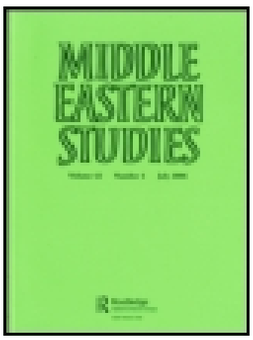

Middle Eastern Studies

ISSN: 0026-3206 (Print) 1743-7881 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fmes20

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To cite this article: Ramazan Aras (2019): Veiled memories: an ethnography of the single-party regime in Turkey, Middle Eastern Studies, DOI: 10.1080/00263206.2019.1680544

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2019.1680544

Published online: 05 Nov 2019.

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2019.1680544

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Veiled memories: an ethnography of the single-party regime in Turkey

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When state authorities rule through top-down policies and regulations in order to achieve and retain their monolithic and elite-driven social-engineering projects, the discontent of ethnic, political, ideological and religious groups surges up through political and public mediums. The modern nation-state's maneuvers around the controlling of life and death along with its instrumentalization of miscellaneous forms of violence, terror, and fear have appeared as novel control mechanisms which constantly shape subjective and collective lives and memories.[1] Therefore, studying the state requires comprehensive, broad and deep research to understand it as a political entity armored with a 'state of exception'.[2] It also necessitates an analysis of the effects and the encroaching of the state on the everyday lives of ordinary people who are anticipated to be obedient citizens. When speaking on the difficulties of studying the state, Philip Abrams defined the state as 'not the reality that stands behind the mask of political practice' but 'itself as the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is'.[3] The intricate question of what the state is, along with 'the Foucault effect'[4] in the social sciences and humanities in the 1990s, has resulted in the growth of ethnographic and theoretical studies addressing diverse forms and practices of the state.[5] The literature on state formation, power and its diverse ideological, physical and psychological apparatuses along with novel ruling mechanisms have burgeoned in spite of 'practical and conceptual difficulties'.[6] Therefore, going beyond the ambiguity and elusiveness of the subject matter, this article emphasizes the difficulties of studying diverse mechanisms of the modern authoritarian secular state as a political body and as an ethnographic site.

The ultimate task of this work is to document difficulties of investigating the effects of the authoritarian secular Turkish nation-state and its apparatuses on social fabric and memory. As an anthropological and oral history study of everyday practices of authoritarian and 'assertive'[7] secularism during the single-party regime era in Turkey (1923–1950), this paper emphasizes the importance of the life stories and personal testimonies of ordinary citizens who witnessed this era.[8] Firstly, it should be noted at the beginning that an analytical study of relations between the state and society with a particular focus on precarious times, breaking points, times of turmoil (coups d'état) and internal political clashes in the history of the country has been a puzzling, fearsome and intimidating task for social scientists with a critical perspective. Secondly, the 'statist' formation of social sciences and academic institutions in Turkey has also prevented critical and independent approaches that attempted to go beyond ideological boundaries dictated by Kemalist ideology. Researchers who questioned the official historiography and the statist ideologies struggled within the mainstream Kemalist and Turkish nationalist body of the academy in Turkey and have been cast out in one way or another for a significant period of time. Consequently, it can be argued that one of the reasons behind the late arrival of critical ethnographic studies in academia regarding the formation of the Turkish state, with a particular focus

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on the era of the single-party regime, was the statist and Kemalist formation of social sciences in the country. For instance, in the case of the late emergence of socio-cultural anthropological studies in Turkey, Tayfun Atay has argued that anthropological research conducted in the 1920s held a particular focus on physical anthropology, and was ignored in the 1940s because of the political interests of the Kemalist state.[9] Similarly, in this context it has been argued that 'anthropology played a crucial role in the ideological formation of the Republic' during its early decades.[10]

Despite these challenges, critical and independent studies of oral history and social memory began to emerge in the 1990s at some private and a very few state universities and institutions under the guidance of particular institutions[11] and scholars.[12] Despite limited sources and a lack of institutional development, oral history studies grew at the beginning of the 2000s. The expansion of literature and rising awareness of the oral histories of various ethnic and religious communities, ideological/political groups and movements either complemented or encountered official histories and narratives; these could be related to Turkey's move and will towards a more democratic state in those years. In the developing literature of oral history and memory studies in Turkey of the same period, researchers focused largely on certain aspects of non-Turkish ethnic societies (Kurdish, Greek, Armenian, Assyrian, Laz, and Circassian), non-Muslim communities (Christian, Jewish, Yezidi), non-Sunni (Alevi) subjects and communities, the events during and after the First World War, the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925, the Dersim massacre of 1937–1938, the histories and memories of the coups d'état of 1960, 1971 and 1980, and both the Armenian and Kurdish Questions in contemporary Turkey.[13]

While describing the fundamental and traumatic events of the modern history of Turkey in the context of the development of oral history and memory studies in Turkey, the crucial question of 'how do we remember?' is highlighted by Leyla Neyzi.[14] However, the answers to this question and to the question of 'What do we remember?' for the majority of the Muslim population disclose some crucial but neglected aspects of the history of the secular Republic. The question of what we know about the oral histories and memories of ordinary citizens who survived atrocities of the single-party regime and the 'work of postmemory'[15] in the following generations still remains to be answered properly. What were the survival tactics of these subjects under enduring, decades-long effects of sweeping and enforced secularization/westernization rules and principles in the official and the public realm? Here, I argue that the rule of the single-party regime that deeply influenced the larger Muslim public has not been treated, addressed and documented accurately or sufficiently in the existing literature. It seems the suffering of the mainstream Muslim population has been trivialized. There has been a resounding silence during which painful memories of that era have been veiled and very partially revealed for various political reasons. It appears that historians of modern Turkey, oral historians and other researchers have been complicit in ignoring histories and memories of Muslim subjects of that era and thus generating a crucial gap in the history of modern Turkey. Therefore, doing an ethnography of the Kemalist single-party regime not only requires a critical reading of the statist narratives but also identifying comprehensive methodological strategies to overcome longstanding measures hindering access to both veiled personal memories and relevant data in the official archives.

During the work of carrying out an ethnography of the single-party regime and its assertive secular politics, the first challenging issue facing ethnographer and his/her interlocutors was fear of the state because they were concerned about security as widely seen in conflict and post-conflict research settings. It is argued here that people's conception of the state as a hegemonic and violent entity resulted in anxiety in the interviews during the fieldwork. The second issue was the politics of remembering and forgetting among people who have to confront diverse reasons, motives and issues alongside ageing. Third, state-legislated protective laws as in the case of the law of lèse-majesté for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) have fabricated a perception of him as an infallible, glorious and sacred figure. This Kemalist narrative of the status of Mustafa Kemal has been largely equated with a sense of belonging and loyalty to the homeland,

the state. Lastly, the state policies of censorship and non-accessibility of certain archival records relating to the single-party regime era need to be highlighted as methodological difficulties confronting anyone who wants to study the state. In oral history studies, it is generally articulated that the subject matter consists of unwritten histories and memories have consciously or unconsciously been ignored by hegemonic discourses and historiographies. Therefore, this article is not only about those neglected histories and memories or 'missing archives'[16] in the mainstream historiography but also the failure of researchers working on the history of modern Turkey and oral historians themselves.

The secular state and its Muslim subjects

Following the declaration of the foundation of the new state in 1923, the Kemalist modernization/westernization project that transformed the state rationale and apparatus launched a rigid secularization process to uproot diverse traditional and Islamic institutions, norms, codes and patterns of life. The unfolding policies of authoritarian secularization reflected a deep sense of anti-religiosity (anti-Islam) in favor of modernity/westernization along with Turkish nationalism which was equated with the idea of the supremacy of Turkishness. Based on a new paradigm, secularism was coupled with evolutionism/positivism, and Turkish nationalism which became the master signifiers and discourses of the Turkish territorial state. The move towards construction of an 'imagined community/nation' necessitated fundamental changes in essential 'cultural conceptions'.[17] The Kemalist ideology which was defined by Taha Parla and Andrew Davison as a 'nationalist, laicist and solidarist corporatism'[18] was based on 'the conviction that the Kemalist elite were distinct from the Anatolian masses in terms of rational intelligence and adaptability, and were therefore responsible for leading Anatolian townsmen and peasants out of darkness into the light'.[19]

Hence Islamic institutions and cultural forms were replaced with new modern institutions, narratives of a western, evolutionary and secular narrative genres, symbols and codes that were imbued with quasi-sacred qualities. In this context, the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 was the starting point for a wider political, religious and cultural rupture. The declaration of the closure of Islamic schools (479 madrasas) in 1924,[20] was followed by the hat (*şapka*) law to impose western secular dress codes, prohibition of the burqa (in Turkish *çarşaf*) and fez (Ottoman *tarboosh*), and the closure of religious (Sufi) orders and lodges in 1925. The elimination of the Arabic alphabet and introduction of the Latin alphabet in 1928 was a sign of starting a new era. The abolition of Islamic sharia law in 1934 was followed by other new rules and regulations related to law, education, religion and other social and political institutions. In other words, the authoritarian secular regime's radical regulations that aimed to control social, cultural and religious patterns of life were expanded to acceptance of European civil, commercial and penal codes, Turkification (conversion from Arabic to Turkish) of the call to prayer (*ezan*)[21] and sermons (Friday prayer, *hutbe*), and prohibition of the teaching and learning of the Quran and Arabic.[22]

These forcefully imposed secular rules and regulations resulted in destructive and traumatic effects on the social body in spite of mass discontent among the population. For instance, the declaration of *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* Law (Unity of Education) on 3 March 1924 resulted in the prohibition of the Arabic alphabet, used for centuries, and with being replaced by the Latin alphabet under 1353 numbered law on 1 November 1928. On this date, state authorities began a highly pervasive control of public and private spaces by employing the police and the army. Around four year later, on 4 January 1932, the state declared a new law in article 526 of the Turkish Penalty Law, stating that 'those who teach and educate using the Arabic alphabet in public and private places (homes included) will be subject to incarceration for at least three months or made to pay a fee ranging from 10 to 200 Turkish Liras'.[23] Furthermore, 'the hat

law' that was passed by the Turkish parliament on 25 November 1925 prohibited men from wearing other turbans and promoted the wearing of western hats by all male citizens across the country.[24]

With the legislation of the *Takrir-i Sükun* Law (the Law for the Maintenance of Order), one independence tribunal was established in Ankara (Ankara Istiklal Mahkemesi) and the Eastern Independence Tribunal (*Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi*) was established on 5 April 1925. The one founded in the Diyarbakır started work just after the Sheikh Said rebellion in order to eliminate Kurdish oppositional voices. However, interestingly, these tribunals acted in a mobile capacity, moving to many other cities from 1925 to 1927 to eliminate any oppositional figures and movements who opposed the secular regulations and were not willing to obey the new laws.[25] In this process of suffocating the voices of mass populations, Eric J. Zürcher claims that 'the Independence Tribunals played their part in suppressing this resistance. Under the Law on the Maintenance of Order nearly 7500 people were arrested and 660 were executed'.[26] Both statist and counter-statist written sources on the history of the Atatürk era document varying numbers of charged and executed Muslim subjects who opposed the authoritarian secular practices. It is not easy to get a totally accurate number of executions and diverse charges. For instance, Ergün Aybars documents that from just 1 December 1925 to 23 February 1926, 3500 people were dragged into the courts, 1368 of whom were not found guilty, 678 were punished and 156 of these were executed.[27] The map below indicates not only the major cities where these independence tribunals were operating but also other cities where a 'mobile' independence tribunal carried out hundreds of executions, incarcerations and other forms of punishment against ordinary Muslim citizens who opposed the hat law and other authoritarian Kemalist secular principles (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Some of the major cities where Independence Tribunals operated from 1925 to 1927. The list of the cities was mainly derived from the work of Kemalist historian Ergün Aybars on the Independence Tribunals.[76] (Map: Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin: https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/turkey_admin_2006.jpg).

The map above illustrates how the Independence tribunals worked systematically as fearsome machines and how they disseminated a fear of terror and death in many cities. The authoritarian secular regime aimed to achieve a submissive citizenry all around the country by creating a climate of fear of the state within the national boundaries. For instance, 47 people were executed in Diyarbakır including Sheik Said in 1925,[28] and 10 people were executed in Elazığ in 1926.[29] As stated earlier, the executions were carried out in many cities where thousands of Muslim subjects were reacting against the state-sponsored authoritarian secular regulations. In Rize, 143 people were dragged into the independence tribunal in 1925 for opposing the hat law. The court made its decision on 14 December when eight people were sentenced to capital punishment, 14 were given 15 years in prison, 22 people were given 10 years, and 19 of them were given 5 years. Eighty were not found guilty.[30] In another case, on 21 December 1925, 45 people were arrested in Maraş because of their opposition to the hat law and were sent to Ankara to be tried at the Ankara Independence Tribunal. The decision was made on 18 January 1926 and seven of these people were sentenced to capital punishment. The others were sentenced in various ways including imprisonment.[31] Another source documents that thirty Muslims in the city of Erzurum, including one woman, were executed by independence tribunals.[32] It is not possible to document hundreds of other court cases in various cities and counties where thousands of people were executed, incarcerated or given other forms of punishments here because of the space constraints of this article. In short, for the Kemalist totalitarian secular state authorities, 'backward' opponent Muslims (*gericiler, yobazlar*) were a threat to the sovereignty of the newly founded state and therefore had to be eliminated by any means necessary. In this context, it can be argued that the independence tribunals achieved their ultimate goal and suffocated the voices of discontented citizens. That is why statist and Kemalist historians and researchers such as Ergün Aybars consider the destructive operations of independence tribunals, which continued for two years, to be an essential step and as a crucial period that facilitated the foundation of the Turkish Revolution (*Türk Devrimi*).[33] Mustafa Kemal's successor İsmet İnönü (1884–1973) who later named himself National Chief (*Milli Şef*) and the greatest guardian of Kemalist ideals, was a very strong supporter of Kemalist principles and exerted huge efforts in disseminating and maintaining Kemalist ideology around the country until the Republican People's Party (RPP) lost power in the 1950 elections.[34]

In his work on the single-party regime in Turkey, Gavin Brockett contends that 'histories of the Turkish Revolution must be treated with considerable circumspection not simply because their sources are explicitly biased in Kemalist interpretation of political developments, but also because the same sources present an extremely distorted impression of popular Turkish experience'.[35] In this context, oral history methodology helps us to uncover untold stories and testimonies and how Kemalist principles and re-coding policies were domesticated into the social and cultural fabrics of Muslim society by force and diverse forms of state-sponsored violence. As one of the historians working on early Republican history, Hale Yılmaz claims to document 'how ordinary people experience the process of Kemalist reforms and how they receive and react to the state-initiated changes'[36] in the introduction of her work. By using both archival and oral sources, she aims 'to shift the emphasis away from the state and leaders to the society in order to understand the people's own experiences of the process of nationalist reforms'.[37] However, Yılmaz fails to reveal a clear and complete picture of the feelings, reactions and resistance of ordinary people who disapproved of the Kemalist top-down secular principles and new rules. Yılmaz's narrative is primarily based on the Turkish-populated parts of the country and does not provide any data from Kurdish inhabited parts of the country and how ordinary Kurds perceived and reacted to the Kemalist reforms. While barely addressing the perceptions and reactions of larger Muslim populations and generally avoiding burning questions, she prefers to highlight the experiences of local state governors, local representatives, teachers, soldiers and marginal pragmatic bureaucrats and businessmen from different parts of the country. Like many other researchers working on this era, Yılmaz also reproduces the Kemalist and statist discourses and does not allow us to see a more comprehensive picture of the era despite her ability and access to the archival and oral data on that period.

Rather than focusing on the 'weapons of the weak'[38] and voices of marginalized mass populations in the country, Yılmaz mostly documents the experiences of Kemalist elites, pragmatist reformists, opportunist figures and those public figures and officials who were forced to follow rules in different institutions and settlements around the country. In fact, any critical research based on the oral accounts and personal testimonies of ordinary people that survived the single party regime along with state archives and other written sources can provide us with a better understanding of this critical historical period that shadowed and shaped the modern history of Turkey.

During the work of going beyond the statist historiography and recording counter-narratives, the task of collecting life stories and personal memories holds its own methodological complexities during which a researcher or ethnographer must sometimes go beyond the voice. In this context, material and cultural artifacts, names of people and settlements and the human bodies can be analyzed as texts in order to glean some signs of the events of a particular past. While writing on the effects of the alphabet 'revolution' in 1928, Irvin Cemil Schick documents how Ottoman calligraphers (*hat ustası*) were outlawed by the new law and how they struggled to find a means to survive in the following years that ended in their disappearance and the near perishing of their craft. Through his analysis of their life stories and memories, he talks about how their physical bodies carry the memories of that art, bodily memory; both their bodies and art have become 'loci of memories'. By recalling Pierre Nora's eminent work and his notion of *homme-mémoire*,[39] Schick describes the last generation of these calligraphers as 'memory men'[40] and indicated how memories are forced to become invisible or move to suppressed spaces when encountering threat and terror.

Schick then describes the last generation of calligraphers who struggled to maintain memories of this art in the Latinized Republican era as 'book people',[41] echoing the book protectors in the science-fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.[42] Interestingly, the acts of memorizing books as a tactic of protection and survival can be similarly seen during the single-party regime era. As we learn from the oral accounts, after the ban, studying and memorizing the Quran secretly intensified, particularly in the forest villages of the Eastern Black Sea region. The same tactic was mostly secretly practiced by pious Muslims in the following decades. This has played a great role in the survival and empowerment of that Islamic tradition. Totalitarianism as a new rule of the Turkish state gained large ground not only in state institutions but also in the public space and in the domain of everyday life during that era. The book burnings in Bradbury's haunting novel as a science-fiction scenario in the early 1950s was an actual experience at different times throughout the world, but also in Turkey during the 1930s. As we learn from oral accounts, Arabic books including chapters (*nushas*) of Qurans were systematically forbidden, collected and burned in almost every city after the ban on the Arabic alphabet in 1928.

The climate of fear and precarity

In their pioneering work on the state, James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta use the concepts of 'verticality' and 'encompassment' (vertical encompassment) in order to explain pervasive, central, top down, manipulative and surrounding authorities of the state.[43] During the formation of such authoritarian regimes, the emotions of fear, death and security have always been used by state actors as very effective instruments of disciplining and control of the masses. In a similar vein, our recently conducted oral history project documented how the emotions of fear, death and suffering were dominant in everyday life and how they were attached to the state, the single-party regime, and its local agents and apparatuses by the ordinary Turkish citizens. The oral accounts of ordinary people have revealed the conception of the state as an omnipresent and fearsome entity.

During the fieldwork, we witnessed a continuation of that deep fear and anxiety on the faces and in the eyes of our many interlocutors. While some cancelled the interviews, others started to

tremble, gulp, and sometimes cry during the interviews. I remember quavering voices, hidden looks and moments of bitter silence, in addition to the cancellation of further interview appointments. These emotions have served as repeated and powerful signifiers of feeling of insecurity and effective registers in their worlds.[44] The most striking experience in the field was to observe such insecurities and prolonged traumas while trying to convince and encourage these forgotten victims who are now in their nineties to share their stories. How should we understand these emotions of fear of the state and that deep pain that have lingered in the hearts and minds of ordinary people for so many decades? How do we interpret the well-known Turkish proverb, *keser döner sap döner, gün gelir hesap döner* (what goes around comes around) which was expressed by many elders who were reluctant to talk and those who cancelled interviews?[45] In spite of the fact that Turkey has been governed by a popular conservative government, the AK Party (Justice and Development Party), in the nearly two decades since 2002, it did not facilitate the process of conducting more research among those citizens and give them a voice. The proverb can be interpreted as a manifestation of their anxiety, mistrust and hesitance if asked to speak about the single-party regime era, addressing Mustafa Kemal era in particular. That is why many interlocutors blamed and consciously addressed *'Halk Partisi'* (Republican People's Party) rather than its founding leader while talking about atrocities and state violence. They felt more comfortable talking about and criticizing İsmet İnönü, Mustafa Kemal's successor. On the other hand, some of them expressed their feelings during the interviews by saying *Allah bir daha Halk Partisini başımıza getirmesin* (May Allah never allow the RPP to gain power again). This statement was constantly repeated by many elderly interlocutors. It has been observed that people are still afraid of a possible resurrection of the authoritarian Kemalist secular regime, which can be described as a form of 'hauntology'.[46] The fact that the state or army-sponsored coups d'état and other military interventions occurred in the country in almost every decade further fostered that perception and deepened that fear. The perception of the Turkish state as a ghostly entity had a devastating impact on their everyday life which was dominated by precariousness for decades.

Fear of the state as a destructive, intimidating and insidious emotion was widely experienced and felt by citizens of the newly established territorial Kemalist Turkish state not only at the time but also lingers in people's minds and hearts in the present. While analyzing life stories and testimonies of our male and female interlocutors, the dominance of emotions and narratives of fear of the state, incarceration, punishment and execution can be explicitly seen. During the fieldwork, some elders rejected appointments outright or later cancelled them or kept silent while being asked for details such as specific names and periods. The main reason behind this deep and haunting fear and silence among elders is the fact that any individual or collective acts of suppressed social agents against the secular policies mentioned above were brutally punished during that era. On the other hand, those who were willing to speak and tell their life stories and testimonies narrated many stories of executions, punishments, incarcerations, interrogations by police or soldiers. In spite of the fact that my own interlocutors and other elders who were interviewed by our research assistants were from different cities in different regions of the country, the similarity of events, experiences and atrocities they narrated indicate wide-spread practices of the state in different parts of the country.

Ayşe who was in her eighties and from the city of Rize, conveyed how her father was incarcerated in the 1930s for four years due to his opposition to wearing a western hat and for speaking out against it in the mosque during Friday prayers.[47] She remembers how her mother regularly visited her father in prison. As in the case of Ayşe, children of that era not only remember with fear and anxiety what happened to them but also what happened to their parents and other elders as well.

In their life stories and narratives, the majority of the interlocutors talked about how they 'secretly' tried to learn the Quran during their childhood in barns or secret houses in the forest despite a deep fear of being arrested by the police or soldiers. Hamide who was born in 1940 remembers how previous generations talked with deep sorrow about their many escapes from the gendarmerie who raided

not only the mosques but also secretly situated places (barns, basements, houses, cottages and gardens) where they were learning to read the Quran. The state gendarmerie forces perceived as actual agents of fear of the state were persistently remembered with their actions of raids and house searches. Not only Hamide but the majority of my interlocutors named the single-party regime era as *'İnönü dönemi'* (the Era of İnönü)[48] or *'Halk Partisi Dönemi'* (the Era of the People's Party) and remembered this period with that deep fear. Hamide who was in her late seventies recounted:

> Imam (hoca) was teaching us how to read the Quran which was forbidden in those years. According to testimonies of our previous generation, while hearing about the raid of the gendarmerie, children escaped to the forest and gardens. They were escaping … While escaping they dropped their elifbas (booklet of instruction in the Arabic Alphabet), Quran chapters and Qurans. As the children ran away through gardens, sometimes the spines of the books fell apart. One by one the leaflets fell out and pages were getting hooked onto the branches of the hazelnut trees and tearing up the pages … Many have told these kinds of stories. My sister in-law has also recounted them. The Quran was forbidden … Some could manage to learn the Quran but some could not … Many could not learn … [49]

As Paul Connerton has eloquently stated, 'the attempt to break definitely with an older social order encounters a kind of historical deposit and threatens to founder upon it. The more total the aspirations of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to introduce an era of *forced forgetting*'.[50] During and after the era of the single-party regime in Turkey as an era of forced forgetting, 'veiled or hidden memories' demand a deliberate act of 'remembering' as a tactic of resistance and as 'a ground of political struggle' against the power of the secular state.[51] One of the key interviewees narrated how Arabic books and texts including Qurans were collected from houses by soldiers and burned in the yard of local government offices. In Istanbul, 98-year-old Zeynelabidin narrated his memories of systematic incidents of the burning of books written in Arabic including Qurans in Gaziantep in the 1930s:

> I was eight or ten years old. My father was serving tea from our teahouse to the state officials in the Government Center building in Antep. I was helping him. One day, as usual, my father told me to serve coffee to one of the chiefs there. While walking through the yard I saw soldiers and a huge stack of books written in Arabic, lots of noble Qurans, booklets of the sura of Yasin, and many others. Four armed soldiers were keeping watch over them. Then, they started to pour gasoline (kerosene) on them and burn them. It was the back yard of the grand penal court. Immediately, I approached the soldiers and asked them to let me pick some of the Qurans. They let me but pretended that they do not see me while I was taking them. I picked three Qurans whose edges were burned a little bit but where the fire had not reached the verses. I hid them in the coal-bunker until the evening and then took them home. After a while, I remember, my father was scared that the soldiers might see them during house searches and therefore discreetly left each one in nearby mosques.[52]

While narrating this story, Zeynelabidin started to cry and curse the state authorities of the time. After calming down, he continued:

> Oh, my son, the police and gendarmerie were searching houses in the cities, towns and villages, one by one and collecting the Qurans. During their house raids, local headmen (muhtarlar) guided and helped them. They were collecting Qurans and all other religious books in Arabic and carrying them in big gunny bags and then burning them.[53]

The life stories and narratives of first- and second-generation survivors of the single-party regime document many accounts of rescuing or hiding religious books, the struggle of families attempting to teach and help their children with memorizing the Quran. In the village of Muratbey in the mountainous region in Düzce, Hafız İsmail, who was nearly eighty years old, narrated how it was difficult to learn and memorize the Quran in those years. When I asked about the ban, he hesitated and replied 'There was a ban. Gendarmeries were coming. I do not want to talk about this … ' Then, when I insisted he started to talk. In his words,

> Actually, I have told these stories to my children as well. Excuse me, but they (gendarmeries) were throwing Qurans into the toilets and burning them. While we were learning at the house of the Imam, the watcher would scream to us that the gendarmeries are coming. It was generally around ten o'clock and we were in the middle of our class. Then, all kids were escaping. We ran to our houses, of course. Nobody was doing anything when the gendarmerie was in the village. What can you do? The gendarmerie was the

> state … They could arrest you … There was nothing to do … When the gendarmerie left the village, we collected the Qurans from the toilets. Some parts of them were burned. I remember, my father told me to burn or bury those Qurans under a fruit tree. Somewhere where people could not step on them … [54]

These stories and memories of survivors completely challenge the official narrative of what took place in the early decades of the Republic. Hafız İsmail also narrated how his father rejected and never wore the hat. However, he talked about how he bought one from the seller in front of the mosque in Düzce and wore it sometimes. He added: 'I wore it but I had Muslim faith in my heart. You should look at one's heart not the hat. But, if you wear it you do not become an infidel (gavur) … '.[55] Hafız İsmail and other interviewees also relate accounts of religious Muslim women clad in burqas and their inability to visit town or city centers for months and years due to the ban on the burqa and hijab. Publicly circulated actual stories and rumors about women whose burqas and hijabs were torn apart by the police or soldiers intimidated them into not going to public spaces displaying an Islamic dress code.

The use of fear and violence as two governing mechanisms by the single-party regime turned these phenomena into highly influential registers of everyday life where precarity became one of the foremost prevailing emotions in the life of Muslim subjects. The traumatic impact of diverse forms of state violence, punishment and severe secularization policies during the single party regime were felt in the following generations as a result of the dominant role of the Turkish army in determining the politics in the country. The army which has been staging coups d'état decennially has played the role of guarantor of the secular Kemalist regime as well. In the process of secularization and Turkification for establishing a fully homogenized Turkish nation not only Muslim Turkish subjects but also other ethnic communities and non-Muslim groups were targeted. In short, one of the fundamental tasks of the secular nation-state was to discipline and civilize the backward religious and non-Turkish masses by establishing an efficient schooling system and various other institutions.

The politics of remembering and forgetting: insecurity and ageing

Doing ethnographic research on the impacts of the state, state-community relations and politically marginalized religious and ethnic communities in Turkey with a critical perspective has been a very challenging task for many researchers.[56] In other words, collecting data in insecure environments and whilst risking the lives of both the researcher and interlocutors was not an easily achievable task in the context of carrying out research in conflict and post-conflict environments.[57] Questions like 'Why do people conceal their memories? Why it is difficult to narrate events from the past? What is the conception of the state as a hegemonic power amongst ordinary people in Turkey?' were the main questions and concerns that pushed individuals to develop or resort to a certain politics of remembering without abandoning the need to secure themselves and their family members. Emotions of fear of the state and anxiety seemed to be amongst the strongest determinants in the politics of remembering and forgetting during interviews, as well as in casual talks with our interlocutors in our project. Field observations and the narratives of our interlocutors have revealed the fact that there is a continuity of these emotions in the hearts and minds of people from different generations and from diverse ethnic, ideological and class backgrounds. In addition to this, the fact that the target informant figures for our project were above the age of eighty resulted in a difficult encounter with gathering stories from elders, most of whom struggled with ageing and, at times, with Alzheimer's disease.

During my fieldwork in the village of Fakıllı near the city of Düzce, I attempted to convince 89-year-old Arif Badur, a friend's grandfather, to recall the era of the single-party regime. In spite of the fact that I was introduced to him through his grandchild who reiterated words of trust and comfort, he was still not willing to speak. Instead, the elderly man opted to interrogate me, questioning who I was, why I was doing this research, whether I was a spy or even a police

informant, and whether I was pro-government or not. In the end, he reluctantly offered a highly filtered account of that past with obvious signs of nervousness, whereas his wife Fatma was slightly more willing to share her memories.[58] Fatma narrated how dangerous it was to study the Quran in those years due to sudden raids by police and soldiers who received reports from local informants and state-collaborators (Kemalist school teachers, headmen, and other state officials, supporters of the RPP among local people). 84-year-old Fatma narrated one of her own stories from the early 1940s:

> I remember, while going to primary school I was also trying to learn reading the Quran in the village, at the imam's home. I generally went on Saturdays and Sundays for the Quran lessons. Sometimes I would go in the early morning during the weekdays as well and then go to school. However, sometimes, I would arrive late at the school while I was taking Quran classes. Once, the teacher asked me why I took Quran classes. He wanted to punish me. He asked me to extend and open my hands. My response was no. He was going to beat my hands with a cornelian cherry branch. I refused but he still beat my hands with that stick and shouted at me to not take Quran classes anymore … Then, I guess, the imam was reported. On the weekend, I went again as usual. Whilst in class, one of the kids had stayed outside to watch in order to warn the imam if state officials or raid patrols were coming. While studying, suddenly, the watcher kid came in and warned the imam that the soldiers were approaching. The imam and his wife ushered us out in panic and hid us in the barn. They hid the *rahles* (Quran desks) and Qurans in the hayloft. I was watching from the cracks of the barn's wooden door. Soldiers came in and talked to the imam: 'They say you are teaching the Quran here. Is that true?' The imam replied: 'No, there must be a mistake or misinformation. We do not do this here. You are welcome to check around.' The soldiers then talked to one other and said, 'It must be a misreport,' and left. Following this event, the imam and his wife fled the village in fear in the following days.[59]

One of the strong discourses in the narratives of my interlocutors was the constantly repeated phrase, *Allah, bir daha o günleri bize göstermesin* (May Allah never let us see or experience those days, again). These kinds of constantly repeated prayers can be interpreted as strong indications of trauma and fear that were experienced and whose effects still linger in their lives. This is why the top-down policies of the Turkish state are being remembered with the distinct image and perception of the state having an 'iron fist'. The image remained unchanged and was observed and experienced intermittently in later periods which were encircled with four coups d'état, 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 respectively.[60] As a result, the violent, manipulative and intrusive character of the state and its practices resulted in the emergence of insecure and suspicious relations between the authoritarian secular state and its citizens in general.

Conducting interviews with elders is one of the most challenging issues in ethnographic research, particularly in oral history studies during which you, as an oral historian, wish to document narratives before they have severe illnesses or pass away. In our project, at times it was difficult to get elders' life stories due to physical and psychological complications that they endured as a result of senility. In her ethnographic work with elder women living during the early decades of the Republic, Fatma Barbarosoğlu also talks about the difficulty of interviewing aged interlocutors with memory loss and senility.[61] When we were informed by one of our contacts that there was an old lady named Müzeyyen in her nineties who witnessed many events in that era in Fatih district of Istanbul, we immediately set out in search of her and located a contact person to bring us to her house. When one of our female researchers in the team met Müzeyyen, she was sad to find out that Müzeyyen could not speak due to a recent severe illness of mental deterioration.[62]

It is a fact that such a project should have been conducted one or two decades ago. We had difficulty in locating survivors and witnesses of the Mustafa Kemal era (1923–1938) while getting in contact with survivors of the İnönü era (1938–1950). Among our 140 interviewees, just three of them were witnesses of the 1920s, but they hardly remembered the events. We have actually reached a number of elders who could be key interviewees, but most of them were either sick, suffering memory loss or Alzheimer's. Therefore, one realizes that beyond the politics of

remembering and forgetting, and the inaccessibility of state archives, many untold stories, testimonies and memories of the era of single-party regime have been lost.

The protective laws and official archives

The task of undertaking an ethnography and oral history of the single-party regime, which has been a taboo in Turkey, could be achieved through the application of oral accounts and testimonies and the complementary support of the state archives as well. However, as Gavin Brockett has stated, 'historical analysis of the Atatürk era is indeed limited by the inaccessibility of state archives' but then he adds 'newspapers, population censuses and British consular documents all constitute important sources for social history' of that era.[63] Brockett tried to overcome the limitedness of the sources and the inaccessibility of archives by using newspapers, printed documents and other written sources in his work. On the other hand, the state-legislated protective laws of lèse-majesté[64] of the founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk have restrained the focus on his era. Furthermore, the fabricated perception of him and his ruling era as infallible and untouchable has hampered the emergence of critical academic approaches to the social and political history of that era in Turkey. While writing on the making of Atatürk as a father figure of the nation through art and propaganda in the early decades of the Republic, Faik Gur states that 'by the time Atatürk died in 1938, hundreds of busts, statues and monuments of him had already been erected in most important public spaces in İstanbul, Ankara and other major cities in Turkey'.[65] The labor of glorification of the father figure intensified in later periods and resulted in the ornamentation of every single school (kindergarten, primary, secondary and high schools) and all classrooms, official buildings, main squares of settlements (towns, counties, cities) which were generally named 'Cumhuriyet Meydanı' (Republican Square), and even shops and restaurants with pictures, busts and monuments of Atatürk. The veneration of the Atatürk era and the representation of Mustafa Kemal as a sacred and immortal figure for decades resulted in muteness and the silencing of critical voices of survivors of that era, and following generations as well.[66] Here, it is crucial to note that this Kemalist narrative of Mustafa Kemal and glorification of his era as a state-sponsored and manufactured narrative has been also promoted by some historians and other researchers working on the modern history of Turkey.[67] However, as our oral history study has revealed, this narrative has not been shared by mass populations in the country.

On the other hand, the use of state archives particularly relating to certain periods in the modern history of Turkey has been highly limited for researchers. In the context of the use and abuse of archives and their role in reshaping our sense of history and the past, Meltem Ahıska addresses the question of accessibility of the state archives with a particular focus on the relationships between history, memory, power and truth while writing on the destruction of archives and the fear of archiving from the late Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic.[68] In her research, Ahıska delves into the question of publicizing past records of old totalitarian regimes and points out that archives could possibly be 'sites of destruction, falsification and corruption' for the state which has an interest in making certain fabrications in the present.[69] In this context, let us think about accessibility to the Archive of the General Directorate of Police in Ankara, which has an enormous amount of recorded information on secular politics along with documentation of executions, incarcerations, punishments and detentions carried by the state forces (either police or gendarmerie).

It is a fact that state officials have not allowed any researchers to have full access to the archives of the police department which are crucial for our project. However, we have made use of a valuable little chunk of data presented through the work of Ali Dikici, who seems to be a former police commissioner. In his work on secular regulations, laws and practices during the rule of İsmet İnönü, he documents detailed information on surveillance, arrests and punishments of citizens who secretly practiced the teachings of the Quran in their houses, basements, barns

or in the mosques. Dikici unveils recorded information, drawn from police records, about arrested Muslims subjects who called for prayer in Arabic or wore the Fez instead of the Western hat, or wore the hijab (*çarşaf*) and how they were dragged into the detention centers.[70] So, as Ahıska highlighted, the archives of the police department were partially used by Dikici for the interest of the state to legitimize the secular state policies of the İnönü era. Dikici disagrees with the arguments that secular policies were employed to erase Islam from state institutions and the public space and keep Islam under control.[71] Contrary to this argument, Dikici as a member of the police department, claims that the rules and policies of the National Chief, İsmet İnönü, aimed to maintain, protect and ingrain Mustafa Kemal's revolutions in society, a view echoing the statist discourses of Kemal Karpat.[72] Going beyond these arguments and Dikici's use of police archives allows us to learn a little bit about the state's maltreatments of its citizens in that era in spite of his statist rhetoric and Kemalist standpoint. What Dikici documents from the police archives corresponds with what elders narrated to us in our oral history project. Therefore, the stories and testimonies of state-sponsored executions and other atrocities from that era can be interpreted as cultural 'memoricide'[73] and an erasure of Islamic cultural forms and traditions.

In summary, the inaccessibility of the state archives and fear of the state have made the task of documenting the memories of that era and making them accessible and public a very difficult one. Besides, the accomplishment of such research requires the witnesses, including the second generation, to be willing to speak. Today, the archives of the state institutions such as the police or the army are either still undisclosed or only partially accessible but restricted to certain 'selected' profiles of researchers. Therefore, doing research on 'sensitive issues' related to the modern history of the Turkish nation-state has been a very challenging one with many complexities.

Conclusion

The Eurocentric view of the world which is shaped by a series of orientalist, secularist, evolutionist and positivist ideas was entirely articulated within the statist and Kemalist discourse during the single-party regime era by the Turkish secular elites. The rest of society was predominantly perceived to be located on the ladder of development, and in need of being modernized and civilized through different ideological and institutional state apparatuses by any means necessary. Ordinary Muslim citizens were often described and presented as backwards, uncivilized *(gayri medeni*) and a threat to the ideal principles of the authoritarian secular Republic. Therefore, life stories and testimonies of ordinary people from the era of the single-party regime not only document the resistance, resilience and struggle of mass populations but also how the new authoritarian regime severely changed their social, cultural and economic life on both the individual and collective levels. In other words, their testimonies signify their survival strategies against the state-sponsored war on Islamic and traditional ways of life as they were historically embodied in certain practices, institutions and cultural patterns. Therefore, the reactions and resistance of Muslim subjects can be interpreted as acts of strong will and faith to protect and maintain their sense of belonging and memory to the Ottoman-Islamic past and in a larger sense to Islamic civilization.

In Turkey, studying the single-party regime era still remains one of the challenging fields with methodological obstacles and political controversies. The histories, experiences and testimonies of the silent Muslim populations were not only 'too often neglected by an elite-oriented historiography'[74] but also ignored by critical researchers who escaped from possible severe consequences of the task of 'brushing history against the grain'.[75] Recent oral history research among Turkish people carried out in the western part of the country in the Turkish populated cities revealed the fact that ordinary Muslim Turkish subjects share a similar and even more traumatic experience of the fear of the state concerning the single-party regime relevant to the fears of other marginalized ethnic, religious and ideological communities in the country. In short, oral

history sources tell us more about diverse forms of relations between the state and Islam (Muslims) and how Islamic notions, cultural forms, codes and meanings were gradually prohibited and eradicated from inside state institutions and public domains. Going beyond the politics of the use and abuse of state archives and their (in)accessibility, oral history seems to become the most influential methodology to use for not only unveiling memories of the politics and practices of the authoritarian modern secular state but also deconstruction of the statist and Kemalist discourses on the history of modern Turkey.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962); G. Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); B. Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); S. Ahmed, 'The Politics of Fear in the Making of Worlds', *Qualitative Studies in Education* Vol.16, no.3 (2003), pp.377–98.
2. C. Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.1.
3. P. Abrams, 'Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State', *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol.1, no.1 (1988), p.58.
4. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
5. K. Verdery, 'Matthew Hull and Ethnographies of the State', *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* Vol.3, no.3 (2013), p.407.
6. J. Ferguson and A. Gupta, 'Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality', *American Ethnologist* Vol.29, no.4 (2002), pp.981–1002; A. Bernstein and E. Mertz, 'Introduction – Bureaucracy: Ethnography of the State in Everyday Life', *PoLar: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* Vol.34, no.1 (2011), p.6.
7. In his work, Ahmet T. Kuru defines secularism with two distinct notions, 'passive' and 'assertive' secularisms. He claims that 'assertive secularism requires the state to play an "assertive" role to exclude religion from the public sphere and confine it to the private domain. Passive secularism demands that the state play a "passive" role by allowing the public visibility of religion.' A.T. Kuru, *Secularism and the State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.11.
8. This research is a part of an extensive oral history research project titled *Religion, State, Society and Memory in Turkey 1923-1950* supported by Ibn Haldun University and co-directed by me and R. Şentürk. The one year oral history project was carried out from August 2017 to August 2018. The fieldwork team included E.Y. Demirci, me and our research assistants, İ. Altıntaş, H. Uyanık, H. Çebi, E.N. Arslanoğlu, E. Haliloğlu, O. Doğan and M. Kökçen. The fieldwork was carried out under my supervision. After training the research assistants for this oral history project, data was collected from different parts of the country. 140 men and women aged from 75 to 114 were interviewed and video-tape recorded. The interviewees were selected via snowball sampling with a particular focus on lived experiences and testimonies of the authoritarian single-party era but ranged from 26 cities throughout the country. As an anthropologist and oral historian, I conducted fieldwork in the cities of Düzce, Yalova and Istanbul during which I interviewed twenty elders and this paper is mainly based on the data which I collected during this fieldwork.
9. Anthropologist Tayfun Atay points to how the discipline of anthropology was founded in 1925 at Istanbul University by Şevket Aziz Kansu and Afet İnan – Mustafa Kemal's adopted daughter – with the directions of Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), the founding father of the Turkish state, under the title of *Antropoloji Tetkikat Merkezi* [Center for Anthropological Studies]. T. Atay, 'Türkiye'de Antropolojinin Gelişim Süreci' [The Development Process of Anthropology in Turkey] in R. Aras (ed.), *Sınırları Aşmak: Türkiye'de Sosyo-Kültürel Antropoloji ve Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşımlar* [Crossing the Borders: Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies in Turkey] (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2014), p.27. See also, N. Maksudyan, *Türklüğü Ölçmek: Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Çehresi 1925-1939* [Measuring Turkishness: Science-Fictive Anthropology and the Racist Face of Turkish Nationalism 1925-1939] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005); Z. Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersime: Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* [From Darwin to Dersim: Republic and Anthropology] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012).

10. S. Aydın, 'Cumhuriyet'in İdeolojik Şekillenmesinde Antropolojinin Rolü: Irkçı Paradigmanın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü' [The Role of Anthropology in the Formation of the Republic: The Rise and Fall of the Racist Paradigm], in M. Gültekingil and T. Bora (eds), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce ve Kemalizm* [Political Thought and Kemalism in Modern Turkey], Vol.2 (Istanbul: İletişim Press, 2004).
11. Here, the critical role of the History Foundation, an Istanbul-based NGO founded in 1991, in the development and dissemination of oral history and memory studies in Turkey should also be noted. For further details visit http://tarihvakfi.org.tr/
12. A. Öztürkmen, 'Sözlü Tarih: Yeni Bir Disiplinin Cazibesi' [Oral History: The Appeal of a New Discipline], *Toplum ve Bilim* Vol.91 (2001), pp.115–21; A. Öztürkmen, 'Remembering through Material Culture: Local Knowledge of Past Communities in a Turkish Black Sea Town', *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.39, no.2 (2003), pp.179–193; E. Danacıoğlu, *Geçmişin İzleri: Yanıbaşımızdaki Tarih için bir Kılavuz* [Traces of the Past: A Guide for History Right Beside Us) (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002); L. Neyzi, *'Ben kimim?': Türkiye'de Sözlü Tarih, Kimlik ve Öznellik* (Who Am I? Oral History, Identity and Subjectivity in Turkey] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), L. Neyzi, 'Oral History and Memory Studies in Turkey', in C. Kerslake, K. Öktem and P. Robins (eds), *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity: Conflict and Change in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.443–59; M. Ahıska, 'Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: Politics of Archives in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey* Vol.34 (2006), pp.9–29; M. Ahıska, 'Arşiv Korkusu ve Karakaplı Nizami Bey: Türkiye'de Tarih, Hafıza ve Iktidar' [The Fear of Archives and Karakaplı Nizami Bey: History, Memory and Power in Turkey], in M. Güney (ed.), *Türkiye'de Iktidarı Yeniden düşünmek* [Rethinking Power in Turkey] (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 2009), pp.59–92.
13. L. Neyzi (ed.), *Nasıl Hatırlıyoruz? Türkiye'de Bellek Çalışmaları* [How Do We Remember? Memory Studies in Turkey] (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), pp.1–5.
14. Ibid.
15. M. Hirsch, 'Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory', *The Yale Journal of Criticism* Vol.14, no.1 (2001), pp.5–37.
16. M. Ahıska, 'Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: Politics of Archives in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey* Vol.34 (2006), p.11.
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20. A.T. Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.218.
21. Concerning traumatic impacts of this law and its practices which endured for 18 years (1932–1950), R. Atay, 'Türkçe Ezan Uygulamasının Toplumsal Hafızada Yol Açtığı Travmalar Üzerine' [On the Traumatic Impacts of Policies of Turkish Adhan on Social Memory], *Mukaddime* Vol.9, no.2 (2018), pp.49–65.
22. For more detailed information on secular politics of that era, see Ali Dikici's work that is based on valuable Archives of the General Directorate of Police in Ankara. See A. Dikici, 'Milli Şef Ismet Inönü Dönemi Laiklik Uygulamaları' [The Policies of Secularism During the Era of National Chief Ismet Inönü], *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk Inkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergis*i Vol.42 (2008), pp.161–92.
23. Ibid., p.164.
24. M.A. İskilipli, *Frenk Mukallidliği ve Şapka* [Imitating the French and the Hat] (Istanbul: Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi Neşriyatı, 1924). İskilipli Atıf Hoca (1876–1926), a renowned Muslim madrasa scholar of the era, was executed due to the Hat Law. According to historical accounts, Atıf Hoca in his book criticizes the ongoing westernization/modernization process and Muslims' aspirations to Western (French) life styles and dress codes. Although the book was published in 1924 one year before the declaration of the Hat Law in 1925, he was arrested and dragged into court (the Independence Court of Ankara) and accused of insulting and opposing the hat law through his book. In spite of his counter-statement and rejections, the court decided on his execution under the Takrir-i Sükun Law. For more detailed information on the Independence Courts, see A. Nedim, *Ankara İstiklal Mahkemesi Zabıtları 1926* [Records of the Ankara Independence Tribunals 1926] (Istanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1993); A.T. Alkan, (1993) *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* [The Independence Tribunals] (Istanbul: Alternatif Üniversite, 1993); A.T. Alkan, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri ve Sivas'ta Şapka İnkılabı Duruşmaları* [The Independence Tribunals and the Courts of the Hat Revolution in Sivas] (Istanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 2011); M.C. Baydar, *Şapka* [The Hat] (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2007); N.F. Kısakürek, *Son Devrin Din Mazlumları* [The Oppressed Pious during the Last Era] (Istanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 2008). T. Mevlevi, *İstiklal Mahkemesi Hatıraları: Matbuat Alemindeki Hayatım* [My Testimonies of Independence Tribunals: My Life in the World of the Press], edited by N. Boşdurmaz (Istanbul: Büyüyenay Yayınları, 2012); E. Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri*

[Independence Tribunals] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2014); B. Kurbanoğlu and B. Gökgöz, *İskilipli Atıf Hoca: İstiklal Mahkemeleri'nin Tarihi Misyonu ve Şapka İnkılabı* [Iskilipli Atıf Hoca: The Historical Mission of the Independence Tribunals and the Hat Revolution) (Istanbul: Ekin Yayınları, 2013); S. Aslan and T. Dündar, 'Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstiklal Mahkemeleri' [The Independence Tribunals in the Republican Period], *Mukaddime* Vol.5, no.1 (2014), pp.27–44; M. Sılay, *İskilipli Atıf Hoca 1876-1926* [Iskilipli Atıf Hoca 1876-1926] (Istanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, 2016); A.Y. Akengin, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri Sempozyumu 10-11 Aralık 2015, Adıyaman* [The Symposium on the Independence Tribunals, December 10-11, 2015 Adıyaman] (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2016); M. Akyürekli, *Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi 1925-1927* [Eastern Independence Tribunals 1925-1927] (Istanbul: Tarih Kulübü Yayınları, 2017).

25. M. Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması 1923-1931* [The Foundation of the Single-Party Regime in the Turkish Republic 1923-1931] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015).
26. E.J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p.173. See also, M. Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetiminin Kurulması (1923–1931)* [The Foundation of the Single-Party Regime in the Turkish Republic 1923-1931] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), p.169. In the footnote, Zürcher states that 'this figure does not include the (much higher) number of executed deserters', p.348.
27. E. Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* [The Independence Tribunals] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2014), p.371.
28. Ibid, p.353.
29. Ibid, p.369.
30. Ibid, p.445.
31. Ibid, p.463.
32. Independence Courts or Tribunals, inspired by the French Revolutionary Courts founded in 1793, were first established in 1920, in order to maintain order and control by the state authorities. Here, we are referencing the reactivation of these courts in the period of 1923–1927. The courts were mainly established in Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakır. The one founded in Diyarbakır was named Eastern Independence Courts (*Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi*). However, the state founded a mobile court to carry out other cases in other cities such as in Samsun, Kastamonu, Konya, Sivas, Erzurum, Pozantı-Adana, Eskişehir, Isparta and Yozgat where thousands of Muslim subjects were dragged into the courts and were punished, incarcerated and executed. See A.T. Alkan, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* [The Independence Tribunals] (Istanbul: Alternatif Üniversite, 1993).
33. Ibid., p.531.
34. Ş. Aydemir, *İkinci Adam, II. Cilt* [Second Man, Volume II] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1967); M. Toker, *Tek Partiden Çok Partiye 1944–1950* [From Single Party to Multiple Parties 1944-1950] (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1970); M. Gologlu, *Milli Şef Dönemi 1939–1945* [The Era of the National Chief 1939-1945] (Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1974); N. Ugur, *Ismet Inönü* [Ismet Inonu] (Istanbul: Yapı-Kredi Yayınları, 1995); H. Uran, *Meşrutiyet, Tek Parti, Çok Parti Hatıralarım 1908-1950* [My Memoirs of Constitutionalism, the Single-Party and Multi-Party Era] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008); C. Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) Cilt I* [The National Chief Era in Turkey 1938-1945 Vol. I] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008); C. Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi (1938-1945) Cilt II* [The National Chief Era in Turkey 1938-1945 Vol. II] (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları, 2013).
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37. Ibid., p.221.
38. J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
39. P. Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Vol. 1 - Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); P. Nora, *Hafıza Mekânları* [Places of Memory] (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 2006).
40. I.C. Schick, 'Bedensel Hafıza, Zihinsel Hafıza, Yazılı Kaynak: Hat Sanatının Günümüze İntikalinin Bazı Boyutları' [Bodily Memory, Cognitive Memory and Written Source: Some Dimensions of the Transition of the Art of Calligraphy to the Present Day], in L. Neyzi (ed.) *Nasıl Hatırlıyoruz? Türkiye'de Bellek Çalışmaları* [How Do We Remember? Memory Studies in Turkey] (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011).
41. Ibid., p. 31.
42. In Bradbury's dystopia, books are forbidden and immediately burned when found by the state authorities. Under the circumstance of state terror, some people began to resist by memorizing books in order to prevent their total vanishing. R. Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012 [1953]). See also M. Fishburn, *Burning Books* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
43. J. Ferguson and A. Gupta, 'Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality', *American Ethnologist* Vol.29, no.4 (2002), p.982.
44. S. Ahmed, 'The Politics of Fear in the Making of Worlds', *Qualitative Studies in Education* Vol.16, no.3 (2003), pp.377–98.
45. Many interviewees used this proverb and some others uttered similar sayings in the interviews during attempts to convince them to carry out an interview. I should note here that many elders filtered or cancelled

our appointments for the interviews. The fact that interviews were recorded resulted in greater alarm amongst interlocutors. The idea that any negative utterances and criticisms against the secular state and the founding leaders of the state (particularly Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü) might be used against them or their family members barred many from speaking out.

46. J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
47. Ayşe was interviewed by her grandson in October 2017 and the interview recording was sent to us by him during our ethnographic research. Here, it is important to mention that many ordinary people, who had heard about our project and were in search of elders who had witnessed the single party regime era transmitted the news within emailing circles, WhatsApp groups and other social media networks, and many expressed excitement over the oral history project's prospects. Our research team received phone calls from volunteers from different cities informing us of elderly men and women near them. They invited us to visit them and conduct interviews with those elders. At times, as in the case of Ayşe and her grandson, when we were unable to visit, volunteers conducted interviews using mobile phones and sending their recordings to us.
48. Some of my interlocutors used these two phrases, '*İnönü Dönemi*' (the Inonu Era) or '*Halk Partisi dönemi*' (the Era of the People's Party) while naming the era or time of the catastrophic events that they survived but others did not. The phrase 'Era of İnönü' here is a reference to İsmet İnönü, the successor of the Mustafa Kemal who ruled the country from the 1938 to 1950.
49. Hamide Tut (1940-) was interviewed in October 2017 in Düzce.
50. P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.12.
51. I.C. Schick, 'Bedensel Hafıza, Zihinsel Hafıza, Yazılı Kaynak: Hat Sanatının Günümüze İntikalinin Bazı Boyutları' [Bodily Memory, Cognitive Memory and Written Source: Some Dimensions of the Transition of the Art of Calligraphy to the Present Day] in L. Neyzi (ed.) *Nasıl Hatırlıyoruz? Türkiye'de Bellek Çalışmaları* [How Do We Remember? Memory Studies in Turkey] (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), p. 32.
52. Zeynelabidin Sarın (1920-) was interviewed in October 2017 in Basaksehir, Istanbul.
53. Personal interview with Zeynelabidin Sarın.
54. Hafız İsmail Kaya (1940-) was interviewed on 28 October 2017 in Muratbey village in Düzce.
55. Personal interview with Hafız İsmail Kaya.
56. F. Çetin, *Anneannem* [My Grandmother] (Istanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 2004); A.G. Altınay and F. Çetin, *Torunlar* [Grandchildren] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2010).
57. R. Aras with D. Boyd, M.M. Clark, M. Kurt, S.M. Mohaqqaq, C.P. Gonzales Peres, and L. Taminian, *Documenting and Interpreting Conflict through Oral History*: *A Working Guide* (New York: Published with the support of Columbia University Libraries, 2013).
58. Arif Badur (1929-) was interviewed in October 2017 in the village of Fakıllı in Akçakoca, Düzce.
59. Fatma Badur (1934–2018) was interviewed in October 2017 in the village of Fakıllı in Akçakoca, Düzce.
60. F. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993); T. Köker, 'The Establishment of Kemalist Secularism in Turkey', *Middle East Law and Governance* Vol.2 (2010), pp.17–42; B. Bozkurt, 'Türkiye'de 'Milli Şef' Dönemi CHP Politikalarının Eğitim Sistemine Etkileri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme' [An Evaluation on the Effects of RPP Policies during the Era of the National Chief on Education in Turkey], *Belgi* Vol.2 (2011), pp.183–204; Z. Özcan, 'Psiko-sosyal Açıdan İnönü Dönemi Dini Hayatla İlgili Bazı Değerlendirmeler'[Some Evaluations on Religious Life during the Inonu Era from a Psycho-Social Perspective], *Tarih Kültür ve Sanat Araştırmaları Dergisi* Vol.3, no.2 (2014), pp.60–87.
61. F. Barbarosoğlu, *Cumhuriyet'in Dindar Kadınları* [Pious Women of the Republic] (Istanbul: Profil Yayınları, 2016).
62. Elif Naime Arslanoğlu, one of our research assistants, tried to interview Müzeyyen in Fatih district in İstanbul.
63. G.D. Brockett, 'Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era 1923-38', *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.34, no.4 (1998), p.46.
64. The law of lèse-majesté, the act of 5816 to protect the legacy of M.K. Atatürk was formed and accepted on 25 July 1951 due to criticism and attacks on his legacy in public by ordinary people in the early 1950s. The law is still in effect and many individuals have been incarcerated recently because of their oral criticism and attacks on Atatürk and his statues in the public spaces. The Turkish version of the law can be accessed from the following link: http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.5816.pdf (accessed 5 February 2019).
65. F. Gur, 'Sculpting the Nation in Early Republican Turkey', *Historical Research* Vol.86, no.232 (2013), p.342.
66. E. Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016).
67. B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); U. Azak, *Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Kemalism, Religion and the Nation State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); B. Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); H. Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey 1923-1945* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013).
68. M. Ahıska, 'Occidentalism and Registers of Truth: Politics of Archives in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey* Vol.34 (2006), p.60.

69. Ibid., pp.9–10.
70. In his article, Ali Dikici documents one of the arrest stories found in official police archives: 'In 1937, in Gaziantep, police were informed that a woman in her fifties, was secretly teaching children Arabic books in her house. Subsequently, police raided her home and the woman was caught in the very act. The woman was dragged into a detention center and to the court for issuing a punishment. According to the police records, during the arrest three books on mavlid al-Nabi, five books on surah (chapter) *Tabaraka*, twenty-five books of the thirtieth chapter of the Quran (*amme cüzü*), one *Kadesemiallah*, seven Quran books, ten beginner alphabet booklets (*elifba*), two cushions, one stick and one desk (*rahle*) as illegal material' (Archive of General Police Department, D.13217-3, K.596: The Report from the Governor's office of Gaziantep to Minister of Internal Affairs, dated 31 Dec. 1937 and paper numbered 1481, cited in Dikici, 2008, pp.164–165).
71. Ö. Çaha, 'Türkiye'de Resmi Din Anlayışı: Etatokratik Sistemin İnşası' [The Official Conception of Religion in Turkey: The Formation of an Etatocratic System], *Islamiyat* Vol.IV, no.4 (2001), pp.77–89.
72. K.H. Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temelleri* [The History of Turkish Democracy: Social, Economic and Cultural Foundations] (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2008), p.187.
73. S. Fatović-Ferenčić and T. Buklijaš, 'Mirko *Dražen* Grmek: The Genesis of Scientific Fact and Archaeology of Disease', *International Journal Collegium Antropologicum* Vol.24, no.1 (2000), pp.8–9; M.D. Grmek, M. Gjirada and N. Simac, *Ethnic Cleansing: Historical Documents about one Serbian Ideology* (Zagreb: Globus, 1993). Stella Fatović-Ferenčić and Tatjana Buklijaš in their short article entitled 'Mirko *Dražen* Grmek: The Genesis of Scientific Fact and Archaeology of Disease' give a definition of the concept as 'the active intention to destroy all traces of cultural and historical existence of a nation on a certain territory' with a reference to the works of Mirko *Dražen* Grmek on the ethnic cleansing of the Croatian nation, culture and history during the War in the 1990s (Grmek, Gjirada and Simac 1993 cited in Fatović-Ferenčić and Tatjana Buklijaš 2000, pp.8–9).
74. G.D. Brockett, 'Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era 1923-38', *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.34, no.4 (1998), p.47.
75. W. Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp.256–7.
76. E. Aybars, *İstiklal Mahkemeleri* [The Independence Tribunals] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2014), pp.223–540.