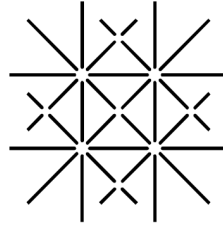




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ISLAMIC AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES



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Call for Applications

# Turkish Nationalism

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Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies  
beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism

September 13-14, 2013

DOCTORAL SEMINAR

Guest Lecturers:

Prof. Dr. Erik J. Zürcher (University of Leiden)  
e.j.zurcher@hum.leidenuniv.nl

&

Prof. Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz (University of Utah)  
hakan.yavuz@poli-sci.utah.edu

Hosted and organized by  
Prof. Dr. Maurus Reinkowski  
maurus.reinkowski@unibas.ch

Alp Yenen, M.A.  
alp.yenen@unibas.ch

## Seminar Description

The emergence and development of Turkish nationalism from the times of the Ottoman Empire and into the Turkish Republic is a widely researched topic. However, it remains a great, and as yet unresolved, debate. Beyond secularist, ethno-nationalist, and modernist interpretations of Turkish nationalism, some scholars have pointed out the strong Muslim and Ottoman backgrounds that characterize the discussion.

In relation to late-Ottoman history, the emergence of Turkish nationalism is generally used to explain the ethnic-cleansing of Anatolian Christians and the transition from a multi-national and multi-confessional Islamic empire to a secularist Turkish nation-state. Accordingly, internal affairs within the Ottoman Empire during the late-Ottoman period are simplified and reduced to a socio-economic and demographic Turkification, while the Empire's foreign affairs are viewed as mere Pan-Turkist expansionism and adventurism. Turkism is consequently regarded as the most dominant political ideology during the rule of the Young Turks. Nevertheless, some scholars have challenged these received wisdoms and proposed a more complex relationship between ethnicity, ideology, and religion in late-Ottoman society and politics. They argue that Turkism is overstated in its political impact and that its emergence as a popular ideology was a later development. They point out the deliberate reasoning of post-Ottoman state-formation and contrast this with contemporary assumptions of an alleged dichotomy between Islam and nationalism. In their view, Islam and Ottomanism continued to dominate political rhetoric and popular ideology in the late period of the Ottoman Empire.

The rise of the Islamic Justice and Development Party in contemporary Turkey and Turkey's constantly increasing self-awareness in the Middle East show the undiminished popular appeal of a Turkish-Islamic identity. At the same time, an "imperial Ottoman" self-image maintains a persuasive presence within Turkish society. Despite, or in spite of, Kemalist policies of radical secularism and social engineering throughout the Republican era, a rival nationalist discourse survived and has now come to the fore. This is distinctly Islamic and Ottoman in its response to the question of "Turkishness", while being just as nationalist as its Kemalist counterpart. A new generation of conservative nationalists has emerged from the population at large and risen to political and economic power. Members of this movement are intellectually inspired by conservative and Islamic figures such as Sultan Abdülhamid, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Said Nursi, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, and İbrahim Kafesoğlu. They are also admirers and followers of right-wing political figures such as Adnan Menderes, Necmettin Erbakan, Alparslan Türkeş, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, Fetullah Gülen, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Consequently, Turkish-Muslim nationalist identities have established themselves within public discourse and are increasingly marginalizing the secularist nationalism of Kemalism.

Academe tends to separate research into the emergence of Turkish nationalism during the Ottoman Empire from its later development up until contemporary times in the Republic of Turkey. While the emergence of Turkish nationalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Young Turks, World War One, Turkish War of Independence, Kemalist reforms) is widely discussed by historians, the rise of a new composite Turkish-Muslim nationalist ideology (Turkish-Islamic synthesis) in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century is mainly analyzed by political and other social scientists. The doctoral seminar *Turkish Nationalism: Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism* strives to bring together these separate areas of focus by identifying the factors of continuity and structural similarity. The seminar will explore the complex relationship between Turkish nationalism and

Islam, which is further complicated by the Ottoman imperial legacy. It aims to locate Turkish-Muslim nationalist attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities, the West, Westernism, and secularism during the Ottoman and Republican periods within a single analytical framework.

The above requires researching the complex relationship between the emergence and development of Turkish nationalism and the prevailing Islamic and Ottoman legacies. This seminar will raise the following questions: How did the intellectual forefathers of Turkish nationalism view the role played by Islam? Why did Ottomanism as a civic nationalism fail to integrate non-Muslims? How far were the Young Turks' politics driven by Turkish nationalism? Was the ideology of Turkish "ethno-nationalism" the driving force behind the ethnic-cleansing of Anatolian Christians? How significant was Islamic zeal in the Armenian massacres by local tribes and gangs? Was the Arab Revolt a reaction to Turkish nationalism? What was the role of Islam during World War I and the Turkish War of Independence? How "Islamic" was the early Kemalist republic? What was the effect of Kemalist secularist policies on the general population of Anatolian Muslims? What role did the "Muslim aspect" of Turkish nationalism play during the pogroms against the Thracian Jews in 1934 and against non-Muslim citizens and shops in Istanbul on September 6-7, 1955? Who are the intellectual forefathers of the Turkish-Muslim nationalism that arose in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? To what degree was the synthesis of Turkishness and Islamism the victor that emerged from the 1980 coup d'état? How "nationalist" are Turkish "Islamists" and how "Islamic" are Turkish "nationalists"?

The doctoral seminar *Turkish Nationalism: Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism* is a two-day intensive seminar (September 13-14, 2013) hosted and organized by Prof. Dr. Maurus Reinkowski and Alp Yenen, M.A., from the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Basel. Two leading scholars of Turkish nationalism will take over the instruction of the seminar. Prof. Dr. Erik J. Zürcher (University of Leiden), one of the leading scholars of the political and intellectual history of the late Ottoman and early Republican era, will introduce an advance study of the emergence and development of Turkish nationalism from empire to republic. Prof. Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz (University of Utah), a political scientist renowned for his study of political Islam and conservative nationalist movements in Turkey, will lecture on nationalism theories and the complex relationship between nationalism and Islam in the Turkish Republic. The objective of the seminar is for participants to acquire an advanced knowledge of the history, historiography, and theories of Turkish-Muslim nationalism. In addition, the seminar aims to enhance the skills of doctoral candidates in writing, presenting, and discussing conference papers.

The seminar is funded by the MUBIT doctoral colloquium, which is jointly conducted by the departments of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the universities of Basel, Bern, and Zurich. This seminar is MUBIT's first and, therefore, inaugural workshop.

Please contact Alp Yenen, M.A., for additional information and questions concerning organizational matters by email at: [alp.yenen@unibas.ch](mailto:alp.yenen@unibas.ch).

## **Application Procedure**

PhD students who wish to attend the seminar are asked to write an email to Alp Yenen, M.A. ([alp.yenen@unibas.ch](mailto:alp.yenen@unibas.ch)), explaining their motivation and their academic background (max. 300 words, in English). The deadline for the application is May 15, 2013. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation on June 1. Doctoral students of Islamic and Middle Eastern

Studies from Basel, Bern, and Zurich have priority over other applicants due to MUBIT funding. The maximum number of participants will be 15 students. The organizers will not assume any travel and accommodation costs.

### **Requirements for Successful Participation**

All participants are entitled to 3 ECTS points for successful participation. Participants will receive a list of required and recommended readings and a list of topics for presentations and papers from both guest lecturers (June 15, 2013). All doctoral participants must select two topics, one for each guest lecturer. For each topic, the participants must prepare a short paper (5-7 pp.) and a presentation (max. 10 min.). The deadline for the short papers is September 1, 2013.