

# Battle of Identities

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- Modern Turkish Republic, in many respects, is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire. However, the founding father of the modern Turkish Republic (1923), Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in an effort to create a modern state introduced a series of reforms to disestablish the Ottoman past. Kemalism, named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as an ideology based on homogenisation of ethnically and religiously diverse population, aiming, ultimately, to create a modern western state and society. Modernisation of society from top down alienated predominantly peasant and religious society. While radical secularism, one of the main pillars of Kemalist modernisation, has been a strong reference for a significant section of the middle class and civil-military bureaucracy, majority of the Turkish people continue to identify themselves with reference to Islamic culture. During the establishment and the consolidation of the secular modern republican regime, the republic de-emphasised Islam as part of Turkish republic, disempowering the ulema (religious scholars) and dissociated the regime from Islam, in order to control the autonomous Islamic political and civil society activity.

- Throughout the single party era (1923-1950) the ruling CHP (Republican People's Party) used
- Kemalist symbols abundantly, ranging from flags, Atatürk's pictures, busts and speeches to dominate the public and official spaces. On an everyday level these symbols has also appeared as stickers on shop windows, cars and on clothes. One symbol, Atatürk's signature on car's back windows has become a distinguishing mark between those who defends Atatürk's reforms and Western ideals as opposed to Islamic or Eastern values. This symbol was challenged first time in Turkish history when AKP (Justice and Development Party) came to power in 2002, by the supporters of this party. There appeared signature of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the car windows.

# Historical Context

- Kemalism, named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of the modern Turkish Republic (1923), as an ideology based on homogenisation of ethnically and religiously diverse population, aiming, ultimately, to create a modern western state and society. Modernisation of society from top down alienated predominantly peasant and religious society. While radical secularism, one of the main pillars of Kemalist modernisation, has been a strong reference for a significant section of the middle class and civil-military bureaucracy, majority of the Turkish people continue to identify themselves with reference to Islamic culture.

- During the National Independence War and during the consolidation of the nation state in the 1920s, Kemalist state adopted an Islamic discourse to mobilise the masses and the secure the alliance of influential religious leaders. However, Kemal made a careful 'distinction between regressive and progressive Islam, promoting the latter as compatible with modernisation' (Çınar and Duran 2008: 27). Between the 1920s and 1940s, during the establishment and the consolidation of the secular modern republican regime, the republic de-emphasised Islam as part of Turkish republic, disempowering the ulema (religious scholars) and dissociated the regime from Islam, in order to control the autonomous Islamic political and civil society activity. Through establishing Ministry of Religious Affair, Kemalist state aimed at 'promotion of an acceptable state Islam and the submission of religion to the reason of the state' (Çınar and Duran 2008: 22).

- Kemalist establishment has always viewed Islam and any political demand with Islamic agenda as backward, reactionary and thus a threat to the secular Turkish republic. Thus, until the 1950 general election, the first multiparty election since 1923, the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP) imposed a strict control on Islamic political activities. The election of the Democrat Party, DP, in 1950 allowed the representation of the 'periphery' in politics, as the DP showed a sensitive attitude towards religious sensibilities of the people.

Yeşil alanlar hızla azalıyor...

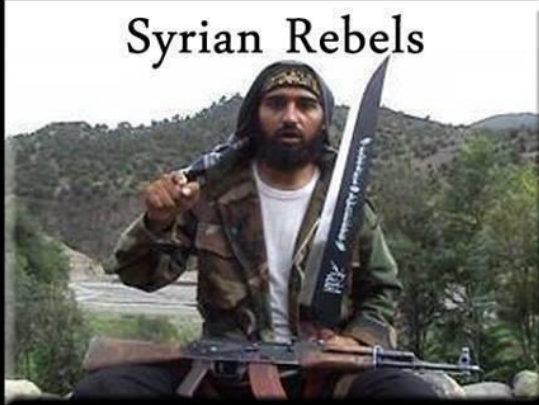
ŞU AĞAÇLAR DA GİTTİ Mİ  
AYNI ARABİSTAN LAN!



## Satılık Medya



Syrian Rebels



**Suriyeli hükümet karşıtı**

Turkish Rebels



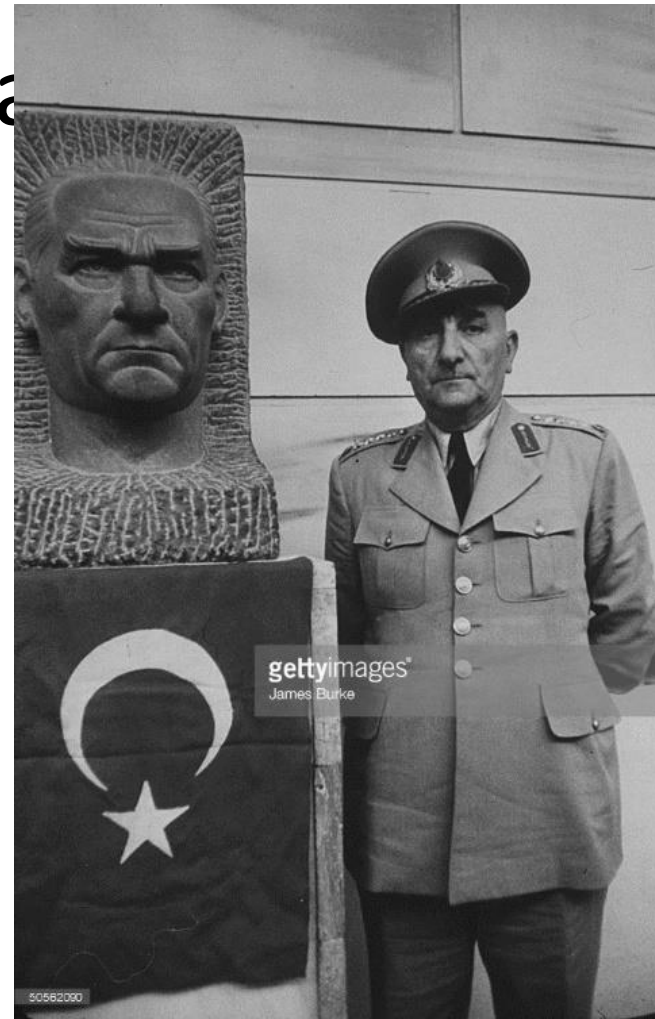
**Türkiyeli  
hükümet karşıtları**



- The republican mass education system created new social groups who came from the rural areas, through their education could find new paths for social advancement in state bureaucracy (White, 2008). DP allowed these groups to take up high positions in the state bureaucracy (ibid), operating in a state bureaucracy, which predominantly consisted of secularist elite. These new social groups distinguished themselves by their values and lifestyles informed by Islam as a frame of reference for daily life' (White, 2008: 350). The 1960 military coup ended the DP period, however, the 1961 constitution, the most democratic constitution Turkey had so far, allowed freedom of expression, unionisation and formation of political organisation.



Celal Bayar – 1954  
3rd President of Republic of Turkey



Cemal Gürsel – 1960  
4th President of Republic of Turkey

## Kemalism at Official Ceremonies



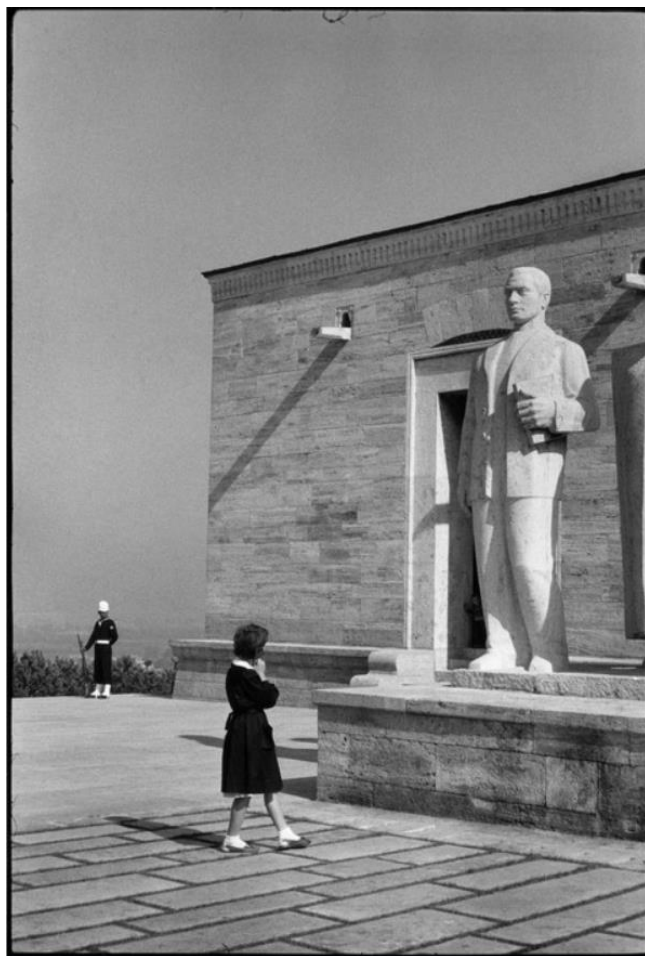








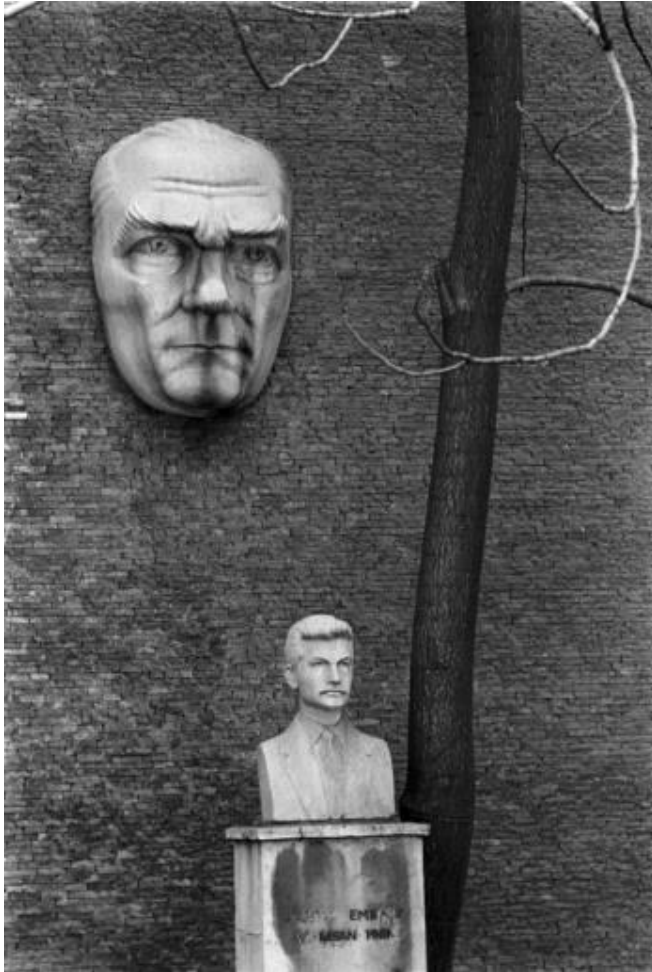
# Kemalism on Governmental Institutions







## 4- Kemalism on Public Places



# Kemalism in Daily Life















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# Contesting Atatürk







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