

Activities - The Making of Modern Turkey Seminars 2005-2006

Third Saturday of each month 2:30-5:00 p.m.

Presented in association with Bogazici University

Republican Turkey and the various "isms"

● **October 15, 2005** - Prof. Zafer Toprak

Republican Turkey and "Populism"

Populism is one of the vaguest concepts in the current literature of the social sciences. It first emerged in Russia as an ideology then acquired political identity as a category in political science and finally, economic, cultural and even artistic populism became a topic of debate. In early Republican Turkey, populism entered the literature as a 'people's' movement, took on a different form during the multiparty period, and in the 1970s, was considered an application of the 'import substitution' economic model."

● **November 19, 2005** - Prof. Ayhan Aktar

Republican Turkey and "Racism-Turanism"

There are several things to be said about the "Racist-Turanist" movement that developed in Turkish politics during the Republican period. In the first place the movement contributed to establishing the scenario for the defensive dimension of the Kemalist Turkish nationalist discourse. This role weakened when World War II was won by the "Democratic Front" and ended in 1944 when the National Leader regime put on trial the leading figures of the "Racist-Turanist" movement. Secondly, with the beginning of the Cold War, a new movement emerged organized around the themes "Struggle against Communism," "Soviet Threat," and "National Unity and Cooperation." The new "Flag and Prayer" (*Bayrak ve Ezan*) movement gained strength from urbanization, social change and the development of the Turkish right-wing populist faction. While essentially secular in the single-party period, the second wave "Racist-Turanist" movement increasingly resorted to religious themes and with the 1980 military coup, entered a process of transformation.

● **December 17, 2005** - Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Demirel

Republican Turkey and "Conservatism"

The conservatist attitude, which fears change and finds reassurance in established values, essentially developed in Turkey as a by-product of the transition from Empire to Republic. In the early years of the Republic, Turkish conservatism withdrew from the political arena and appeared more in the form of cultural conservatism. After adopting a timid political role during the single-party period, Turkish conservatism began to expand and play a part in politics, from the beginning of the multi-party era to our day

● **January 21, 2006** - Prof. Gunay Goksu-Ozdogan

Republican Turkey and Nationalism

Turkish nationalism emerged as one of the influential ideologies in Turkish politics after the foundation of the Republic. Yet, contrary to what ideologists have claimed, it was not an innovative ideology and should be considered in relation to other nationalist ideologies. In addition, instead of referring to a single Turkish nationalism it would be more accurate to speak of various Turkish nationalisms. The concept of "Turkish identity" redefined within the framework of republican principles in a liberated political setting was obviously quite different from the trend of Turkism preceding it in the last days of the Ottoman Empire. The elements forming a Turkish national identity, and its historical basis and boundaries are still a topic of debate today, attesting to the difficulties Turkish nationalism faces in the process of nation-state building. As egalitarian policies were left behind, the contradiction in attempting to unite as citizens of one land different ethnic and religious groups, while simultaneously stressing a historical-cultural Turkish ethnic identity, has also increased. Instead of strengthening civic patriotic ties, the emphasis has been on the security of the "state" and as a result the efforts at national unity have failed. Theorizing and political discussion on a global scale now challenge the classical nation-state model and make it necessary to approach Turkish nationalism from a new perspective.

● **February 18, 2006** - Assoc. Prof. Fuat Keyman

Republican Turkey and Liberalism

Modern Turkish history contains a major political dichotomy. On the one hand it tells the success story of modernization and the passage to democracy, on the other, it relates the still ongoing failure in achieving durable modernization and democratization both in the relations between the state and the individual or society and in the relations among different social groups. Although liberalism is a key concept to understanding and solving this dichotomy, in Turkey it remains a seldom discussed political theory and a form of social administration. Focusing on the latest debates on contemporary liberalism the lecture will discuss the ways in which liberalism can promote a lasting modernization and democratization process in Turkey.

● **March 18, 2006** - Prof. Fatmagül Berktaş

Republican Turkey and Feminism

The evolution of feminism in the west was replicated (naturally, with a time lag) in Ottoman society. At its core lay the efforts to enlarge the sphere of civil rights through the struggle to establish women as human beings deserving equal "human and citizen" rights. One important characteristic of Ottoman feminism was its connection to nationalism. When Ottoman women followed in the footsteps of their western counterparts to demand more rights and in particular the right to education and the political privileges that went with it, their argument was that they were due these rights as "mothers of the nation." Although this powerful link to nationalism, the founding ideology of the Republic, may have, at times, opened the way for feminism, it also prevented the movement from developing an independent consciousness and method and constituted a mental obstacle to its claims for liberation. Consequently, in addition to the baggage of unresolved tensions between westernization, nationalism and Islam, handed down to the Republic by the Ottoman Empire, Turkey today also has to deal with the pressures generated by the demands of identity politics, for the recognition of "otherness."

● **April 15, 2006** - Prof. Mete Tunçay

Republican Turkey and "Marxism"

The form of Marxism best known in Turkey is Marxism-Leninism and anti-imperialism. During the National Struggle, there was an attempt to reconcile this ideology with Islam but with the secularist policies of subsequent years, this effort was abandoned. Marxism agrees with most of the revolutionary Kemalist reforms undertaken to modernize the country. Although cordial relations with the USSR until WW II limited the Marxist opposition movement, it remained subversively positioned within the socio-political sphere. It was only after 1960 that Turkey actually encountered Marxist socialism.

● **May 27, 2006** - Prof. Zafer Toprak

Republican Turkey and "Fascism"

According to well-known French historian Pierre Milza, during the single-party era, Turkey had a semi-dictatorial regime, which in some aspects evoked fascism. He suggests that the authoritarian stance of the Republican People's Party and the ideological foundation of the Kemalist "Six Arrows" reform program, are somewhat reminiscent of the program that Mussolini adopted. However, he also maintains that the differences between the two regimes outweigh any similarities. Since it had the support of broader social layers than Mussolini's regime, the enlightened despotism [*despotisme eclaire*] of the early Republican period in Turkey felt no need for the paramilitary organizations used by fascism to impose discipline among the masses. In addition, the "peace at home and peace abroad" guideline, which constituted the cornerstone of Turkey's foreign policy during the single-party era, was in sharp contrast with expansionary fascist policies. Pierre Milza also draws attention to the resemblances between the Kemalist regime and some of the "benevolent" dictatorships established to counteract colonialism in Latin America. Kemalism, which Milza refers to as "developing nation Bonapartism" or "leftist fascism" [*l'fascisme de gauche*], thus deviates from actual fascist ideology by its rationale, social content and modernizing aspects.