maps containing these terms. Even the word 'Turkey' had not been used within the Ottoman Empire before the twentieth century, and 'Turks' were considered, at least by the residents of the imperial capital Istanbul (or Constantinopolis!), to be the uncouth peasants of Anatolia, deprived of the trappings of Ottoman civilization.

When I use the term 'Turk', its meaning depends on the context. It can comprise all residents of Turkey regardless of their ethno-religious and linguistic community. This was the spirit which some tried to instil, if unsuccessfully, into the definition of citizenship in the Turkish Republic. Especially when I write about bilateral relations with other states, I use 'Turkish' as representing the government of the Republic of Turkey. When I contrast the term with 'Kurds', I mean the Turkish-speaking communities of Turkey, who self-identify as Turks.

The term 'Kurdistan' made a forceful comeback in the 1980s, with the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which initially aspired to establish an independent state with the same name. In this book, Kurdistan is taken to comprise the geographical region of south-east Turkey which has a majority Kurdish population and has been, in the past and again since the 1980s, referred to as 'Kurdistan'. This region is

largely congruent with another historical region, that of Armenia. The fact that these two historical regions overlap underlines the contested nature of both, as well as the futility of ethnogenetic claims on territory.

Another historical term has been a bone of contention for many and could lead to charges of 'denigration of Turkishness' according to the now reformulated Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code: the term 'Armenian genocide', which I also use in this book. The term 'genocide' has many facets, above all legal, political and ethical. Debates on whether the destruction of Ottoman Armenians by the secretive Committee of Union and Progress and members of the state apparatus constituted genocide are often shaped by political rather than historical considerations. Whether one uses the term or not is supposed to signify on 'whose side' one stands. These debates, however, often only obfuscate the facts: anywhere up to a million (and probably more) men, women and children, most of them non-combatants, were forced from their ancestral homelands and most of them were killed under heart-rending circumstances, while many were forcibly or voluntarily converted to Islam. There is a wide range of terms which one can use to describe these events – crimes against humanity, the 'Great Catastrophe' or '*Metz Yeghern*', eviction and destruction, and also genocide – and I use all of them interchangeably, without prioritizing one over the other, or implying legal consequences. I do, however, not use terms like 'relocation', 'resettlement' or 'evacuation', which are inaccurate and used by the deniers of the great calamity that was brought upon the Armenians of Asia Minor in 1915.

Preface

This book is about Turkey and its turbulent recent history. It deals with political institutions and ideologies, with parties and political leaders, with civil society organizations and with individuals who have tried to negotiate a startlingly complex country. It seeks to elucidate the role of the state in the country's political history and the decisive impact of the non-elected 'guardians of the republic' – the military high command, the high judiciary and bureaucracy – that have been shaping Turkey's politics at least since the 1950s. Also referred to as the 'deep state', these actors and their 'behind-the-scenes' politics are defining characteristics of politics in Turkey. So are the chilling absence of humaneness and judiciousness in many court decisions and the high levels of political violence which have permeated much of the twentieth century and the decades under scrutiny in this book. *Turkey since 1989: Angry Nation* also looks into the spells of political reform and societal change and seeks to understand the ambiguous role of the European Union in the processes that have shaped Turkey in the last three decades.

The book is also about the many ruptures and interventions in the country's recent history, which have shaped the biographies of literally every citizen of Turkey. Members of my family and I have observed and experienced many of them personally. Take my parents. They were politically active as students in the 1950s, with my father leaning towards the Turkish Communist Party. After the coup of 1960, they quickly realized that incriminating literature with socialist themes, some of it published in communist Bulgaria, could put their lives at risk. Living in a modern flat in Istanbul's central Aksaray district, they burned the books in the bathtub, in a small and badly ventilated bathroom. Or my grandmother, Semiha Hanım. After the military intervention in 1971, my aunt was on the run as a socialist activist. Many of her books – Marx's *Capital*, Politzer's *Elementary Principles of Philosophy*, forbidden copies of the prose of communist poet Nazım Hikmet, the standard armament of a Turkish socialist at the time – were stored in a slowly crumbling mansion in Istanbul's Asian suburb, where the family used to gather

for the summer months. One day in the summer of 1971, a military commander demanded to search the premises with his unit. Semiha Hanım was well aware that the books would cause great grief to the family if discovered. Herself the daughter of a general, and gifted with theatrical talent, she pulled off what was probably the performance of her lifetime: frequently invoking her deceased father and her status as 'daughter of a soldier', she invited the commander in to do whatever was necessary to serve the nation, even if this entailed the whole house being stormed or torn to pieces. Stunned by such militant fervour, the commander politely requested permission to leave after a superficial search. Nevertheless, my grandmother had the books carried into the basement and immured. My aunt was eventually caught, imprisoned and, like so many other politically active youths of the time, tortured.

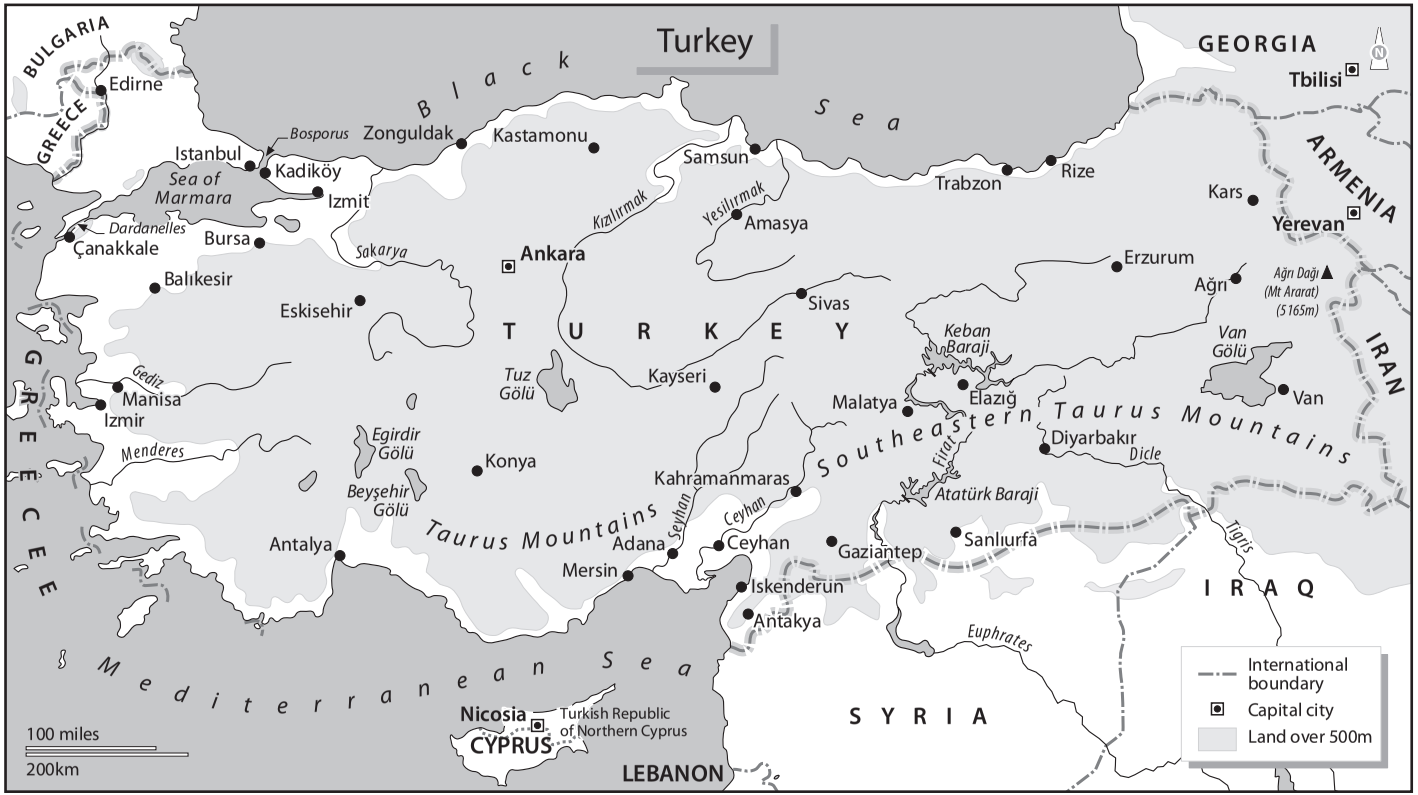
I grew up with the letters my aunt sent us from prison. They were adorned with colourful drawings of vast landscapes, open skies, blue seas, kites and birds. But it was in high school during the years after the military coup of 1980 that I discovered the prison atmosphere myself. For a student in Turkey in the mid-1980s, only what was not explicitly forbidden was allowed, and this was not a lot. There were no Kurds, no Armenians, no Greeks and no Alevis in this grim post-coup world, or so I thought. My school was an elite institution, the German School of Istanbul (Deutsche Schule Istanbul), and there we were all Turkish, mostly Sunni Muslims, secular in our outlook and ready to defend any criticism levelled against the country by outsiders. Ironically, I did have quite a number of fellow pupils of Jewish and Armenian background at this school, but I did not think much about it. Freethinking was not encouraged anyway, and as is possible only in authoritarian regimes, I believed that Turkey was a tolerant place, where everybody lived together in peace, even though I knew that in fact people were being tortured in every bit of the country and being a non-Muslim was almost as bad as being a 'terrorist'. Our school week began and ended with the obligatory flag ceremony and the chanting of the national hymn, and we were subjected to weekly lectures on 'National Security', in which we had to learn by heart the different ranks of the army and the external and internal enemies of Turkey, who were many. The lecture was delivered by a retired general, and strangely, I remember him as one of the more humane teachers we had.

All theatre plays performed in schools, all books read in literature classes, had to be approved by educational commissions, which ensured

that no subversive idea and no incitement to insubordination would enter the classrooms. There was little space for socialization outside the family circle, with restaurants and nightclubs reserved for the very rich, the very intellectual or the underworld. Unfortunately, one could say, I came of age at a sorry time for Turkey. But then, and as you will see in this book, Turkey's recent history has been dominated by such sorry times and the anger it has created among its people. Importantly, however, these dark patches alternated with hopeful phases of political stabilization and rapid economic development, with short bursts of artistic and intellectual genius and significant leaps forward in terms of personal and group rights. These 'light spells' were underpinned by longer-term processes of societal change – unexpected when looking only at the erratic nature of the political sphere – that triggered the emergence of a large middle class and significantly increased wealth and educational levels in society as a whole in the three decades since 1980.

This book is hence about the transformation from an inward-looking, conflict-ridden country in the 1980s to the vibrant economy and differentiated yet still-contested society of the twenty-first century. Turkey today is a country that holds great promise: the expanding economy, Turkey's growing regional and international weight as a political actor, and the globalization of Istanbul, which has become a major cultural and economic centre of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and beyond, are powerful indicators. Yet conflict remains the defining experience of contemporary Turkey – conflicts over history, identity, over poverty and gender discrimination, and over Europe and the country's position in the world. The roots of these conflicts, as well as their impact on Turkey's people, are the story I have tried to capture in *Turkey since 1989: Angry Nation*.

Kerem Öktem
Oxford, December 2010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Dardanelles
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TURKEY
Keban Baraji
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Malatya
Elazığ
Van
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Diyarbakır
Dicle
Fırat
Menderes
Egirdir Gölü
Konya
Beyşehir Gölü
Kahramanmaras
Atatürk Baraji
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Ceyhan
Taurus Mountains
Adana
Ceyhan
Gaziantep
Sanlıurfa
Tigris
Antalya
Mersin
Iskenderun
IRAQ
Antakya
Euphrates
Mediterranean Sea
SYRIA
Nicosia
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
CYPRUS
LEBANON
100 miles
200km
International boundary
Capital city
Land over 500m

Introduction

Imagine a country that is known more for the metaphors with which it is described than for its rather complex politics, society and history – a country that is unfailingly described as a 'Bridge between East and West', a passageway which links Europe and Asia, combines tradition and modernity, and raises hopes for the coexistence of Islam and democracy. This country is, of course, Turkey, the modern state on the Asia Minor landmass, which stretches out into the Aegean Sea and also includes a small part of Europe in its Thracian west. This is a country that has a mostly Muslim population, shares borders with some of the most feared dictatorships of the Middle East as well as with the European Union, and an economy with one of the fastest growth rates in the world. Few places are so often alluded to in world historical debates on the 'clash of civilizations' or the 'future of Europe', and few countries are so frequently misread and misunderstood. The metaphors of bridges and passages are often but euphemisms that seem to obfuscate conflicts between the binaries that the metaphors celebrate: conflicts between East and West, between Europe and Asia, between Islam and secularism. And yet again, these simple binaries are inappropriate if we want to understand the startlingly complex, but also intriguingly dynamic, country which Turkey is today, and the historical processes that have brought it about. This book proposes a framework that seeks to make sense of the complexities and counter-intuitive conflicts in Turkey's recent past and its political life today.

Unlike the other books in the 'Global History of the Present' series, *Turkey since 1989: Angry Nation* begins in 1980 rather than 1989, and it has an introductory chapter on the country's emergence as a modern nation-state since the nineteenth century. The main story of this book has hence two starting points: the year 1980 constitutes the key traumatic rupture, while 1989 marks a new context for Turkey's future engagement with the world. Many of the momentous changes that are often ascribed to the 1989 revolutions in eastern Europe – the abrupt

end of authoritarian regimes and socialism, the ostensible victory of liberal democracy and free enterprise – in short Fukuyama's premature fantasy of the 'end of history' – were anticipated in Turkey in the 1980s.

The military intervention of 12 September 1980 was ruthlessly brutal: it led to the imprisonment and torture by the armed forces and police of more than half a million citizens, the proscription of trade unions and the next-to-complete elimination of the country's associational life. This massively destructive act, however, also created a *tabula rasa* for the swift transition from an inward-looking corporatist economy based on import substitution to a firmly globalized and export-oriented economy, whose self-confident capitalists would eventually defy gagging attempts by the state. The September Coup, together with a programme of neoliberal restructuring announced on 24 January 1980, hence constitutes the zero hour in Turkey's recent history. It has unleashed the forces of market liberalization, anticipating comparable transformative processes in eastern Europe. Despite the bloody nature of its birth, the September Coup also opened the gateways for the generation of new social classes, rising levels of wealth, a more liberal political culture and the emergence of new social and identity-based politics.

The second key moment was 1989, when a significant historical turning point in Turkey coincided with the ruptures in eastern Europe: on the day the Berlin Wall fell, on 9 November 1989, the Grand National Assembly, Turkey's parliament, elected Turgut Özal as president of the republic. Taking over office from the commander of the 1980 *coup d'état*, General Kenan Evren, Özal became the symbol of the return of civilian government and the military's reluctant and incomplete retreat to the barracks. He also stood for the emergence of a new entrepreneurial class that was brash and profit-oriented and laid the foundations for a new market-oriented spirit. It fuelled the expansion of the economy and the commodification of everyday life well beyond the established industrial centres in western Turkey. On the home front, competing camps of secularists and Islamists replaced the preceding divide between socialists and conservatives, while the war between the security services and the Kurdish guerrillas escalated.

The year 1989 created a myriad of new opportunities in Turkey's immediate neighbourhood, which Özal artfully seized upon: the collapse of the Soviet Union opened the route to the 'Turkic' republics of Central Asia, the end of communism in the Balkans cleared the

roads to Turkey's immediate neighbourhood, and US interventionism in Iraq promised to pave the way for a more prominent regional role. It was in the same context that Özal applied for full membership of the European Community, as the European Union was called back then, but was eventually forestalled. Most of the major domestic and international issues which determined Turkey's politics in the last three decades can hence be traced back to Özal's brief role as prime minister and president, and most of the achievements and failures of the country's political and economic trajectory can be measured against the backdrop of this period.

Another aspect of the eastern European transformations of 1989 was the onerous process of facing up to the multiple societal traumas of cynical dictatorships and to histories falsified by nationalist and communist regimes. The seeds of a reckoning with its authoritarian past were sown in Turkey in these years, but they only began to bloom in the 2000s, when critical intellectuals and activists began to reject the ethno-racist ideology of Turkey's founding fathers and challenged the official historiography. From the forced 'population exchange' with Greece in the 1920s and the genocide of Ottoman Armenians in 1915, to the policies of denial and assimilation towards Kurds and Alevis, the debate on what constitutes Turkey and what a Turk has transcended the narrow confines of what used to be a tightly ethno-religiously defined and ostensibly homogeneous polity.

There was a third key moment, in which world historical ruptures and domestic shifts coincided, if with a time lag. The September 11th attacks in New York significantly reshaped the context for Turkey's interaction with the world: George Bush's 'global war on terror', the assault on Iraq on Turkey's doorstep, the ensuing discursive polarization between 'Islam' and the 'West' and an increasingly security-based policy outlook in most European Union governments contributed to a growing sense of European essentialism and EU fundamentalism. The reformist zeal and pro-European excitement that unfolded in Turkey in the early 2000s was soon countered by a growing anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish sentiment in Europe. Wary of further enlargement, fearful of more immigration, unsympathetic to cultural differences and increasingly less convinced by the virtues of democracy and human rights, European publics shifted to the right, while the prospect of Turkey's EU membership turned into a memento of Europe's immanent 'Islamic conquest'. The erratic process of Turkey's relations with the

European Union in the 2000s hence had an ambiguous effect, which may have prepared what many see as Turkey's 'shift of axis' to the East. In fact, this was not much more than a course correction that responded to the European Union's increasing internal conflicts and to the inability to engage meaningfully with the shift of global economic and political power to centres outside the Euro-Atlantic world.

If we take 1980, 1989 and 11 September 2001 as the key historic moments when world historical events interacted with domestic processes, and the year 2010 as the temporary end point of this history of the present, we see two ostensibly contradictory phenomena: rapid change and development in economy and society as opposed to stagnation and violent conflict in politics. From globalization and Europeanization to rapid economic development, migration and urbanization, even individualization, Turkey has changed radically and at breakneck speed. Within three decades, the peoples living within the borders of the Turkish Republic have experienced their country's transition from an inward-looking agrarian economy dominated by a parochial and often neurotic worldview to a major regional power and, in 2010, the sixteenth-largest economy in the world. In the same period, Turkey has shifted from being a travel destination for backpackers and culturally interested individuals into the world's eighth-largest tourism market.

This story of relative economic and international success, however, has been overshadowed by institutional weakness, recurring political crises, religious conflict, ethno-national strife, mass violence and political manipulation. From the 1978 film *Midnight Express*, which illustrated in rather unsympathetic terms the conditions and experiences of torture in a Turkish jail, to the reports of international human rights organizations, Turkey has been depicted as a country of police brutality and arbitrary rule, and rightly so. Many of the images that accompanied news coverage of Turkey since the 1980s contained angry faces: members of Turkey's most significant religious minority, the Alevis, remembering community members killed in large-scale massacres, followers of the extreme right protesting against the critical reappraisal of Turkey's past, secularists screaming against the ruling Justice and Development (AKP) party, soldiers attacking the positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and Kurds demonstrating against state repression. Violence also spilled over into the daily lives of anxious ordinary citizens in the form of intra-family violence, mount-

ing criminality and hate crimes against members of sexual and ethnic minorities. This mounting violence was further aggravated by the country's abysmal 'gender gap', according to which Turkey is ranked 121 among 128 countries with regard to the economic participation, the educational achievements and political empowerment of women.

Much of the violence may be a function of the rising insecurity in the wake of a fast-changing society. But there are more immediate reasons. Tens of thousands of tortured men and women were eventually released into freedom and had to make do in a society that had become foreign to them after a decade or two in prison. Many soldiers who returned from the Kurdish war in the 1990s with deep scars in their psyches in turn began to traumatize their social environments. More than a dozen transsexual sex workers have been killed in Istanbul alone every year for many years now, indicating a new level of brutalization of the everyday world. And the anger has not been confined to Turkish territory: especially during the 1990s, when the military campaign against the guerrilla war of the PKK was at its height, supporters of the party blocked motorways in Germany and attacked Turkish embassies all over Europe. When the PKK's now imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in a Greek embassy in Kenya in 1999, outraged Kurdish nationalists attacked Greek missions from Moscow to Berlin.

Yet, as Slavoj Žižek reminds us in his reflections on violence published in 2008, violence is never only limited to the subjective violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent, who is visible to the outside observer. It is shaped by the 'symbolic violence' of language and ideology and by the 'systemic violence' of economic and political systems. In this book, I seek to explain why Turkey in the 2000s became such an 'angry nation' and explore, as far as possible in the confines of a concise account, the symbolic and systemic spheres where this anger has been created. In addition to a consideration of the violent politics of today, this necessitates reaching farther back into the history than 1980 and 1989. On the political level, much of the anger can be traced back to the underpinnings of Turkey's dominant ideology of nationalist modernization, in its early form of 'Unionism' (*Ittihatçılık*), and, after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Kemalism (after the state founder, Mustafa Kemal). Based on an unlikely amalgam of ruthlessly modernizing policies, the authoritarian state forms of 1920s and 1930s Europe, the ethno-national ideology of Turkism and a restrictive form of state Islam, Kemalism has had a lasting effect on the country's

institutions and mindsets. It was in three fields especially that the founding ideology of the republic paved the way for the tensions in today's Turkey: the definition of citizenship, the relationship between religion and society (laicism or *laiklik*) and, finally, the incomplete separation of powers between elected governments and non-elected actors like the military, the bureaucracy and the judiciary.

The Kemalist modernization project paid lip-service to civic notions of Turkish identity, yet in practice, and much as in the neighbouring Balkans and Greece, created groups of 'others', who were denied full citizenship rights. Kurds, Alevis and non-Muslim minorities were the most marginalized, if in different ways. Kurds and Alevis could be assimilated into the body politic when they denied their ethnic and religious origins, while non-Muslims were generally seen as a potential security risk and deemed unfit for full citizenship. All of them, however, had to suffer degrees of social exclusion and state repression. Even though they are minorities, taken together Kurds and Alevis probably make up more than a third of Turkey's population today, which is a substantial group in a country with more than seventy million inhabitants. Yet even conservative Muslims, who rejected the state-sanctioned Kemalist version of Islam and chose different readings of their religion, were pushed to the margins of the political system, and sometimes also to the margins of society. From the 1950s to the 1980s and until the end of the Cold War, communists and socialists, despite their growing significance in the political and cultural life of the country, were prosecuted and had their rights curtailed too. In this exclusionary mindset, 'full citizenship' was extended only to those Turkish Sunni Muslims of the Hanefi sect who subscribed to the secularist policies of the Kemalist regime, while members of all other groups experienced exclusion on different levels in public life. The political scientist and public intellectual Baskın Oran captured this idealized notion of a Turkish citizen with the derisory acronym LAHASÜMÜT (Laik, Hanefi, Sünni, Müslüman, Türk), the Turkish equivalent of the US WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant).

Laiklik, the Turkish derivative of the French term *laicité*, was regarded as one of the founding principles of the republic and is still often presented as the separation of the public and religious spheres, which at least in France it was. However, in Turkey, *laiklik* came to mean the control and imposition of a certain reading of Islam, the Kemalist one, by the state, financed by public monies. This led

to irresolvable contradictions whereby state-employed imams of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) would endorse the wearing of the headscarf in their sermons, while state universities barred scarf-wearing students from entering university campuses, as happened after the 1997 military intervention. Likewise, state monopolies produced and promoted the consumption of raki and wine, while imams warned their flock never to give in to the temptations of alcohol. This was a schizophrenic world only possible in authoritarian regimes.

The political system, which emerged from this contradictory trajectory of modernization, especially since its shift to competitive politics in the late 1940s, has been another source of constant tension: a dual structure emerged, with a 'guardian state' of an all-powerful coalition of the judiciary, the bureaucracy and the military on the one side, and elected, yet often insecure, governments on the other. The guardian state was a reincarnation of the Kemalist one-party state and a result of the country's incomplete transformation to democracy. In 1946, the Republican People's Party did introduce elections, but never fully renounced its role as the party of the state and of Mustafa Kemal's reforms. It remained part of a coalition of the military high command, the high judiciary and bureaucracy, whose leaders continued to consider themselves the rightful owners of the state, which they felt obliged to defend against whoever they believed were internal and external challengers to its hegemony.

The workings of the guardian state

Let us discuss in more detail the workings of this body, which we will frequently come across throughout the book, with different names and in different disguises: the guardian state is an amorphous power structure within the state hierarchy, which is upheld by interpersonal contacts at the highest levels. It extends into all walks of life and can easily be prompted into action if state preservation so requires. The guardian state uses the methods and acts in accordance with the state preservation of the one-party era from which it emerged. Its worldview is also shaped by the clandestine nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, which have paved the way for the key ideological and political movement of Turkey's twentieth century, Turkish nationalist modernization, and by the necessity to cover up the dark moments in the emergence of the republic, such as the Armenian genocide or the extermination of Dersim Alevis in the 1930s.

The core method of guardian state governance is prescribed by the notions of divide and rule – a nod to the Ottoman imperial tradition of governance – and by manipulation and deceit. The distinguishing feature of the guardian state is the importance attached to state preservation as opposed to legitimate political processes. Governance is achieved by creating enmity and conflict between different groups, by exploiting religious or linguistic difference, as in the case of Alevis and Kurds, and by nudging political groups into radicalization. All these conflicts then eventually escalate – sometimes beyond the expectations of the guardians – and become justifications for overt military intervention. This was the case in the coups of 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997, and in the modified form of 'electronic memoranda' by the Chief of the General Staff in the 2000s. In all these interventions, as well as in the civilian periods between them, the guardians act with a rationality of purpose to sustain power. From manipulation of the public sphere to the deceit of individuals, from incitement of mass violence to widespread torture by proxies and security services, all possible methods are permitted as long as they are justified by the ends of 'saving the state', which is often just a euphemism for the perpetuation of power.

There are different names for this coalition of guardians, ranging from 'deep state', 'security state' and the 'guardians of the republic' to the notion of the 'praetorian state'. They have clandestine and overt agencies, which carry out the dirty business of political manipulation: in the course of the twentieth century, the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı mahsusa*) of the Committee of Union and Progress, the Special War Office (*Özel Harp Dairesi*), the Village Guards (*Köy Koruculari*) and the Gendarmerie Counter-Terrorism Unit JITEM (*Jandarma Istıhbarat ve Terörle Mücadele Grup Komutanlığı*) have all committed crimes and killed thousands in the name of defending the state against its perceived enemies. For much of the time covered in this book, the 'guardians' were able to keep key social groups – parts of the intelligentsia, the middle classes and the Istanbul-based industrial bourgeoisie – within a republican hegemonic bloc, which was, however, challenged repeatedly during phases of strong civilian politics.

On the other side, and ever since the transition to democracy in the late 1940s, there are governments formed after competitive and almost always fair elections. They coexist, uneasily, with the guardian state. At key historical moments these governments not only represent

a large segment of popular will, but they also integrate emerging social groups and their demands into the political system. This was the case with the election of the Democrat Party and Menderes in 1950, the brief left-wing interlude of the Republican People's Party under Ecevit in the 1970s, Turgut Özal's election to prime minister in 1983 and the election victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2002.

At their best, these governments are powerful enough to challenge the guardians and to keep the military, the judiciary and the bureaucracy at bay. Sometimes, they also succeed in manning state institutions with their own cadres. These moments also tend to coincide with major periods of economic growth and with a proactive regional and international policy, as was the case with Menderes and Özal and is still the case with Prime Minister Erdoğan. Eventually, however, these governments lose their electoral support. This may happen owing to an increasingly authoritarian turn in the style of government, which closely resembles that of the guardian state, to economic crises, to the creeping return of guardian meddling, or to a combination of all three of these factors. When political parties fail to garner the support of significant parts of the electorate and fall short of representing popular will, weak coalition governments emerge, which are easily pushed into giving in to the demands of the guardian state and helping rebuild its hegemonic position. The coalition governments of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the 1990s, are a case in point.

The distinction between the guardian state and the actual government is never as clear cut as some recent critics would suggest. First of all, there are ample connections between the two spheres, and in times of relative stability, the guardian state may retreat and the military and judiciary may act according to their constitutional obligations. It is in times of crises, and particularly during military interventions, that the duality of the system becomes most apparent, if only for a short period of time. These are the moments when the military singles out groups and individuals, who are tortured, tried and convicted by the police and the courts, while the torturers and putschists are shielded from prosecution. Criminals walk free while the courts often target innocents and almost never mete out justice to victims. Second, elected governments may eventually emulate the guardian state in both method and discourse, thereby blurring the differences between the two, as was the case in Tansu Çiller's term as

prime minister in the late 1990s with its extremely violent anti-Kurdish policy. Finally, individuals and groups may end up being enlisted by the guardians or their middlemen without even realizing their role in the larger scheme of things. The exploitation of left-wing students in the 1940s to the 1960s against the right, the instrumentalization of the extreme right and the guardian cajoling of the Islamists to move against the socialist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the enrolment of Alevis, secularists and social democrats in the fight against the Justice and Development Party in the 2000s, are examples of this guardian state practice of governance.

To call the guardian state to account for most of the episodes of violence and destruction in Turkey's contemporary history does not entail absolving from responsibility the elected political leaders, who have often found ways of accommodation within the dual power structure. It is, however, necessary for analytical reasons to focus on the guardian state, as only an understanding of its manipulative capacity begins to explain the counter-intuitive twists and turns in Turkey's history which have consistently forced neighbours and friends to become enemies, often to the surprise of the very same people, especially in retrospect. It is this counter-intuitive element in Turkey's politics which lies at the root of its angry and torn politics, but which has nevertheless failed to stop Turkish society advancing economically and culturally.

Life-world transformations

An Istanbulite, let's say a socialist activist, who fled the country after the military coup of 1980 – as many tens of thousands did – would probably not recognize her former city if she returned today. Gone is the grey and dusty melancholy of a self-interested bourgeoisie, which Orhan Pamuk described so succinctly in his biographic essay *Istanbul: memories of a city* (2005). Gone also is the sense of isolation from the world and from the imperial Ottoman past. The nation-builders of the early republican years had made a point of creating a new nation in a new city. Ankara, despite its significant, yet more easily destructible, Armenian and Jewish heritage, appeared untainted by the cosmopolitan diversity of Istanbul, and the republic channelled its limited resources into the construction of this new capital. Istanbul was neglected, and even with the start of massive industrialization in the 1960s, the metropolis remained demoted to the status of a secondary city. All this has changed now, and Istanbul has once again

become a cosmopolitan hub, busily reconnecting to the world and to its past: the Ottoman Empire has become a positive reference; a faux neo-Ottoman style adorns hotels, restaurants and bars in the old town. Even in everyday fashion, the empire's stamp is increasingly visible: young religious women experiment with the kaftans and headscarf arrangements of Ottoman princesses, or rather with the models that European orientalist painters of the nineteenth century believed to be Ottoman. Head coverings have increased in numbers, but so have the women on the streets, which used to be mostly male domains. A desecularization of the public sphere and a secularization of society have been happening at the same time.

Istanbul welcomes more than seven million visitors a year and is acknowledged as a cultural capital in its own right, serving as a meeting place for artists from the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans and the rest of the world. Even if its Europeanness is contested by smaller minds on the continent, the city proudly celebrated it status as 'European Capital of Culture' in 2010 and the signifiers of its manifold connections with its Western neighbours: from the city's most important Byzantine monument, the Haghia Sophia (the Church of the Holy Wisdom) to the 'Belgrade Forest', the 'Polish Village' (*Polonezköy*) and 'New Bosnia' (*Yenibosna*), Istanbul's toponymy marks its deeply European identity, while the Baghdad Road in the former suburb of Kadıköy hints at its more distant Arab connections. Motorways, new metro lines, fast ferries, social housing blocks, luxury villa compounds, business parks and shopping malls, new airports, even a 'Trump tower' – they all are testimony to the rapid modernization and globalization of the Turkish economy and the city's climb in the global hierarchy. Processes of gentrification, the often violent expulsion of 'unwanted' social groups such as Roma, transvestite sex workers, African immigrants and squatters from inner-city areas, and conflicts between old and new residents are the darker aspects of this rapid commodification of urban space in times of 'high globalization' and rent-obsessed local governments.

This massive developmental drive has not been limited to Turkey's traditionally more advanced western provinces. The entire country has been changing along the same lines, if not always in equal measure. Medium-sized cities of around half a million inhabitants have turned into centres of industrial production and have generated unexpected wealth. Denizli, Manisa, Kayseri, Konya, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş

and other cities are hence referred to as 'Anatolian tigers', cities where within two generations artisanal work and handicrafts were transformed into global industrial production. More recently, Kurdish cities like Van and Diyarbakır have witnessed the rise of a growing Kurdish middle class, which seems to agree only partially with the maximalist demands of the Kurdish nationalist movement. With more than a hundred universities – both state and private – a gross domestic product of around US$13,000 per capita and an upwardly mobile society, Turkey is probably more economically dynamic than all of its neighbours. The transition from a low-income country to a developed economy appears imminent. The counter-intuitive mismatch between this rapid modernization on the one hand and the inability of the political system to overcome its ethno-national and illiberal foundations on the other accounts for much of the anger. This book explores the tensions and conflicts emanating from this mismatch, and the conditions under which it emerged.

There is no question that the world historic events of 1989 and the rupture of 9/11, together with Turkey's own key moment in 1980, have changed the country profoundly. Turkey is a different place and little has remained of the prison atmosphere of the September Coup. Owing to this rupture, Turkey has entered the era of neoliberal restructuring and globalization. Thanks to 1989, Turkey was reunited with its historical neighbourhood, from which it had been cut off throughout much of the Cold War. And with 9/11, the country was catapulted to the front lines of the 'clash of civilizations' and the war between 'Islam and the West', and then – with a time lag of a few years – directed to the antechamber of the European Union. The European Union itself, troubled by the aftershocks of the 2008/09 economic crisis and by growing populism and xenophobia, has lost much of its appeal as a beacon of democracy and prosperity. In 2010, Turkey remains a country where ethnic conflict, political tensions, authoritarian modes of governance and ongoing 'behind-the-scenes' manipulation by the guardians still muddy the waters. Yet the country is infinitely richer, more democratic, more humane and more civilized than in 1980. The perpetrators of the 1980 coup may soon have to defend themselves in court. The guardians are losing their omnipotence. The Kemalist Republic is obsolescent, but whether the anger may be about to subside or will be incited yet again remains to be seen. Turkey is emerging as an important new actor in its Eurasian neighbourhood, stretching from the European

Union to the Middle East, and from the Black Sea and the Caucasus to Central Asia, but the prime question remains to be answered: can a religiously inspired party with roots in political Islam Europeanize and modernize a society, tolerate its deepening secularization and accept non- and anti-religious life choices? In short, are political Islam and liberal democracy reconcilable, or is this coexistence doomed to be a half-hearted marriage of convenience? Will Turkey continue its erratic but progressive democratic consolidation, which began in the late 1940s, or will the Muslim democracy of Justice and Development prove to be a dead-end scenario for politics in Turkey? The following chapters might not give a definitive answer, but they will provide the reader with a wide range of historical connections that will help clarify the opaque storyline of Turkey's most recent history.

Index

1st of March Permit (*1 Mart Tezkeresi*), 132
11 September attacks, 3, 12, 115, 118–21, 136
1402 regulation, 61

24 January Decisions, 68–9

Abdal, Pir Sultan, 96
Abdülhamit II, Sultan, 20, 21
Aczmendi brotherhood, 106
Ağar, Mehmet, 91, 99, 103
Agos newspaper, 150
agriculture, 42; industrialization of, 42
Ahmadinejad, Mahmud, 177
Ahtamar, celebration of mass in, 179
Akay, Müşerref, 63–4
Akbulut, Yıldırım, 83
Akçam, Taner, 145
Akkoç, Nebahat, 64, 90
Aksoy, Muammer, assassination of, 87
Albania, 17, 80
alcohol, consumption of, 7
Alemdaroğlu, Kemal, 160
Aleppo, province of, 171–2
Alevis, 15, 34, 36, 124, 152; massacres of, 4, 38, 53, 96–100 (in Dersim, 7; in Gazi, 98–100; in Madımak, 163); rights of, 164–70; treatment of, 3, 6, 10, 30
Algan, Cengiz, 132–3
Algeria, 18
Alliance of Civilizations, 171
Alpay, Şahin, 129
Alpdoğan, Abdullah, 36, 37
alphabet, Latin, introduction of, 28
Altan, Ahmet, 109
Altan, Mehmet, 109
Anatolian tigers, 12, 69, 126
anger, 4, 5, 12, 185, 189
Ankara, 10, 54, 68; as capital city, 32; protest marches in, 152
Ankara Agreement (1963), 43, 85, 95, 139–40
Anter, Musa, assassination of, 90
anti-communism, 48, 52, 59, 107, 185
anti-secularism, 106, 108, 152, 159
Anti-Terrorism Act, 144
anti-Turkish sentiment, in Europe, 3, 156, 188
Appadurai, Arjun, 24, 180
Arabesk music, banning of, 72
Armed Forces Pension Fund (OYAK), 46, 62
Armenia, xxii, 18; contested term, xxi; Turkey's relations with, 175–9, 178 (suspended, 81)
Armenian genocide, 3, 7, 18, 20, 23, 33, 75, 76, 146; an issue in USA, 95, 177; apology campaign, 178; foreign recognition of, 178; Israeli lobbying regarding, 177–8; portrayed as a lie, 145–50; Taksim Square commemoration of, 178
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Tashnaksutyun*), 178
Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), 76, 145
Armenians, xxiv, 16, 19, 20, 22, 34, 54, 71; accused of territorial claims, 149; destruction of Kayseri community, 130; genocide of *see* Armenian genocide; in Ankara, 10, 32; in Hemşin, 34; public support for, 151; treatment of, 24
army *see* military
Artuklu University, Mardin, Kurdish teaching in, 168

Assad, Hafez al-, 110
assassination, 84, 86, 156, 161; of Kurdish activists, 88; of Kurdish businessmen, 102; of Kurdish intellectuals, 87, 89–90; of Turkish diplomats, 76; political, 125
Association for the Furthering of Science (*Ilim Yayma Cemiyeti*), 173
Association for the Struggle against Communism, 48
Ataköy Galleria, 72
Atatürk *see* Kemal, Mustafa
Ataturkist Thought Association, 152
Ayalon, Daniel (Danny), 176
Aydın, Vedat, 88; assassination of, 90; grave of, 89
Azerbaijan, 80, 94, 178

Bakiri, Mohammad Reza, 106
Balkan Entente, 27
Balkan War, First, 17
Balkans, 2, 22, 79, 80, 82, 83; Ottoman retreat from, 17; Turkey's relations with, 172; Turkey's trade with, 172
banks: bombing attacks on, 134; re-regulation of, 181; regulation of, 116, 118; state-owned, illegal practices of, 116
Bardakçı, Ulaş, 50
Bayat, Celal, 46
Baydemir, Osman, 143, 165
Baykal, Deniz, 123, 135–6, 142, 152–3, 148, 160, 185
Bedirxan Bey, 20
Bekaroğlu, Mehmet, 127
Belge, Murat, 147
Berktay, Halil, 146
Beşikçi, Ismail, xxi
Bir, Çevik, 106
Birand, Mehmet Ali, 109
Bitlis, Eşref, 90
Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), 81
Bosnia-Herzegovina, 80, 172
Bosnian war, 79
Bosporus Bridge, 71
Bozkurt, Mahmut Esat, 29
broadcasting, state monopoly removed, 73
Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 61
Bucak, Sedat, 102
Bulgaria, 17, 80, 94; response to Turkish earthquake, 114; Turkey normalizes relations with, 80; Turks living in, 78–9
Bush, George, Snr, 94
Bush, George W., 119, 125, 131
Büyükanıt, Yaşar, 142, 151–2

caliphate, 22
call to prayer, in Turkish, 30; revocation of, 41
Can, Osman, 159
Çandar, Cengiz, 108–9
capital flight, 117
capital punishment, abolition of, 112, 115, 124
Carter, Jimmy, 61
Çatlı, Abdullah, 102
Caucasus, 80–1
Çayan, Mahir, 50
Cem, Ismail, 85, 114, 115, 123, 170
Cemal, Ahmed, 23
Central Asia, Turkey's role in, 70
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 59–60
Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), 43
Cerić, Mustafa Efendi, 173
Çetin, Fethiye, *My Grandmother*, 146
Cevahir, Hüseyin, 50
cheap labour, recruitment of, 43–4
children: arrests of, 165; prosecution of, 143–4
Chomsky, Noam, 132
Christian Europe, view of, 180
Christian population, 17, 19–20; independence movements of, 22; killing of Christians in Malatya, 153; reduction of, 34
Çiçek, Cemil, 149
Cilicia, contested term, xxi
Çiller, Tansu, 9, 85, 91, 97, 104, 106, 110, 158; visit to Israel, 94, 175

Cinmen, Ergin, 104–5
'Citizens' initiative for enduring light', 104–5
citizenship, xxi, 6, 26, 33–5; stripping of, 61
civil code, adopted from Switzerland, 29
civil society, 131, 132, 135, 151; beginnings of, 73–5, 183 (in earthquake relief, 113)
clash of civilizations, 118–21, 171
Clinton, Hillary, 178
coalition governments, 84–121
Cold War, 12
Comer, Eric, 48
Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* – CUP), xxii, 8, 23, 26, 27, 54, 55, 145
conscientious objectors, humiliation of, 183
conservative democracy, 123; emergence of, 41–4
Constantinople, 15 *see also* Istanbul
Constitution of Turkey: Article 15, suspended, 184; of 1961, 46, 49; of 1982, 61; referendum on reform of, 184
constitutional court, 184; voids Gül's election, 153
constitutionalism, 19, 21
corruption, 70, 86, 116
Council for Mobilization Research (*Seferberlik Tetkik Kurulu*), 45 *see also* Special War Office
coups, 152; 1960, xxiii, 44, 45–6, 45; 1980, 2, 12, 14, 58–66, 83, 120; 1997, 105–10, 120; e-memorandum, 153; foiled attempts, 160; postmodern, 105–14
cultural and intellectual transformation, 144, 155
cultural diplomacy, 173–4
Cyprus, Republic of, 43, 48, 58, 75–6, 78, 104, 124–5, 135, 137, 139; Annan peace plan, 124–5, 135, 138; European Union accession negotiations, 104; invasion of, 51–2; recognition of, 179–80
Cyprus, Turkish Republic of Northern, 138
Cyprus is Turkish organization, 44

Dalan, Bedrettin, 71
Dallas model, 71–3
dams, building of, 183
Davutoğlu, Ahmet, 158, 170–1, 172, 173, 177, 178
death sentence, abolition of, 119
debt, foreign, 16–17, 42; Ottoman default on, 17
deep state, 8, 14, 40, 105
Demetriu, Thanos, *The Betrayed Upheaval*, 137–8
Demir Kır At ('Iron Grey Horse'), 41
Demirbaş, Abdullah, 90, 141, 165, 166
Demirel, Süleyman, 43, 44, 47, 48, 51, 52–3, 60, 85, 97, 110; deposed, 49
democracy: Islamic, 127; liberal, consolidation of, 187
Democracy Party of the People (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi* – HADEP), 109
Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti* – DP), 9, 39, 41, 44, 57
Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti* – DSP), 86, 110, 112, 155
Democratic People's Party (*Demokratik Halk Partisi* – DEHAP), 123
Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi* – DTP), 110, 141, 155, 164, 165; banning of, 166; members charged with terrorism offences, 144
denigration of Turkishness, charge of, 146, 147, 152
Denktash, Rauf, 76, 125, 137
Dersim, 164; massacres in, 7, 35–7, 145
Derviş, Kemal, 85, 117–18, 123
desecularization, 11
devaluation of Turkish lira *see* lira
Development Assistance Agency of Turkey (TIKA), 79
diaspora communities, engagement with Europe, 44

Dink, Hrant, 147, 149–50, 179; murder of, 150–1
Dink, Rakel, 151
Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), 62, 127, 173, 187
divorce, religious, 29
Diyarbakır, 35, 140, 164; court appearance of arrested mayors in, 166; election results in, 155; killing of protestors in, 142–3; massacre in, 88–9; population growth in, 91–2; renovation of city walls, 141
Diyarbakır prison, 60, 64–6
Doğan media group, 160; fined, 163
dollarization of economy, 112; de-dollarization, 139
Dörtyol, killing of policemen in, 169
drug trafficking, 105, 167
Dursun, Turan, assassination of, 87

earthquake diplomacy, 114
earthquakes, 84, 120; in Athens, 114; in Marmara, 112–14
Eastern Europe, revolutions in, 1
Ecevit, Bülent, 40, 51, 52–3, 60, 85, 86, 110, 111, 115, 119
economy, 1, 11–12, 16–17, 23, 38, 57, 67–8, 70, 78, 81, 84, 96, 112, 144, 155, 179–81; chapter in EU negotiations, 140; crisis of, 12, 85, 115, 117–18, 120, 183, 188; corporatist, 2; development of, 4; global, 54; growth of, xxv, 158; institutions, 116; mixed, 42; of the Kurdish region, 82; recovery, 85, 123
Eczacıbaşı family, 69
education: Gülen schools, 129; primary, compulsory, 107; religious preacher schools (Imam-Hatip) *see* schools; secular, 28
Egypt, response to Turkish earthquake, 114
elections, 7, 8, 39, 51, 55, 66–8, 84, 87–8, 93, 122–3, 153–5, 164
electrification, 43
Elrom, Efraim, abduction of, 50
emigration, 44; to Western Europe, 55
Enver Paşa, 23
Erbakan, Necmettin, 51, 86, 95, 102, 106, 107, 123; visit to Libya, 103–4
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, 9, 41, 123, 127, 128, 130–4, 143, 152, 153, 154, 156, 164, 167, 170, 175, 177, 183; attack on Shimon Peres, 176; banned from running for office, 131
Ergenekon network, investigation of, 89, 149, 157, 159–62, 169
Ergül, Sabri, 100
Erim, Nihat, 49
Ersoy, Bülent, 63, 73
Eruygur, Şener, 152
Esenboğa airport, attack at, 76
ethnic cleansing, 14, 18, 23, 25, 33, 38
ethnicity, 33–5
Euphrates, water of, dispute with Syria, 94
Europe, 15, 17, 19, 25; political thought of, 21; racial equality with, 31; relations with, 44, 75–83, 85, 94, 115, 123, 147 (limits of, 179–82; seen as almost treasonous, 126); sympathy for, under attack, 156
European Community, 57; Association Agreement, 43; customs union with, 94; market for Turkey, 69
European Council: Copenhagen meeting, 124–5, 134–40; Luxembourg summit, 139
European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), 74, 112, 136, 183; decision on Dink case, 179
European Union (EU), 12, 188; 'absorption capacity' issue, 139; approval ratings of, in Turkey, 136; conditionality of relations with, 124; customs union, 95, 104; Cyprus membership of, 138; membership of, becomes less important issue, 182, 183; Turkish candidacy for accession

to, 78, 104, 115, 124, 134–7, 139, 180, 188; Turkish relations with, 3, 4, 137–40, 173, 181
Europeanization, 187
Evren, Kenan, 2, 53, 56, 57, 62, 66, 68, 72, 73, 74, 76, 80, 184
exclusion of unwanted social groups from cities, 11
extrajudicial killings *see* assassination

family names, introduction of, 30
Fatsa town, operation against, 53
Felicity (*Saadet*) Party, 123, 125, 127, 175, 176
feminists, organization of, 73
Fethullah Gülen movement, 119, 173
fez, wearing of, proscribed, 27–8
First World War, 18
flags, massive, emergence of, 148
football, Euro 2008, 174–5
foreign policy of Turkey, 26, 75–83, 93–6, 158, 170–85
Fortuyn, Pim, 180
France, 16, 18, 19, 25
Free Thought Club (*Hür Düşünce Derneği*), 47

Gaddafi, Mu'ammer, 103–4
gay movements, 183
gay pride march in Istanbul, 163
Gaza, Israeli attack on, 175–6
Gazi (Istanbul), massacre in, 98–100, 102
Gaziantep, 171–2
Genç Siviller, 163
Gendarmerie Counter-Terrorism Unit (*Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele Grup Komutanlığı*), 8, 86, 89–90, 160, 162
gender gap in Turkey, 5
gender relations, 174
genocide, 18, 23, 24, 37; in Dersim, 35–7; use of term, xxii *see also* Armenian genocide
gentrification, 11
Georgia, 94
Germany, 27, 129; Turkish intellectuals in, 77; under Nazism, 33, 34
Gezmiş, Deniz, 48, 49; execution of, 50
globalization, 11
Gökalp, Ziya, 131
Gökçen, Sabiha, 36–7, 64
Görmüş, Alper, 152
Gourevitch, Philip, 24
Governor for the State of Emergency Region, 96
Great Union of Jurists (*Büyük Hukukçular Birliği*), 147
Great Unity Party (*Büyük Birlik Partisi*), 150, 161
Greece, xx, 17, 79; Association Agreement with EEC, 75; military stand-off with, 94; missions attacked, 5; Öcalan's stay in, 110; population exchange with, 3, 18; relations with, 120, 161, 172; response to Turkish earthquake, 114; Turkish rapprochement with, 80, 114; US aid for, 39; viewing of Turkish TV series, 174
Greek Orthodox *millet*, 23
Greek Orthodox population, 34; attacks on churches of, 45
Greeks, 16, 22, 25, 54, 71; of Istanbul, emigration of, 45; Pontic, 34 *see also* Smyrna, Greek occupation of
green capital, 109, 129, 130; marginalization of, 106
Grivas, George, 52
growth, economic, acceleration of, 180–1
guardian state, xx, xxiii, 7, 12, 14, 44, 47, 50–5, 57, 58, 84–5, 91, 98, 120, 109–10, 141, 150, 151, 154, 156, 157, 159, 161, 164, 169, 170, 182, 185–6, 188; arms caches of, 160; complexity of, 156, 157; exposure of, 159–64; in Western Turkey, 96–105; portrayed on television, 147; return of, 144–56; workings of, 7–10
Gül, Abdullah, 123, 130, 131, 135, 149, 151, 153, 154, 178; elected president, 156, 158

Gül, Hayrünisa, 153
Gülen, Fethullah, 80, 127–34
Gülen movement *see* Fethullah Gülen movement
Gülen schools, 130
Güneş, Turan, 52
Güney, Yılmaz, *Yol*, 65–6, 111
Güreş, Doğan, 97
Gürüz, Kemal, 107, 160

Haider, Jörg, 137
Halaçoğlu, Yusuf, 145
Hamidiye troops, 74
Hanefi sect, 6
Hartley, L. P., *The Go Between*, 32
Hat Law (1925), 27
headscarf, worn by women, 7, 11, 152, 153, 158–9; banning of, 107, 136, 150, 160
Higher Education Council, 168
Hikmet, Nazım, xxiii
historiography, contestation of, 144–6
Hittites, 31
Hizbullah, Kurdish, 66, 90, 133
honour killings, 135
hood event (Çuval Olayı), 133, 147
human rights, 57, 86, 100–2, 164–70
Human Rights Association, 74, 109
Huntington, Samuel, 171
Hürriyet newspaper, 160
Hussein, Saddam, 79, 82, 94
hydro-electric plants, building of, 183

Ihsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin, 171
Ilıcak, Nazlı, 109
import substitution industrialization (ISI), 68
impunity, 9, 57, 61, 97, 101, 142, 148, 167, 184, 189
Inan, Afet, 31
Independent Association of Businessmen (MÜSİAD), 109
industrialization, 126, 181; in the 1930s, 69; in the 1960s, 10; import substitution, 68; Marshall plan, 42
inflation, 69, 71, 84, 112, 116, 118, 139
infrastructure, 43, 126, 172, 183; Ottoman, 16; Özal era, 71; of cities in the Southeast, 92; privatization of, 118
Inönü, Erdal, 85, 91
Inönü, Ismet, 27, 35, 38–9, 50
internally displaced people, 140; land and homes seized, 167
International Monetary Fund (IMF), austerity programme, 116, 117, 123
investment, foreign direct, 139, 155
Iran, 106; Islamic Revolution, 75; market for Turkey, 69; Turkey resists sanctions calls, 177; Turkey's relations with, 94, 127, 171, 175–9
Iraq, 79, 82, 94; relations with, 171; Turkish troops sent to, 81–2; US interventions in, 3; war against, 81, 119, 131 (Turkey votes against, 132)
Islam, 16, 28, 58, 118, 137; compatibility with democracy, 122; forced conversion to, xxii, 145; political, 13, 102, 108, 128, 134; relations with West, 12; state's relations with, 5, 6, 30, 77
Islamic Calvinism, 124, 126–40
Islamic dress codes, 66, 126
Islamic Green Belt, 61
Islamic law, 29
Islamic Opening, 103–4
Islamism, 52, 55, 59, 96–7, 98, 106, 153, 155, 161, 174; Kurdish, 188; mobilization of, 88; moderate, 119, 123, 127
Islamist National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*), 51
Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah*), 86, 87–8, 95, 97, 98
Islamization of society, 156
Islamophobia, 115, 119, 125, 136; globalization of, 122; in Europe, 180, 182, 188
Israel: attack on Gaza, 175–6; possible role in Öcalan capture, 110; response to Turkish earthquake, 114; Turkey's relations with, 81, 94, 104, 106, 110–11, 158, 175–9

(deterioration of, 177); Turkish trade with, 94
Istanbul, 10, 69, 70; as cultural capital, 11; as service sector centre, 126; bomb attacks in, 133; demonstrations in, 154; internationalization of, 18; urban development in, 42, 71, 183
Istanbul Ekspres newspaper, 45
Istanbul University, boycott at, 48
Italy, under Fascism, 33
Ittihad-ı anasır (Unity of elements), 22
Ittihatçılık (Unionism), 5

Jansen, Hermann, 32
Jews, xxiv, 20; emigration of, 55; in Ankara, 10, 32
Jordan, relations with, 171
journalists, court cases against, 182
judiciary, 164, 187; government use of, 156, 157, 184
Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP), xx, 4, 9, 10, 41, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51, 57, 58, 67, 77, 80, 84, 118, 119, 122–56, 158, 163, 164, 169, 170, 175, 179, 180, 181, 186, 187, 189; charged with anti-secularism, 159; increases share of vote, 154; public funding cut, 159

Kadıoğlu, Ayşe, 135, 155
KAOS GL group, 163
Karabagh, 178
Karabilgin, Ahmet, 96
Karakaşlı, Karin, 151
Kayseri, industrial development in, 130
Kazakhstan, 80
Kazan, Şevket, 97
Kemal, Mustafa, 5, 7, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 38, 44, 54, 64, 126; house of, attack on, 45; *Nutuk*, 33; personality cult of, 62, 154, 168
Kemalism, 5, 6, 12, 14, 24–39, 41, 144; Islamicization of, 61; loss of impact of, 186; obsolescence of, 187
Kerinçsiz, Kemal, 147, 148, 150, 160
Kılıçdaroğlu, Kemal, 185
killing rampages of ex-servicemen, 86
Kırkkilise (Thrace), renaming of, 32
Kırkyaşaryan, Manuel, 146
Kızıldere village, attack on, 50
Knaus, Gerald, 130
Koç family, 69
Kocadağ, Hüseyin, 102
Korkut, Hüseyin, 100, 102
Kosovo, 173, 174; Turkey's recognition of, 172
Kouchner, Bernard, 178
Kozakçıoğlu, Hayri, 99
Küçük, Veli, 160
Kürkçü, Ertuğrul, 50
Kurdish areas repopulated with Turks, 35
Kurdish businessmen, assassination of, 102
Kurdish culture: madrasas banned, 35; teaching centres closed, 28
Kurdish Human Rights Project, 93
Kurdish identity: normalization of, 170; visibility of, 169
Kurdish language: banning of, 35, 60, 63 (revoked, 74, 119); education in, 143, 168; in radio and TV broadcasts, 135, 136, 141; study of, 136
Kurdish opening (*Kürt açılımı*), 165–70
Kurdish provinces, 57, 77, 126, 132, 150, 154, 165; depopulation of, 91
Kurdish Red Crescent, 93
Kurdish rights, 164–70
'Kurdish spring', 141–4
Kurdish TRT 6 television channel *see* TRT 6
Kurdish war, 74–5, 77, 83, 84, 86–7, 95, 111, 115, 120, 140–4, 163; death toll in, 91; funding of, 116; in 1990s, 88–96; roots of, 64–6; urbanization of, 91–3
Kurdish–Armenian conflict, 20
Kurdistan, xxi–xxii, 35, 39, 54, 188; contested term, xxi; virtual, 93
Kurdistan Regional Government, 82, 133
Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* – PKK), xxi,

4–5, 66, 65, 71, 77, 84, 86–91, 93, 102, 109, 114, 141, 143, 164, 169, 189; amnesty for, 166; attack on Şırnak, 89; ceasefire, 185; faking of raids by, 167; guerrilla war, 5; killing of fighters of, 142; naming of, banned, 87; raids on military posts, 161; Syria's support for, 171; voluntary return of fighters, 167
Kurds, 15, 18, 20, 26, 27, 34, 37, 39, 67, 104, 111, 124, 161, 186, 188; as political refugees, 93; as workers in resorts, 70; assassination of intellectuals, 66; defined as 'Mountain Turks', 62; growing middle class, 12; in Iraq, refugees into Turkey, 82; inflated jail terms for, 73; migration of, to cities of Western Turkey, 71, 91, 92; pacification of, 38; pogroms against, 161, 169; provocation of hostility with, 162; suicides of, 162; treatment of, 3, 6, 10, 24, 98–9, 166 (in prisons, 65; racism against, 169); use of term, xxi
Kurmanch people, 35
Kyrgyzstan, 80

Labour Party (*Türkiye İşçı Partisi*), 47, 160
Labour Party of the People (*Halkın Emek Partisi* – HEP), 88
LAHASÜMÜT, use of term, 6
laiklik (laicism), 6, 30
Lambda Istanbul group, 163
Lavrov, Sergey, 178
Laz people, 26, 34
Lazistan, xxi
Le Pen, Jean Marie, 137
Lebanon, 19; Turkey's relations with, 171
legal reform, 27
Lewis, Geoffrey, 31–2
liberalization of economy, 68–71, 72, 84, 118
Libya: relations with, 171; visit by Erbakan, 103–4
lights switched off in protest, 105
lira: devaluation of, 116, 117; exchange rate of, 118; removal of zeros, 139

Macedonia, xx, 17, 80, 172, 173, 174; recognized by Turkey, 81
MacMillan, Margaret, 187
Madımak hotel, massacre of Alevis in, 163
mafia groups, 92, 102
Mahmud II, Sultan, 28
Malatya, killings of Christians in, 153
Mamak prison, 60
Manisa trial, 100–2
Maraş, attack on 'unbelievers' in, 52–3
Marcus, Aliza, 99
Mardin: massacre in, 166–7; university, Kurdish teaching in, 168
Mardin, Şerif, 21
Marshall Plan, 39, 42
martial law, 49, 50
Marxist Left, 52, 55, 66, 76, 91, 155
masculinities, study of, xxi
Mavi Marmara, Israeli attack on, 171, 176–7
Menderes, Adnan, 9, 39, 41, 42, 46, 58, 71
Menzir, Necdet, 99
Merkel, Angela, 180
Metris prison, 60
Midnight Express, 4
migration, 4; to cities, 42, 55, 71 (of Kurds to Western Turkish cities, 91, 92) *see also* emigration
militarism, challenging of, 183
military, 50, 57; key importance of, 27; modernization of, 19
military interventions, 44, 46, 50, 57, 85
military nation, 161
military service, compulsory, 161, 183
millet system, 22, 23
Milli Görüş see national view
modernization, 6, 11, 14, 20, 21, 24, 26, 33, 37, 54; authoritarian, 29; fourth wave of, 126
monopolies, state, abolition of, 118

mosques, building of, 62, 148, 173
Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* – ANAP), 41, 57, 67, 84, 86, 112, 115, 123, 128
motorways, 11; building of, 71
Muhammed Ali (Mehmet Ali Paşa), 18
multiparty politics, 14
Mumcu, Uğur, assassination of, 90
Müren, Zeki, 63, 73

Nakşibendi brotherhood, 68, 128
national anthem of Turkey, 65
National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, 112
National Organization for the Cypriot Struggle (EOKA-B), 52, 51
National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* – MSP), 51, 68, 131
National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), 46, 73
National Unity Committee (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*), 46
national view (*Milli Görüş*), 44, 123, 127, 31, 153
National Youth Foundation (*Milli Gençlik Vakfi*), 131
nationalism, 15, 16, 22–4
Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – MHP), 51, 52, 86, 120, 123, 125, 136, 155, 165, 168, 169, 184
Nationalist Democracy Party (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi* – MDP), 66
Nationalist Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe*), 52
Ne mutlu Türküm Diyene ('Happy is he who calls himself a Turk'), 33, 166, 186
neoliberalism, 12
Nesin, Aziz, 96–7
Netanyahu, Binyamin, 176
Netherlands, 129
Neve Shalom synagogue, bombing of, 133
Niemöller, Martin, 162–3
nightclubs, raids on, 63
Noble Edict of Gülhane, 20
Nokta weekly, 152
non-Muslims, xxiv, 15, 20, 22, 26, 32, 34–5, 39, 54, 124; attacks on, 44, 45; marginalization of, 38; pogroms against, 40; suspicions towards, 16; treatment of, 6
normalization, 120, 144, 182
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 39, 40, 45, 60, 75, 77, 79; Turkey's relations with, 181
Nour TV series, 174
Nurcu religious group, 80

Öcalan, Abdullah (Apo), 5, 66, 140; capture of, 95, 110–12, 115; death sentence on, 112; statements of, 111; talks with, 169, 185
oil, Turkish-Iraqi pipeline, 82
oil wells, disposal of bodies in, 160
Öktem, Tezer, 107–8
Önder, Sırrı Sürreya, *Beynelmilel*, 63
'One minute of darkness for enduring light' campaign, 131
one-party state, 7, 14, 24–39
Operation Desert Storm, 94
Opponents of War organization (*Savaş Karşıtları Derneği*), 162
Oran, Baskın, 6, 26; *Deportation Memories of a Child Named MK*, 146
Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), 76, 171
Örnek, Özden, 152
'Ottoman Armenians in the late empire' conference 148–9
Ottoman Liberal Party, 23
Ottoman state, 8, 11, 14–55; administrative reform, 14, 16, 19–21
Ottoman-Arabic script, banning of, 28
Özakman, Turgut, *These Mad Turks*, 147
Özal, Semra, 87
Özal, Turgut, 2–32, 41, 56–83, 89, 120, 155, 170; death of, 81, 83, 87; elected president, 87; elected prime minister, 9; export strategy

of, 70; foreign policy of, 77; liberal views of, 74; 'new man' project, 72
Özbilgin, Mustafa Yücel, 150
Özkök, Hilmi, 124

Palestinian training camps, 49
Pamuk, Orhan, 147; *Istanbul: memories of a city*, 10; *Snow*, 158
Papadopoulos, Tassos, 137, 138
Papandreou, Giorgios, 114
Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi* – BDP), 169, 184
penal code: adopted from Italy, 29; Article 301, 146, 147; reform of, 135 (revocations of, 143)
People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), 30
People's Labour Party (*Halkın Emek Partisi* – HEP), 93
People's Liberation Army of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*), 48, 50, 53
People's Liberation Front, 49, 50
Peres, Shimon: Erdoğan's attack on, 176; invited to Turkey, 175
Perinçek, Doğu, 149
Perle, Richard, 59
Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, 89–90
Pittard, Eugene, 31
pogroms: against Greeks and non-Muslims in Istanbul (1955), 44–5, 145, 148; against Kurds, 161, 169 *see also* Kurds
police custody, deaths in, 182
Police Law (2007), 182
polygamy, 29
Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti*), 66
poverty: of Kurds, 93; urban, 70
Presidency of Religious Affairs, 30
prisons, 58–60
privatization, 116–17, 118
protectionism, 69

Qaeda, al-, 134
Qur'an, Turkish translation of, 30

radicalization of political groups, 8, 47; of Islamist groups, 131; of Kurdish nationalists, 65; of rightwing groups, 48
Radikal newspaper, 149
railways, building of, 17
rape, 36
referendum (1982), 61
religion, 33–5
Republican Peasants and Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* – CKMP), 47
Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* – RPP), 7, 9, 27, 29, 30, 38, 40, 41, 46, 47, 51, 85, 117, 120, 123, 153, 154, 155, 158, 164, 165, 168, 184, 185, 187
Revolution of 1908, 22
Revolutionary Culture Hearths of the East (*Doğu Devrimci Kültür Ocakları*), 47
Revolutionary Path (*Devrimci Yol*), 53
Revolutionary Workers' Unions (*Devrimci İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu*), 48
Rıza, Sey, 186
roads, building of, 17, 43
Roma associations, 183
Romania, 17
Russia, 19, 25, 70, 81, 94; trading relations with, 173

Sabahaddin, Prince, 22
Sabancı family, 69
Sağlar, Fikri, 96
Şahin, Leyla, headscarf case, 136
Said Piran, Sheikh, 35
Said-i-Nursi, Bediüzzaman, 128
Sakık, Şemdin, 109
Samast, Ogün, 150, 151
Santoro, Andrea, killing of, 150, 151
Sarıkaya, Ferhat, 142; dismissal of, 184
Sarkozy, Nicolas, 180; EU intervention of, 140, 179
'Say No to Racism and Nationalism' campaign (DurDe), 132, 151
Saylan, Türkan, 163
Sayman, Fatma, 51
Schabowski, Günther, 56
schools: Gülen schools, 80; military

schools, 19; religious preacher schools, 62, 106, 131 (curtailment of, 28, 38, 107)
secularism, 26, 28, 30, 38, 136, 152, 153, 184; among Kurds, 188; imposed in universities, 107–8 *see also* anti-secularism
secularization, 11, 13, 29, 30
Selek, Pınar, xxi
Selim III, Sultan, 16, 19
Şemdinli affair, 141–2
Semiha Hanım, 23–4
September coup *see* coups, 1980
September Pogroms (*Septemvriana*) (1955) *see* pogroms
Serbia, 17, 172
Serter, Nur, 107
Settlement Law (1934), 35
Sezer, Ahmet Necdet, 151, 154; dispute with Ecevit, 116–17
Shafak, Elif, 147; *Bastard of Istanbul*, 146; *Flea Palace*, 146
Sheykh-ul Islam, abolition of post of, 30
Shia Islam, 34
shopping malls, 11, 72
Short, Robert, killing of, 133
Sincan, tanks in, 106
Sincar, Mehmet, assassination of, 90
Sırnak, PKK attack on, 89
Sıvas, massacre in, 96–8
Smyrna, 18; Greek occupation of, 25–6
Social Democrat Party (*Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi* – SODEP), 91
Social Democrat Popular Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti* – SHP), 85, 87
Socialist Ideas Club (*Sosyalist Fikir Kulübü*), 47
soft power, 171–5
Sönmez, Fikri, 53
sovereignty, loss of, 16–19
Spain, 189
Special Action Branch (*Özel Harekat Dairesi*), 91, 162
Special Organization of CUP (*Teşkilat-ı mahsusa*), 8, 146
Special Team (*Özel Tim*), 66
Special War Office (*Özel Harp Dairesi*), 8, 15, 23, 45, 46, 47, 86, 159
Srebrenica, massacre at, 172
Star TV station, 72–3
state: definition of, 67; fetishization of, 54, 73
State of Emergency Regional Governorate (*Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliği*), 74, 140
State Security Courts, discontinuation of, 135
State Water Works Agency, 183
stay-behind armies, 60
Strategic Depth doctrine, 170–5
Straw, Jack, 139
strikes, 51
students, xxiii, 49, 105, 114, 149; in public schools, 62; Kurdish, 168; left-wing, 10, 15; Marxist, 48, 49; politicization of, 47; veiled, 7, 107
Sufi brotherhoods, closure of, 28
suicides of military recruits, 162
Sulaymaniah, US military attacks mission in, 133
sultan, role as caliph, 22
Sultanbeyli (Istanbul), Islamist mobilization in, 88
Sun-Language theory, 31
Sunalp, Turgut, 67, 155
Sunni Muslims, xxiv, 6, 24, 27, 30, 34, 54, 98
Susurluk incident, 85, 102–4
Syria, 19, 79, 110, 114; Turkey's relations with, 94, 171
Syriac Orthodox Church, 34

Talat, Mehmet, 23
Taliban, 61
Tanzimat (Reorganization), 20
Taraf newspaper, 109, 161
Tarlabaşı Boulevard, Istanbul, 71
television: Turkish series, popularity of, 173–4; US series, 73
Temelkuran, Ece, 72
Temo, Selim, 168
territorial integrity of Turkey, 16, 86, 144

terrorism, campaign against, 84, 86, 92, 96–105, 143
Thrace, 78–9
time, Turkish, 28
titles, abolition of, 30
torture, 5, 8, 9, 59, 64, 65–6, 74, 84, 86, 96, 100–2, 120, 184; of Kurds, 89–90
Torumtay, Necip, 82
tourism in Turkey, 70, 174
trade deficit, 70
trade unions, banning of, 2, 68
transparency, suspension of, 190
transsexuals: killing of, 5; organizations of, 163, 183; persecution of, 63–4, 72
Treaty of Lausanne (1923), 18
Treaty of London (1913), 17
Treaty of Sèvres (1920), 18, 25
TRT television channel, 87
TRT 6 television channel, 165
TRT Eurasia television channel, 79
True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* – DYP), 41, 85, 91, 95, 102–3, 123
Truman, Harry, 39
Truman Doctrine, 39
Tuncel, Erhan, 151
Tunceli Law (1935), 36
Tunis, 18
Türkeş, Alparslan, 45, 47, 51, 53, 86, 112
Turkey: as 'sick man of Europe', 14; metaphor of East-West bridge, 1; shift of axis to East, 4; US aid for, 39; use of name, xxi
'Turkey My Paradise', 64
Turkification, 30, 34
Turkish Airlines, 80; rise of, 181
Turkish Businessmen Association (TÜSİAD), 109, 129
Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), 109, 129
Turkish Cypriots, demonstration of, 137
Turkish Development Cooperation Agency (TIKA), 173–4
Turkish Grand National Assembly, 25
Turkish History Society, 30
Turkish History Thesis, 31
Turkish language: reform of, 31–2; forced speaking of, 65
Turkish Language Society, 31
Turkish Republic, 14–55; contradictions of, 37–9; discourse of, 27; emergence of, 24
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), 76
Turkish Revenge Troops (*Türk İntikam Tugayları*), 152
Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, 62, 71, 128–9
Turkishness, 6; definition of, 3, 15, 24, 26, 27, 34; forced imposition of, 33
Turkmenistan, 80
Turquie Kemaliste, *La*, 32

Üçok, Bahriye, assassination of, 87
Ulagay, Osman, 68
ulema, 28
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), 43, 55, 57, 61; collapse of, 2, 78, 83; foreign policy of, 38–9
United Kingdom (UK), 129; support for Turkey's EU membership, 180
United Nations (UN), 38
UN Security Council, Turkey's seat on, 171, 177
United States of America (USA), 15, 38–9, 40; aid from, 42; anti-Americanism in Turkey, 119; foreign policy, covert operations of, 190; involvement in 1980 coup, 59; kidnapping of US soldiers, 49; leaks from Ankara embassy, 131; Middle East policy of, 188; possible role in Öcalan capture, 110; Turkey's relations with, 75–83, 117, 118–19, 132, 133, 147, 173 (opening of airspace to US fighters, 133)
universities, 12; establishment of, 42; secularist programmes in, 107–8
urbanization, 4
Us, Gonca, 102
Uyar, Tanay Sıtkı, 113

Uzan, Cem, 72
Uzbekistan, 80

Vahdettin, Sultan, 25
Valley of the Wolves, 147, 174, 176
Van, 179
Village Guards (*Köy Koruculari*), 8, 74, 89, 92, 102; as crime machine, 167
village institutes, 30
violence, xxiii, 53, 59, 86–7; against women, 135; mass, fabricated, 40; political, 59; symbolic and systemic, 5
Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*), 123; banned, 127, 128
visas, scrapping of requirements for, 173, 182
Vlahos, Sotiris, 137–8

War of Independence, 147
war on terror, 3, 119, 130–4
wealth tax, 34, 145
Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*), 102–3, 105, 106, 107, 123, 126, 131, 164; banned, 108, 128
Western Working Group (*Batı Çalışma Grubu*), 106–7; surveillance system of, 108–10
WikiLeaks affair, 190
Wilders, Geert, 180
women: legal situation of, 29; 'modern Turkish', 37; right to vote, 29; suicide of, 36; violence against, 135 (beating of wives, 73)
women's movement, 163; Ottoman, 29
World Bank, 67
World War I, 18, 23, 26
World War II, 27, 34, 37, 39, 42, 55

Yıldıran, Esat Oktay, 64–5
Yılmaz, Cem, 64
Yılmaz, Mesut, 74, 86, 103, 110
Yirmibeşoğlu, Sabri, 45
Young Civilians movement (*Genç Siviller*), 151, 162–4
Young Ottomans, 19, 20–1, 27
Young Turks, 19, 21, 23, 24, 53

Zana, Leyla, 93
Zarqawi, Abu Musab al-, 134
Zaza people, 35
'zero conflict with all neighbours' doctrine, 170, 177
Zhivkov, Todor, 78
Žižek, Slavoj, 5

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