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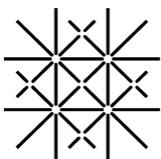
Contested Memory Regimes in Turkey Remembering and Forgetting in Authoritarian Turkey

Prof. Dr. Kerem Öktem (University of Graz)

23 February 2016, 6.15 pm
room 105, Maiengasse 51, Basel

Turkey has witnessed a proliferation of counterhegemonic memory acts in recent years. This trend towards remembering has been described enthusiastically as the emergence of a new space of memory, a coming to terms with a dark past and even as a process of healing. Others have criticised such efforts as superficial and occasionally also as conformist and, with regard to the Armenian genocide, neo-denialist. In this lecture, I will make two arguments. First, and based on the case study of the 2015 centennial of the Armenian genocide, I suggest that rather than the creation of a shared space of remembering, what we have seen is the emergence of several memory communities that co-exist amidst great tension. Some of these communities have indeed dedicated themselves to the recognition of the fact and effects of the genocide, while novel forms of denial have been advanced in others. Secondly, I argue that the current escalation of Turkey's authoritarian politics suspends the emerging moments of counter-hegemonic memory for two reasons: On a philosophical level, we can assert categorically that there can be no memory under war and dictatorship. Yet, more specifically, the current state crack down on the Kurdish movement is targeting the most vibrant memory community in Turkey.

Kerem Öktem is Professor for Southeast European Studies and Modern Turkey at the University of Graz, and Associate of the Centre for International Studies at the University of Oxford. His current research deals with Turkey's domestic and foreign policy, the history of the early Republic and nationalism, minority rights, and Islamic networks in Europe and the Balkans. His latest edited book (with H.-L. Kieser and M. Reinkowski) is *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide* (Tauris 2015), his last monograph is *Angry Nation. Turkey Since 1989* (Zed Books, 2011). Kerem Öktem is also a regular contributor to *OpenDemocracy* and the *FreeSpeechDebate*.



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