

perhaps even unstable area, still developing and evolving. This fact makes some conclusions of Zhurzhenko's work no longer applicable. For example, the author repeatedly stresses the importance of the Orange Revolution in bringing change to the country as well as the region, however, fails to acknowledge the failures of Ukraine's Orange government to consolidate change and go beyond elaborate rhetoric to decisive action. In retrospect the achievements of the Revolution are questionable at best, as they did not lead to a large political turnover or replace the political make up of the country, as was initially intended by the population of Ukraine, leading to a general disenchantment of the people with the events of 2004, and Ukrainian politicians in general. However, the repeated use of the Orange Revolution as a central event does not undermine the conclusions the author presents or the other well researched and little-known aspects of the borderlands of Ukraine. The more recent developments in Ukrainian politics that were not covered in Zhurzhenko's work cannot be seen as a flaw in the book; on the contrary, it should be viewed as an opportunity for further research on the topic of Eastern borders. It was the author's initial goal to fill a gap with her work. She managed to begin this process, yet there remains much space left for new and further analysis.

Overall it is hard not to agree with the author that "democratic consolidation and a decisive progress towards integration into the EU remain crucial preconditions for Ukraine to become a strong and independent player in the post-Soviet space. Unfortunately, a confrontation with Moscow in this matter is difficult to avoid, and Ukraine's position in the EU-Russia-Ukraine triangle is still the weakest one. This means that the dichotomy of 'Europe/the West' vs. 'Eurasia/Russia' will remain an important symbolic axis of Ukrainian politics for years to come." (p. 74).

Kerem Öktem, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2011)

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Turkey's transformation evidenced best by its more active and assertive foreign policy and economic growth for the last decade has deservedly attracted a great deal of attention. More and more students of Turkish politics have tried to explain underlying domestic, regional, and international dynamics of these monumental changes. As Turkish landscapes alter, a powerful current of scholarship with a revisionist approach to nationalist historiography and the Alevi, Kurdish demands as well as Armenian genocide claims have also surfaced. Kerem Öktem's *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989* is better taken in this overall context; it is one of the most recent

efforts to make sense of Turkey's metamorphosis through the lenses of revisionist views of the history of the Turkish Republic.

In this timely book Öktem seeks to explain the causes of what he perceives Turkey to be today, an angry nation that has finally started facing its deep structural and other problems. Feeling obliged to stray from the general framework of the 'Global History of the Present' series, of which this book is a part, Öktem commences Turkey's journey from the late Ottoman Empire to end it with Turkey in the first decade of the 21st century by taking the reader through the Cold War years and the derelict first post-Cold War decade with weak coalition governments, the 'Kurdish war', and a post-modern coup d'état in 1997. Digging in the history of the Turkish Republic for Turkey's ills today the author pins the blame on the founding ideology of the Republic, namely in the nationalist modernization forms of Unionism (İttihatçılık) and later Kemalism. Three key areas that Kemalism resolved in a very problematic fashion stand out in author's analysis: the definition of citizenship, the (mis)practice of secularism, and the absence of clear separation of roles between the judiciary, military, and governments. An actor that figures constantly and elicits the most blame from the author is 'the guardian state' which, according to Öktem, has disguised itself in many forms throughout the Republic. And three structural, one domestic and two international, turning points are singled out to have impacted Turkey's transformation most: 1980 coup d'état with deep scars it has created as well as the ensuing economic liberalization programme under Prime Minister and then President Turgut Ozal, the end of the Cold War and Turkey's reengagement more actively with the outside world, and most recently the 9/11 attacks, which have put Turkey on the frontline of the declared 'global war on terror'.

However, one problem that tarnishes the value of this book are the free-floating concepts scattered all around. Not wanting to define the PKK [Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan] as a terrorist organization, Öktem uses "fighters of the PKK" (p. 89), "guerillas" (p.89) and "PKK combat units" (p.185) all interchangeably in an unscholarly manner although he acknowledges in passing at one point that the PKK used terrorist strategies (p.66). He also offers an analogy between stone-throwing kids in Southeast Anatolia and Palestinians (p.143) but he simply takes for granted the aptness of such an analogy as he does not feel any need to justify it. Another freely used term is 'genocide'. It is not only that the author rushes to label what happened during the Republican period in Dersim in 1937/1938 a genocide (pp. 35-37) and extermination of Dersim Alevis (p. 7), something historians would hesitate to do, but also that elsewhere he refers to the same events as "Dersim massacres" (p.145). The reader is left wondering whether there is a distinction between massacre and genocide.

Further, the author casts the onus mostly on the secret dealings and behind the scenes operation of the 'guardian state.' However, the suspicion against the 'guardian state' reaches levels of paranoia at certain points in the book. For example, Öktem goes as far as to claim that guardian state was behind even the idea to film the 'Valley of Wolves in Iraq' [sic] in order to create a hotbed for chauvinism and militarism, which would then help preempt the newly emerging scholarship with revisionist re-reading of Turkish history (p.147).

Concerning the increased receptivity inside Turkey of Armenian genocide claims as illustrated by an 'apology campaign' recently organized (p.178), Öktem, in an act of exaggeration, argues that "the memory of 1915, and of many more instances of state violence such as the Dersim massacres of 1937/1938, the Wealth Tax and Istanbul pogroms of 1955 had not been excised from the *collective memory* as thoroughly as republican nation-builders would have hoped" (my emphasis) (p. 145). Here it remains obscure whose collective memory Öktem is alluding to because he also acknowledges that "outside the Armenian community and those families that had witnessed or taken part in the deportation of Armenians, or had escaped extermination by conversion, *few Turks* questioned the official orthodoxy and made no connection with the recollections of their grandparents" (p.145)? If it is only a few Turks who are today willing to accept the Armenian genocide claims, how does that allow for the authors' conclusion about Turks' collective memory?

Finally, the Armenian genocide receives a relevant role in the book. The author claims that the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) intended to exterminate or annihilate Armenians in the events of 1915. Yet, his assertion that "this [official] narrative [which denies there was genocide] was flying in the face of international scholarship, *where there was little disagreement*" (italics added) (p.145) could not be further from the truth unless such renowned historians as Malcolm Yapp, late Stanford Shaw, Norman Stone, and Bernard Lewis, who hesitated to pass judgment on these events on account of absence of historical evidence to convict the CUP of conspiring to exterminate the Armenians, are dismissed from this collection of international scholars. The problem of the overall absence of in-text referencing in the book gets even more acute in this section because the reader is given no chance to know which sources the author relies on while making certain assertions. Among the referenced books that one finds in the list of sources at the end, Vahakn Dadrian's book, for example, has been claimed by Malcolm Yapp to have harbored no new evidence for the CUP's deliberate extermination plans.⁴ Yet, the author seems so convinced about the truth of the Armenian genocide that he does not even feel the need to open a thorough discussion on the subject by defending his

⁴ Malcolm E. Yapp, review of *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, by Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Middle Eastern Studies* 32 (4) (Oct 1996): 395-397.

sources without discounting a whole body of opposing voices from the gambit of international scholarship.

Overall, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989* is written in nice prose and can be easily read in one sitting. The fact that Öktem minces his words at no place throughout the book serves as added value in certain sections. However, it is hard to claim that the book, which is written more with freely-floating concepts and unfounded assertions than one expects to come across in a scholarly publication, is a great service to scholarship on Turkey.

Robert Bowker, *Egypt and the Politics of Change in the Arab Middle East* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2010)

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The last two years have seen a transformation in the Arab world that stunned several regimes after the eruption of protest in Tunisia. When the first signs of the protest began to unfold in the Arab world's major cities, the world no doubt was skeptical as even some keen observers were caught saying the protesters would be dispersed with the "usual iron fist" by the Arab regimes' internal security apparatus. Though each country in the Arab world is unique, the Egyptian protest could be said to be the most dramatic. Robert Bowker's *Egypt and the Politics of Change in the Arab Middle East*, sounds like a futuristic study whose seeds germinated recently as it came to the reading stand a few months before the inevitable reforms that will have to take place despite the problems of "accommodation, reaction and resistance" under way (p. 1) in the corridors of power in the Middle East.

According to Bowker, any curious observation of the Middle East should start with Egypt. The Middle East is a restless region as a chunk of its population will, in a short time, reside in the cities and we know what this entails in social parlance: urbanization. Other "dynamics" that have characterized the region for many years and which continue to make headlines daily include "foreign occupation, rise of nationalist, secular leftist and Islamist reform movements," (p. 3); all of these suggest uncertainties on a large scale. These are factors that cannot exist devoid of the types of power structures in the Middle East which create "disconnection" between the Arab population and their leaders. If it is not a leadership change from father to son, it will surely then be what critics may call a "camouflaged democracy," a kind of democracy with no elections or with elections consistently dismissed as flawed. This, to Bowker, has created an absence of "political transparency or accountability" (p. 5). When rulers do as they wish, then you should expect trouble