A PEACEFUL SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN TURKEY: CONFRONTING RACISM

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INTRODUCTION

The search for truth and the ongoing struggle to come to terms with the past allows for the possibility to speak about and to account for the experiences of state oppression and violence. These realities are known by a significant part of the society, but the people neither have the authority nor will to speak about it, nor the intention to assume the potential responsibilities and consequences for such discussions. It must be acknowledged that this struggle has made significant progress both in the world and in Turkey and that in the twenty-first century, it is more difficult to deny or to justify past injustices. On the other hand, the layers of indifference, which this struggle has not been able to completely eliminate, prevent injustices from being properly talked about and, more importantly, from being effectively denounced or accounted for.

Although we know that these layers of indifference, which feed on the injustices inherent in the very foundations of states and have pervaded the depths of daily life and become structural and systemic, cannot be overcome solely by the search for truth and the struggle to confront the past led by victims and dissidents, the main thrust of this struggle is exactly to go against this insurmountability. In other words, the search for truth and the struggle to confront the past position the dominant, who associate peace with the past and the continuation of their privileges, against the aggrieved, who see peace as belonging to the future and make it conditional on ending these privileges. Because of the demand for the redemption of political, economic, and social debts, and the insistent emphasis on the adjective "dignified" regarding the lasting peace they are trying to build, the task of thinking about how the perpetrators and the privileged might be able to comprehend the victims and dissidents' search for truth and struggle to confront the past, falls to those who seek this lasting and dignified peace.

Knowing that a search for truth and a struggle for confronting the past that demands the redemption of political, economic, and social debts and pursue the aim of a lasting and dignified peace may not – directly, spontaneously, or in the short term – produce any peaceful results, since the debtors do not intend to pay their debts or give up their privileges, requires us to reflect on the possibilities of carrying on with this struggle in a multilayered way. This includes not only victims and dissidents, but also other segments of society, and to turn the search for truth and the coming to terms with the past into a political program. That said, there is a more fundamental truth underlying this need, which also concerns social groups other than the victims and the dissidents and needs to be made visible and accounted for: the power relations that are inherent in the modern understanding of political government and which encompass all layers of society, exercise their power of establishing, producing, speaking, and recording truth through systematic, structural, and coercive means.

Objecting to this relationship between power and truth, which Foucault described with the notion of the "regime of truth," and to the official truths and the regime of truth that arise from this relationship, might be one of the ways to point out that victims and dissidents are not the only ones waiting for redemption and to crack open the layers of indifference in society. In short, the combating of indifference regarding past injustices, the current struggles to reveal the truth and confront the past, and the efforts towards building a lasting and dignified peace all imply that we attempt to make visible the workings and resources of truth regimes and to unveil who or what they exploit and deny.

While the effort to make visible the functioning of a certain regime of truth and the official truths it produces corresponds to a search for counter-truths, this search is prone to becoming part of establishing and operating an oppositional regime of truth. In other words, it is pertinent to remember that every regime of truth will lead to the formation of an oppositional regime of truth and that the search for truth, which relies on counter-truths in contesting the official truth regime, plays an important role in the construction of this oppositional truth regime. Therefore, we can say that building lasting peace is only possible if the "regime of war," which feeds on the conflict between regimes of truth, is contested. In order to place this normative and moral proposition on a descriptive and political foundation, it is necessary to discuss criticisms regarding current approaches in dealing with the past and truth-seeking in the context of contributing to peace and to reflect on a "peaceful search for truth," that is, a multi-faceted and multi-layered method of truth-seeking that encompasses different forms of unjust treatment and challenges the indifference of the privileged groups so as to unsettle the regime of war and propagate the demand for peace rather than to consolidate any regime of truth.

In thinking about a peaceful way of truth-seeking, there are two points I find worth discussing. The first is reflecting on the meaning and possibilities of revealing the political and economic equivalents of those factual truths which the official regime of truth makes invisible, and therefore, the oppositional regime of truth tries to make visible. In addition to tracing the factual truths concealed by the official regime of truth, to discuss, in the context of a lasting and dignified peace, those factual truths that the oppositional regime of truth approves of suppressing. It is imperative to underline that the resources and power, as well as the violence and oppression of the two regimes of truth are not equal and that the suffering and destruction is therefore not equally respected and does not have similar chances for reparation. Without this caveat, one would be and become complicit in perpetuating the existing injustices. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the peaceful search for truth itself is a task that falls to the oppositional regime of truth, which is deprived of the power network that the official regime of truth has at its command. In this sense, what I am trying to refer to is not a critical analysis that

remains impartial to the regimes of truth, but a conception that challenges the official regime of truth's hegemony over truth, its past oppression and its future domination, while inviting the oppositional regime of truth to adopt a demand for justice and and an approach to building peace which is consistent with the search for truth that makes this regime possible at all.

The second point I want to make while thinking about a peaceful truth-seeking method has to do with revealing the relationship between the establishment and functioning of regimes of truth and racism. This relationship, which once again Foucault can help us to trace, reveals that the most fundamental truth claim that constitutes the very existence of the regime of truth concerns the existence of races, their superiority over each other and the right of one race to exploit the others. Produced by biological and physiological means under the control of governments and serving to inspire nationalisms and legitimize colonialism, racism allows the modern nation-state to regulate rights and truths in order to promote a particular race while destroying others. After the struggles against colonialism and racism made it impossible to officially invoke colonialism and racism, racism has acquired both new and cultural attributes. In fact, it operates with a tyranny of normality developed by those in power to govern the entire society and to make sure that society governs itself within the framework of the rules determined by the government. Any manifestation that does not comply with the norms is subject to discrimination, injustice, and violence.

I think that defining "racism" as the phenomenon that lies at the source of discrimination against those outside the norms, aside from corresponding to speaking truth in line with the path sketched above, translates injustice, oppression, and destruction into a social register. In my eyes, calling discrimination against genders other than the dominant gender by its name, that is, naming it sexism, strengthens the struggle to make this discrimination constitute a criminal offense, while the fact that we are not able to call discrimination against different religions and languages as religionism or linguicism works to the contrary. In this respect, I think that calling forms of discrimination, other than sexism, which are legitimized particularly by being referred to as nationalism, by their name, that is, racism, will buttress efforts towards making racism a crime and empower the struggle against racism. The issue should not be seen simply as a matter of naming, because it can be argued that naming is a political struggle in itself, corresponding to the efforts of victims and dissidents, who object to expressing the injustices they suffer in the terms of the regime of truth, to point out systematic and structural discrimination and violence.

I would like to conclude this introduction by mentioning the content of this study, which tries to place the above-mentioned discussion in the context of coming to terms with the past and truth-

seeking in Turkey. In the first part of the study, I tried to address today's discussion on the so-called post-truth era proceeding from Foucault's analysis of the "regime of truth" and Arendt's considerations regarding the relationship between truth and politics. After tracing the path of the post-truth era, which I think could also be described as a truthlessness-era, in Turkey, I tried to look at the TV shows of the 1990s and 2010s, especially the manifestations of the "fight against terrorism" that appeared on state channels and the different traces of memory and truth emerging from these manifestations, in order to examine the construction, functioning, resilience and crisis of the regime of truth in Turkey. I tried to discuss the relationship between Turkey's official truth regime and the oppositional truth regime constructed against the former as a regime of war that became particularly evident during the so-called "trench operations." I have tried to present my thoughts regarding the struggle to confront the past and especially also a peaceful way of truth-seeking within the framework of a battle for truth arising from an objection to the truth regimes.

In the second part of the study, I wanted to trace the relationship between the regime of truth and racism. Embarking on this task with an examination of the form of this relationship in Turkey, I examined television talk shows to critically review the relationship between nationalism and racism and the widespread belief that there is no racism in Turkey. This review is grounded in the literature on racism and anti-racism. With the aim of embedding the issues of racism and the struggle against it in the context of efforts towards coming to terms with the past, I touched upon the criticisms leveled against the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and tried to focus on findings suggesting that the problem of racism has not been properly addressed in South Africa's dealing with the past and still fuels discrimination and violence against blacks and other Africans today.

In order to review these findings in the context of a process of coming to terms with the past which will take place in Turkey one day, I first wanted to call to mind the racist reactions to past attempts to resolve conflict in Turkey and the general course of these attempts. Presuming that the great differences between Turkey and South Africa do not prevent us from learning from each other and thinking about both countries together, I elaborated from the South African experience to reflect on a number of aspects that could prove to be critical for anchoring Turkey's dealing with the past and peace process in an anti-racist framework.

While I was working on this study, the following thought often occurred to me: Seeing that this struggle to search for truth and confront the past simultaneously provides the opportunity of contesting regimes of truth and struggling against racism, it also demonstrates once more that this struggle has an inspiring inclusive political power. I hope I have been able to make this idea clear and worth considering.

A PEACEFUL SEARCH FOR

TRUTH IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

This part, which discusses the possibilities of a peaceful way of truth-seeking and confronting the past in Turkey in the post-truth era, consists of three main sections. The first section, in which I address the concept of the "regime of truth," the relationship between truth and politics, and discussions on the post-truth era, is complemented by an evaluation of Turkey's era of truthlessness. The second section, in which I examine Turkey's regime of truth through the political debates and images figuring in the television programs of the 90s and the mnemonic traces left by these images, involves a discussion that touches upon the present manifestations, and therefore the resilience but also the crisis of this regime of truth by looking at a television program of the 2010s. This part ends with the third section, in which I try to discuss the oppositional truth regime constructed against the official truth regime within the framework of a battle for truth that can serve a peaceful search for truth.

The Political Action of Truth

According to Foucault, who claims that modern power operates by dominating truth, truth is to be understood "as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements," and as such it "is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it."[1] Foucault writes that this circular relation, which he calls a "regime of truth," is under constant political and economic incitement, and is produced under the dominant control of institutions such as the university, army and media, and, as the object of extensive distribution and consumption, encompasses a whole political debate and social conflict.[2] In this sense, we can say that the regime of truth constrains the political sphere by domineering politics and operates as a permanent "regime of war" based on the domination over truth. As a matter of fact, tracing the historico-political discourse woven around the claim that politics is a continuation of war, Foucault provides the following analysis: War, presiding over the birth of law and the state, does not end when the guns fall silent; it forms the basis of all power relations and thus causes us to be at constant war with one another. In this general state of war, "the person who is speaking, telling the truth, recounting the story, rediscovering memories and trying not to forget anything

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1 Michel Foucault. 1980a. Truth and Power. In Michel Foucault. Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977. Ed. Colin Gordon. Pantheon Books: 133.

2 ibid.: 132f.

[...] is inevitably on one side or the other: he is involved in the battle, has adversaries, and is working toward a particular victory."[3] The subject of this discourse has lost its universal or neutral position. By saying, "We have a right" what s/he actually means is "the right of his family or race, the right of superiority or seniority, the right of triumphal invasions, or the right of recent or ancient occupations."[4] Similar to the concept of law, the concept of truth is neither neutral or universal nor close to peace but turns into a weapon used for exclusive victories. In this respect, it serves the emergence of truth relations being inherent in power relations and the construction of regimes of truth. Truth has essentially been a part of power relations, asymmetry, and war.[5] In this sense, we can say that we are always referring to the counter-truths that power rejects, suppresses, and erases as opposed to the official truths that are subject to the knowledge production and circulation of power, thus taking sides in the regime of war created by the regime of truth.

One might want to note that factual truths can neither speak nor find their audience by themselves. Likewise, the question of which factual truths will be conveyed to whom and how, and what is to be done with these factual truths is always a matter of political interpretation and choice. If we accept these caveats, we can say that factual truths are used and interpreted in certain ways within certain political contexts to form opinions and beliefs and are thereby transformed into political truths. As a matter of fact, embarking on her discussion of the relationship between truth and politics, Arendt first of all pointed out the difference between rational truth (truths about mathematics, science, philosophy, and religion) and factual truths, stating that factual truths, which "occur in the field of the ever-changing affairs of men," that is, as part of the political sphere, could not resist the attacks of power and could not find any shelter other than the human mind.[6] On the other hand, we can also say that this shelter is a place where the truth is processed, framed and prepared to appear in the public sphere. Especially after everyone's opinion, voice and vote has gained importance following the development of democracy, it has become an inherent phenomenon of modern politics that governments descend into the shelters of factual truths in order to (re-) shape opinions. Arendt states that this was changed by the arrival of post-modern

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3 Michel Foucault. 2003. "Society Must Be Defended" Lectures at the Collège de France. 1975-76. Picador: 51-52.

4 Michel Foucault. 2003: 52.

5 ibid. 2003: 57.

6 Hannah Arendt. 2006. Truth and Politics. in Hannah Arendt. Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought. Ed. Jerome Kohn.

Penguin Books: 227

politics. Now, opinions started to be formed independently of factual truths and a political antagonism emerged between opinions and facts.[7]

Observing that factual truths emerge "in the guise of the [...] 'it seems to me'" because of the "tendency to transform fact into opinion," which we can witness everywhere today, Arendt adds that factual truths, "coercive," "peremptory" and "stubborn" as they are, preclude debate, while debate constituted the basis of all politics. This stubbornness can result in the victory of opinions over factual truths so that the latter are prone to quickly fall out of the political sphere. What makes factual truths so susceptible to defeat at the hands of opinions is that the former are more difficult to reach and disseminate rather than the latter, i.e. that factual truths cannot be absorbed and wander from one person to the other as easily as opinions.

Moreover, factual truths have not only a rival but an enemy. If opinions are its rival, then lies are its enemy, says Arendt. What is more, "lies, since they are often used as substitutes for more violent means, are apt to be considered relatively harmless tools in the arsenal of political action."[8] On the other hand, we can say that the lie is used not only to substitute violence but also to legitimize it, and therefore amounts to more than a harmless tool. Arendt's observations regarding the relationship between both "organized/modern political lying" and power shed some light on the relationship between lies and violence:

> The traditional political lie, so prominent in the history of diplomacy and statecraft, used to concern either true secrets – data that had never been made public – or intentions [...] In contrast, the modern political lies deal efficiently with things that are not secrets at all but are known to practically everybody. [...] All these lies, whether their authors know it or not, harbor an element of violence; organized lying always tends to destroy whatever it decided to negate, although only totalitarian governments have consciously adopted lying as the first step to murder. [...] [T]he difference between the traditional lie and the modern lie will more often than not amount to the difference between hiding and destroying.[9]

We can say that regimes of truth use both traditional and modern lies and operate as an organized regime of lies/war, which conceals secrets, intentions, and factual truths,

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7 ibid.: 233-235.

8 ibid.. 2006: 224.

9 ibid.: 247-248.

or substitutes them with opinions, or uses opinions to assault factual truths, and is determined to destroy whatever it negates. Moreover, as even the authors and agents of lies and destruction start believing in these organized lies that change the entire political context and frame the factual truths, the truth, which once "found its last refuge" in the liar, has "been maneuvered out of the world altogether."[10] Arendt emphasizes that it is only in such a situation that truthfulness will qualify as political action, that is, in a situation where organized lying dominates the political sphere, and in this case, she writes, the truth-teller has also "engaged himself in political business" and "made a start toward changing the world."[11] Based on these considerations, we can reiterate that the struggle to confront the past and the search for a counter-truth, in contesting the official regime of truth, are tantamount to political action.

It should be added that the regime of truth operates in such a way that this form of political action is constantly rendered futile, that is, it attacks the faculty of judgment that would allow us to distinguish between truth and lie. Reminding us that "the surest long-term result of brainwashing is a peculiar kind of cynicism – an absolute refusal to believe in the truth of anything, no matter how well this truth may be established," Arendt explains that the result of this is "not that lies will now be accepted as truth, and the truth be defamed as lies, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world [...] is being destroyed," this being precisely what ensures the recruitment of subjects to totalitarian regimes.[12] In such a case, the perception of truth is so thoroughly destroyed, the truth slips away so far away that it becomes very difficult to see it, or to cite it even if we can see it, or to make others believe in it even if we get a hold of it and bring it back, and to incorporate it in the current political sphere to change the world.

Conversely, the struggles of coming to terms with the past and seeking the truth show that, no matter how damaged the faculty of judgment and perception of truth might be, there is no political space that is not haunted, pressured, and delimited by the notion of truth. As a matter of fact, as Arendt puts it, "[p]ersuasion and violence can destroy truth, but they cannot replace it,"[13] since truth has a power that derives its strength from the past. The past, beyond the reach of human intervention and action, is irreversible and irrevocable. It delimits and thus creates the political sphere through the agency

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10 ibid.: 250.

11 ibid.: 247.

12 ibid.: 252-253.

13 *ibid.: 255.*

of the truth-teller who decides to enter this sphere. Taking such a vantage point to approach the predicament diagnosed by many that we arguably live in an era where truth has become obsolete and there no longer is a place for the truth-teller can be a good starting point for discussing how this era might affect the struggle for truth seeking and confronting the past.

The Post-Truth Era

Although I will continue to use the expression "post-truth" in the concept of the "post-truth era" – usually translated into Turkish as *"hakikat-sonrası çağ"* – as an adjective describing some relational modes or situations, I think that the concept really describing the era we live in is "truthlessness."[14] In my eyes, the word truthlessness indicates both the erosion or devaluation of truth and the loss of the perception of truth, yet simultaneously the appreciation of truth and the growing need and search for said truth. We can deepen this conceptual discussion by examining what led to the emergence, social response to, and widespread use of the concept of the post-truth era.

The official lies about the Vietnam War first came to light in the Watergate Scandal in the 1970s but did not equally disturb all segments of the US society. This paved the way for those secrets, which would form the basis of the foreign policy moves of the US in the following years, to simply be retained in the public sphere. As of the 2010s, this led to the emergence of the expression "post-truth politics."[15] The condition of post-truth politics, which became particularly palpable with Donald Trump's campaign in the 2016 elections and the style of politics he adopted during his presidency, is an expression used

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14 As a matter of fact, when the word "post-truth," which was specified as an adjective in the Oxford Dictionary, was translated into Turkish, it lost its quality as an adjective: "The state of affairs in which objective truths/facts are less effective than emotions and personal convictions/beliefs in determining/forming the public opinion on a particular issue." In addition to this difference, Adem Terzi notes that the structure of the original word complicates its translation into Turkish, a language that does not have prefixes. Terzi states that the most appropriate explanation for the concept of "post-truth" would be hakikatin önemsizleşmesi ("the loss of significance of truth"), but that he finds gerçek sonrası ("post-factual") and gerçek ötesi ("trans-factual") more appropriate. However, as in the most appropriate explanation for the concept, I think that we should insist on the word hakikat ("truth") and that those working in the field of confronting the past will continue to use the word gerçek ("fact") to refer to more singular and factual data, and the word for truth to describe a more comprehensive situation with political, economic and social dimensions. Âdam Terzi. 2020. "Post-Truth" Kavramı ve Türkçe Karşılıkları Üzerine. Türk Dili. April, 69: 82; 80-86. For the English definition of the word, see: https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/ [29.11.2020].

15 Ran Halévi. 2017. The new truth regime. Le Débat. 197(5): 28-41. https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_DEBA_197_0028--the-new-truth-regime.htm# [07.03.2021].

to characterize the era in which we live in. Trump's discrediting of a report that contained findings on the climate crisis in 2018, by saying "I don't believe it," was cited as an example of politics' new relationship with truth: "'I don't believe it' can be interpreted as a manifestation of felt truth, as opposed to the truth of fact."[16]

The post-truth condition does not simply refer to lying, fabricating, breaking one's word, or being false, for, recalling Arendt, we can say that these are not new. What is new is described as "the increasing priority of emotional vibration over fact and evidence, replacing verification by social media algorithms that tell us what we want to hear."[17] We can also say that these algorithms welcome truthlessness as a life strategy, offering society a repertoire of denial. The politician who says "I don't believe it" rescues the public from the shame felt vis-à-vis the scientists, from anxieties about the climate crisis, and from the guilt felt about causing this crisis.[18] It is also underlined that due to increasing social polarization it is no longer possible for truth-tellers and scientists to reach this "emotional" community who "does not want to believe" in factual truths and is scorched by fear and anxiety.[19]

Here, it would however be beneficial if we remind ourselves that it was not possible to reach this community in earlier days either. For example, one of the illusions of the post-truth era, the assumption that the public would make the right decisions if only the right information was widely circulated, might lead us to the conclusion that there are not enough publications or debates on racism in America. However, permeating the very capillaries of society, racism has existed for far too long and has been exposed by far too many studies to be reduced to a matter of concern peculiar to the era of truthlessness. On the one hand, it is a form of oppression characterized by concrete and material causes and effects which cannot be explained by non-materialistic or non-political approaches, such as sentimentality or ignorance. On the other hand, racism is the starting point of a struggle that has afforded countless sacrifices but also led to important achievements.[20]

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16 Giovanni Gobber. 2019. The scarlet letter of 'post-truth': the sunset boulevard of communication. Church, Communication and Culture. 4:3, 287-304: 293

17 Matthew D'Ancona. 2017. Ten alternative facts for the post-truth world. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/12/post-truth-worst-of-best-donald-trump-sean-spicer-kellyanne-conway [10.07.2021]

18 Gobber. 2019.

19 Anna Durnová. 2019. Unpacking emotional contexts of post-truth. Critical Policy Studies. 13(4): 447-450.

20 Robert Mejia, Kay Beckermann and Curtis Sullivan. 2018. White lies: a racial history of the (post)truth. Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies. 15(2): 109-126.

In this sense, approaches that consider the reprimanding references to post-truth made by liberals, who took the election of a racist, sexist, and mendacious member of the economic elite as president to be a result of the post-truth era while ignoring the systematic negation of black truths, as "the symptom of racism" add a critical dimension to the post-truth debate.[21]

In response to approaches that regretfully lament the post-truth era, we might want to recall that feelings and beliefs have always been among the tools of politics. Also, factual truths did not really circulate smoothly and enjoy great popularity before – and even if they did, science and academia were not too well respected before this era of truthlessness. And particularly as regards the phenomenon of polarization, which is often attributed to the digital age, it should be noted that our familiarity with the politics of hatred and resentment derives from decades, even centuries ago.[22] In short, we can say that there has never been an era of truth – this is the case especially for workers, women, blacks, indigenous peoples, minorities of all kinds, LGBTI+ communities, and colonized peoples. The struggle to confront the past is a political struggle that arises precisely from their objection to truthlessness and official truths, their demand for recognition of oppositional truths, their search for truth and their efforts to restore the dignity of truth.

Still, the persistence of critiques of the relationship between truth and politics should not simply lead us to the conclusion that "nothing has changed." To see the possibilities that appear in the era of truthlessness and to be able to reflect on new truth-seeking struggles it is important to try to understand what is really new. In this sense, we might say that we are in a different era of truthlessness where already existing social polarizations are further confirmed and deepened by means of the media and social media. New polarizations are quickly created and the interlocutors of these polarizations become fanatical actors who start inventing factual truths themselves. We can also add that in an age where it is possible to generate alternative factual truths and present and disseminate these truths in an aesthetic way with the aim of exciting and inciting the partisans on one side of the polarization, the perception of truth suffers greater damage than in earlier times.[23] The masses are not only passively exposed to but personally take part in this process. Their relationship to truth has transformed to

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21 ibid.

22 See Kathrin Braun. 2019. Unpacking post-truth. Critical Policy Studies. 13(4): 432-436.

23 For "alternative facts" see Colin Wright. 2018. Post-Truth, Postmodernism and Alternative Facts. New Perspectives. 26(3): 17-29.

resemble power's relationship to truth, or in other words, the desire to dominate truth has become generalized. On the other hand, we can also say that this transformation does not simply destroy truth but can also serve to question the perception of truth and even to loosen the bolts that hold together the regimes of truth.[24]

In a time when the physical and imaginary boundaries of the modern public sphere or the regime of truth are being challenged by opposing truths, the social media, as a medium where these truths can thrive, can function to generate multiple public opinions and undermine the mainstream. The existence of a digital social network which states cannot control is significant in that even the "Web 2.0 spirit" carries the potential for a crisis of truth regimes.[25] Rather than on "external authenticity," which is backed by factual truths, these digital environments are based on "internal authenticity," which is associated with personal coherence and conscientious commitment to a truth, and may contain uncanny self-presentations because they often focus on the number of followers or "friends." When compared to physical collective responses, these digital environments may further allow for collective opposition that preserves individual forms of expression to a greater extent.[26]

Analyzing campaigns such as the "More Than Buchris" campaign, which targeted the Israelian army via sexual offender and ex-army member Ofek Buchris, and the digital demonstrations in which the visual and audio recordings and testimonies of these campaigns were used, Shifman draws attention to the fact that these political activities, multiplying by imitation while each retaining their creative uniqueness, constitute a form of collective truth-telling that has the power to enforce a "vigilante justice" through

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24 As we will discuss in the next section, the debates on the web sites where the television programs of the 1990s are published and the race to establish hegemony over the truth that can be observed in the television programs of the 2010s indicate that in Turkey the perception of truth is being revised to the detriment of the official truth regime.

25 Paul Gready and Simon Robins. 2017. Rethinking civil society and transitional justice: lessons from social movements and 'new' civil society. The International Journal of Human Rights. 21(7): 956-975. The terms "Web 2.0" or "social network" are used to define a more personal and communicative second-generation digital network consisting of interoperable, user-centered web applications and services that encourage social communication, media and information sharing, user content creation and inter-institutional cooperation. See David W. Wilson, Xiaolin Lin, Phil Longstreet and Saonee Sarker. 2011. Web 2.0: A Definition, Literature Review, and Directions for Future Research. AMCIS 2011 Proceedings Paper 368: http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2011_submissions/368 [01.12.2020].

26 Limor Shifman. 2018. Testimonial rallies and the construction of memetic authenticity. European Journal of Communication. 33:2, 172-184. For examples of this kind of collective opposition in Turkey, see İnan Özdemir Taştan. 2018. Ayrımcılıkla Mücadele için Radikal Medya. in Ülkü Doğanay (ed.) Ayrımcılığın Yüzleri. Kapasite Geliştirme Derneği: 217-232.

disclosure, that is, to take back the rights of the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor and bring about legal consequences.[27] Şimşek, who examines "post-truth" posts shared in Facebook groups like Sevdamız Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ("Our Love Mustafa Kemal Atatürk"), Türk Özel Kuvvetleri ("Turkish Special Forces") and Fetva Kurulu ("Fatva Committee") and their detrimental effects in terms of polarization, while at the same time evaluating the Youtube channel "140 Journos," draws attention to counter-initiatives and positive examples in Turkey, which can be found on "teyit. org," "dogrulukpayi.com" and "oyveotesi.com."[28] In addition to these examples, we can also mention the creative works in the field of confronting the past and truth-seeking on "karakutu.org.tr" and "hafizakaydi.org." The existence of such platforms, which can perhaps be referred to as "truth movements," indicates that truth still has a social value.

Siddiquee, who examines the striking role of the Myanmar state's use of media and especially the hateful posts in anti-Rohingya Facebook groups in the Rohingya genocide in 2017, argues that the post-truth era paved the way for authoritarianism rather than democratization.[29] But while social media is a tool that facilitates and accelerates the dissemination of racist official truths and the mobilization of racist/lynching mobs, we also know that the command and control over racist/lynchist mobs has been accomplished by different means in the past. For example, one broadcast of the TV program 32. Gün ("32. Day") deals with an incident in which a group led by supporters of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) "poured" into the streets of Erzurum after the Yavi and Çiçekli Massacres of the PKK in 1993, before they raided the provincial headquarters of the Democracy Party (DEP) and then headed towards the Kurdish neighborhood. In the broadcast, this incident was recounted as follows: "The State just watched things helplessly. Thousands of people were about to wreak their anger at the PKK on their Kurdish compatriots. They were out for revenge."[30] Governor Oğuz

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27 Limor Shifman. 2018.

28 Volkan Şimşek. 2018. Post-Truth ve Yeni Medya: Sosyal Medya Grupları Üzerinden Bir İnceleme. Global Media Journal TR Edition. Bahar/Spring. 8(16).

29 Md. Ali Siddiquee. 2020. The portrayal of the Rohingya genocide and refugee crisis in the age of post-truth politics. Asian Journal of Comparative Politics. 5(2): 89-103.

30 In the same program, we were able to learn that within a week, 750 residents of Erzurum, most of whom were nationalists, had applied to become police or sergeant and carried out a petition for the expulsion of DEP members from Parliament. The guests in the program, which host Mehmet Ali Birand opened by saying, "The party that is most active with regard to the Southeast problem is the Nationalist Movement Party. The MHP has its own methods. [...] We were able to witness their activity in the Erzurum incidents as well," were MHP Chairman Alpaslan

Berberoğlu, who joined the program, said the following in response to the group's desire for revenge, which was "cooled down" by the MHP supporters: "Tens of thousands of people, full of hate, were chanting slogans such as 'The youth of Erzurum want guns.' 'Yes,' I said, 'We will give the youth of Erzurum their weapons.'" The next day he made the following statement to the crowd that had gathered in front of the government building: "The General Staff has sent one thousand Kalashnikovs yesterday. [...] I believe that if my brave Erzurum men receive guns and training, and if they stand their guard, we will not only cope with the PKK but even with the Armenian army."

We can find countless examples demonstrating that authoritarianism is less dependent on social media compared to democratization. In this sense, regimes of truth are perhaps the real problem and different uses of social media and the search for truth, which can contribute to unsettling regimes of truth, are one of the distinctive and positive aspects of the post-truth era.[31] In summary, what most importantly distinguishes the era of truthlessness from earlier times, equally characterized by low esteem for truth and a severe devastation of the perception of truth, seems to be that never before have so many people been so greatly concerned about the way we relate to truth.[32] d'Agostini, a scholar who uses the term "post-post-truth-era" to describe the peculiar situation regarding how the problem of truth has gained such great importance in our lives, discusses the marked difference in our current era. She notes that what is new today is not the ubiquitous circulation of popular lies everywhere, but the numerous diagnoses and therapies proposed for our "alethic diseases."[33] Problematizing efforts to explain the cognitive diseases, i.e., "human alethic diseases," associated with different modes of truth such as necessity, contingency, or impossibility, that is, only with today's technological development, the malice of politicians, or the ignorance of the public, and further problematizing the superficial solutions that arise from such explanations, might in fact lead us to consider the following: Perhaps, we find ourselves in an era of truthlessness where truth is gaining currency. This era does therefore not actually require an immediate cure, but can even be understood as a period of convalescence.

Türkeş and DEP Şırnak Deputy Orhan Doğan, who was on trial for hiding a PKK member in his house. The program discusses the "Southeast Problem" in connection to the DEP's refusal to condemn the PKK. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN5ljsCwRnI [21.11.2020].

31 As a matter of fact, a news report demonstrating the Turkish government's discomfort with the use of social media, especially in critical social events, and featuring legitimate objections to the news that fake images and information were used, can be found at the following address: https://www.yenisafak.com/teknoloji/ozgurluge-evet-sosyal-terore-hayir-dunyada-sahte-haberlere-en-cok-maruz-kalan-ulke-turkiye-3547711 [02.11.2020]

32 Franca d'Agostini. 2019. Misunderstandings about truth. Church, Communication and Culture, 4(3): 266-286.

33 ibid

The Era of Truthlessness in Turkey

Although the periods before the AKP rule, especially the 90s, were an era of truthlessness in their own right, particularly from the point of view of the Kurds, it can be said that the "post-truth era" in Turkey is generally thought to have started with the AKP government. The assumption that the AKP government itself created a condition of truthlessness found expression in accusations that they were engaging in "taqiyya," which means "hiding one's true opinion and belief."[34] Yet this truthlessness regarding intentions, which could fit in with Arendt's category of the traditional political lie, was but another truthlessness adding to the modern political lie, which makes it possible to deny or ignore what practically everyone knows. The subjects of the existing regime of truth accused an Islamist government of committing taqiyya, fearing that it would turn hostile towards their modern and secular way of life and that privileges would change hands. Knowing very well the racist-colonial nature of the truth regime and the authoritarian and conservative aspects of the modern and secular lifestyle, the victims of the latter, especially the Kurds, did not have any privileges they could have feared to lose because of the AKP government, which opposed the existing truth regime.

While the AKP unhinged and transformed some of the racist and colonial victories underlying the longing for the old Turkey, it carried a significant part of them even further. We can say that particularly for the Kurds, the truth regime erected by the AKP is no more truthless than the previous one. It should also be remembered that the political and social initiatives which reached their crest in the Solution Process and, even when not seen as treason or deceit, were never supported without hesitation, paved the way for the transition from a regime of war to a regime of peace. However, the positive results and memories of these attempts were entirely undone by the "Trench Incidents" and the attacks on the local and national political will of the Kurdish people, which gave rise to claims that due to the resilience of the war regime, new Turkey had regressed into old Turkey, signaling a return to the 90s. One of the issues indicated by the claim that this was a return to the 90s was that the AKP government, in accordance with the post-truth era, violently destroyed the already wounded perception of truth by rejecting the factual truths that would shock its audience. Instead, it fabricated its own factual truths to excite its audience.

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34 https://www.luggat.com/index.php#ceviri [03.12.2020]. For some news articles about taqqiya accusations see: https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/son-dakika-haberi/chpli-arslan-iktidar-14-yildir-takiye-yapiyor-1362589/ [03.12.2020]; https://odatv4.com/nuray-mert-ten-yine-kandirildik-aciklamasi-0805171200.html [03.12.2020].

The destruction of the perception of truth in line with the post-truth era has been visible in many other political events. Social media, which is considered a field of struggle by the AKP, has become a critical medium of the battle for truth which climaxed especially during the Gezi Resistance in May-June 2013, the corruption and bribery scandal involving the Erdoğan family on December 17-25, the Kobani protests in October 2014, the Ankara Station massacre on October 10, 2015, the Trench Incidents of 2015-2016 and the coup attempt of July 15, 2016 – and this battle continues today.[35] Especially the Trench Incidents marked a striking return to the old era of truthlessness in terms of the Kurdish issue. On the other hand, we might add here that the official and oppositional regimes of truth were unsettled in the course of these events, something discussed in greater detail at the end of this section. The AKP government's response to this unsettling was to deepen the existing polarization, establish hegemony over those on its own side through ideological and material means, and use pressure and violence against its opponents.[36] I think that this response, which postponed the transition from the war regime to a peace regime, was made possible as a result of the fact that the efforts to confront the past and come to terms with the truth regime, especially with the 90s, have remained unrequited for so long.

In line with the statements made by Police Chief Hanefi Avcı in Parliament and on television programs in 1997 and 1998, reactions to the deep state gang, which the Susurluk accident[37] on November 3, 1996 exposed, and suspicions regarding the truth regime that this gang had made visible, were ultimately dispelled as the incidents were rendered as an intra-state settling of accounts. A TV broadcast in October 2008, in which former special operations officer Ayhan Çarkın lifted the curtain on the massacres of the 90s and the relations between the PKK and the state groups mentioned in the Ergenekon lawsuit, which had just been opened, was

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35 https://www.yenisafak.com/teknoloji/ozgurluge-evet-sosyal-terore-hayir-dunyada-sahte-haberlere-en-cok-maruz-kalan-ulke-turkiye-3547711; https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2020/06/12/ak-parti-lehine-calisan-sahte-hesaplar-kapatildi [04.12.2020].

36 Katharina Bodirsky. 2016. From the 'state-idea' to 'politically organized subjection.' Revisiting Abrams in times of crisis in Turkey and EU-Europe. Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology. 75: 121-129.

37 The Susurluk car crash, in Turkey's Balıkesir province, resulted in the death of Hüseyin Kocadağ, a senior police officer, Abdullah Çatlı a far-right gang leader wanted for murders and drug-trafficking and his girlfriend, while Sedat Bucak, a Kurdish MP from the True Path Party, was injured. The crash was a key event in the unravelling of the deep state in Turkey and the connections between gangs, security forces and state officials.

received with a magazine-like curiosity focusing on Çarkın's psychological state.[38] Likewise, the explanations made by former PKK and JITEM informant Abdulkadir Aygan in October 2010 and by retired Colonel Arif Doğan, self-proclaimed founder of JITEM, in January 2011, also broadcast on television, were but shallow narratives that will at best be remembered as personal memories today.

What should, in my eyes, be pointed out with respect to these opposing truths that started to become visible, is not that they failed to seriously undermine the official truth that has prevailed for almost a century, but that they did not remain completely unrequited either. The Ergenekon Trials (2008-2019), whose importance derives from the defendants' relations with the truth regime, even though it was not possible to put them to trial for the crimes against humanity committed against the Kurds, and the JİTEM Trials (2009-2016), where, even though all of the defendants were acquitted, a high-ranking soldier like Cemal Temizöz was brought to trial, took their strength from these seemingly confessional disclosures among other things. But ultimately, I find Yıldız and Baert's excellent assessments regarding Avcı, Çarkın, and Aygan's "confessions" important as they point to the framework needed by opposing factual truths and draw attention to the durability of Turkey's truth regime. These confessions remained limited to sensational revelations which blurred the line between crime and the responsibility of the perpetrator, absolved crime and responsibility from political meaning and criminal consequences by referring to such notions like system, state, order, duty, homeland, nation, and necessity, presented the perpetrators as victims or heroes and state violence as ordinary while making the victims invisible, and eventually twisted confession into denial.[39] In addition to trivializing the truth of the 90s, which the victims struggled to

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[38] The 1998 documentary Regresso a Wiriyamu, directed by Felícia Cabrita and Paulo Camacho, is a tremendous example of focusing on the perpetrator rather than the crime and its victim. In the documentary, in which Antonino Melo, one of the senior responsibles and perpetrators of the massacre committed by Portuguese military units in the village of Wiriyamu in Mozambique on December 16, 1972, is one of the cameramen, Melo returns to the village to confess his crime and apologize to the survivors. As soon as Baera, the oldest person in the village, begins to respond to Melo's apology, the camera takes a close-up of Melo and we begin to hear Melo's inner voice. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBLqftwIN7c [03.12.2020]. For an analysis of the documentary see Robert Stock. 2012. Apologising for Colonial Violence: The Documentary Film Regresso a Wiriyamu, Transitional Justice, and Portuguese-Mozambican Decolonisation. In Birgit Schwelling (ed.). Reconciliation, Civil Society, and the Politics of Memory. Transnational Initiatives in the 20th and 21st Century. Transcript Verlag: 239-276.

[39] Yeşim Yaprak Yıldız and Patrick Baert. 2020. Confessions without guilt: public confessions of state violence in Turkey. Theory and Society. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-020-09398-x [03.12.2020].

make seen and recognized, the vagueness and slipperiness of the disclosures and their powerlessness with respect to inducing political and criminal consequences reinforced the culture of impunity and the regime of truth.[40]

Turkey's Regime of Truth

We can say that Turkey's regime of truth has been nurtured by all ideologies that have become politically and socially dominant until today. In this sense, the official regime of truth has the following sources: 1.) Turkish nationalism, which manifests itself as conservative-religious/modern-secular racism, 2.) moderate or modern Islamism, and 3.) the goal of secularization and modernization that contributed as least as much as nationalism and Islamism to inspiring the colonial rule and violence harnessed to end ethnopolitical rebellion, "reactionaryism" and economic backwardness in Kurdistan. We can further consider Kemalism/Ataturkism – as a "matrix ideology" that reconciles all these ideologies –, the "practices of organized legal and social violence," such as +the 1915 Armenian Genocide and the burning of Smyrna in 1922, which were incorporated into the "habitus of denial," and, more generally, the myths of the "Turkish State" as other sources of the regime of truth.[41]

I will try to discuss the historical and theoretical background and the racist character of the truth regime in Turkey in greater detail in the second part in the section "Turkish Style Racism." In this chapter, which serves as an introduction to this discussion, I would like to examine how Turkey's truth regime encompasses the sphere of political debate and social confrontation, especially in the context of the Kurdish issue. For this purpose, I would first like to discuss the debates on the "fight against terrorism" in the television broadcasts of the 90s and some shows aired on the state channel TRT, then move on to dealing with the traces of truth these programs have left in the public's memories, and finally interpret the current crisis of the truth regime through the manifestations of the "fight against terrorism" that appear on television today.

A 1993 television debate within the scope of the format Siyaset Meydanı ("Agora"), in which Kurdish members of parliament would later be forced to say that "the PKK is a terrorist

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40 For a short summary of these trials see https://www.failibelli.org/jitem-davalari-aklanma-yargilamasina-donusuyor/ [04.12.2020].

41 Ahmet İnsel. 2001. Der. Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2 / Kemalizm. İletişim; Tanıl Bora. 2017. Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler. İletişim: 119-194; Tanıl Bora. 1998. Millî Tarih ve Devlet Mitosu. Birikim. 105-106: 83-93; Talin Suciyan. 2015. Dört nesil: Kurtarılamayan son. Toplum ve Bilim. 132: 132-149; Biray Kolluoğlu Kırlı. 2005. Forgetting the Smyrna Fire. History Workshop Journal. 60: 25-44.

organization" and to guarantee that the PKK will lay down arms in the event that the state of emergency is lifted and the country undergoes democratization, features a rhetorical discussion within the confines of what is permitted by the truth regime.[42] Democratic Left Party (DSP) deputy Uluç Gürkan says that the village evacuations, which he claims should be carried out by the civilian authority, are necessary for a "frontal war" but that they nonetheless acknowledged the state's cruelties, and asks the Kurdish guests: "Why do you not acknowledge the PKK's cruelties?" State of Emergency Regional Governor Ünal Erkan, who joins the broadcast via phone, affirming the success in this frontal war, says, "Turkish citizens do not have identity-related problems. We are in a very good position in the fight against terrorism."

Independent Member of Parliament Mahmut Alınak states that a "counter-guerrilla republic" has been established in the region under the state of emergency, which is governed by food embargoes, enforced disappearances and murders by unknown assailants. He also refers to the example of Prime Minister Demirel, who was unable to make governor Erkan back down from his statement ("If we hear only a single slogan, we will shoot") or to prevent the 92 Newroz Massacre, to explain that the government is not a political power in the true sense.[43] Welfare Party deputy İbrahim Halil Çelik criticizes the assimilation policies, saying "Let's be careful not to give birth to a second racism in the womb of the first one," and notes that the people of the region were caught between two fires. He argues in support of proposals to lift the state of emergency, for the elucidation of the unsolved murders, for the removal of the "How Happy is the One Who Says I am a Turk" inscriptions in the mountains, as well as for education in Kurdish and the establishment of local governments, stating "We have to come up with an Islamic solution." Yaşar Erbaz, one of the executives of the MHP, comments that there is "a territorial problem," that in economic terms, the state is giving more to the region than it receives from it, that if founded, Kurdistan will soon be replaced by Armenia and the Turks will therefore become a "dead nation," that there is no racism underlying the expression "Turkish identity" and that it is in fact racist to say that "there is a Kurdish question."[44]

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[42] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcMa3Y3zyeY [05.01.2021]. The broadcast date of the program is not specified on the page where the video is located. Taking into account the events mentioned in the program and the presence of Alinak, we can estimate the year to be 1993.

[43] For the significance of the Newroz celebrations in the period and the 92 Newroz massacre see: http://yeniyasamgazetesi2.com/serhildanlar-doneminin-newrozu/ [05.01.2021].

[44] A similar discussion unfolds in another episode of Siyaset Meydanı on 15 October 1994 that deals with "Rising nationalism and the Kurdish Question": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDFkUM00nH8 [07.01.2021]. I will refer to this program in Part II, in the section "The Pure Form of Nationalism: Racism."

Such debates, which witnessed the bickering between nationalist and Islamist movements, which rose to strength in the 90s, and exposed the racism against the Kurds, served to form a public opinion that is well aware of the state's exceptional violence in Kurdistan, but simultaneously reduces this violence to the "truth of counterterrorism."[45] Moreover, it allows the public, which wants to avoid the fear and "moral panic" spread by the truth regime, to turn its eyes elsewhere and choose from the repertoire of denial. The state of "moral panic," according to Stanley Cohen, implies that "[a] condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests [and] its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media [and] politicians." Depending on the nature and scale of the "threat," moral panic offers different options to expressly, interpretively or categorically deny the atrocities committed.[46]

Different ways of denying allegations include blind and express denial (for example, saying that "Turkish" citizens have no identity problems or, although this is not mentioned in this program, that people who have been detained and killed, as is common in Kurdistan, would have been released) euphemistic and legal interpretation (for example, defining forced displacement as the evacuation of villages and linking it with frontline warfare) and the acceptance of allegations paired with categorical rejection or underestimation of their psychological, political or moral consequences (for example, claiming that civilians killed by the state are terrorists or that the terrorists are non-Muslims). These contribute to and comprise the repertoire of denial, itself an extension of moral panic. Frequently resorted to in the context of the Kurdish issue, this moral panic and repertoire of denial help to fuel racism, and both expand as a result of the official truths and the terrifying images broadcast in the TRT programs, which are prepared by order of the state.

The 1990s: Views from "Anatolia"

Things started with the armed attack in Eruh-Şemdinli on 15 August 1984. I was assigned a task. I went to Eruh. As far as I remember, it was Ertürk Yöndem who

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45 For an article that objects to seeing the rise of the MHP in the 90s as an inevitability caused by the PKK and that discusses the MHP's approach to the Kurdish issue in detail see Kemal Can and Tanıl Bora 2000. MHP'nin Güç Kaynağı Olarak Kürt Meselesi. Birikim. 134-135: 56-72.

46 Stanley Cohen. 1972. Folk Devils and Moral Panics. Macgibbon and Kee: 9; Michael Welch. 2003. Trampling Human Rights in the War on Terror: Implications to the Sociology of Denial. Critical Criminology. 12: 1-20; Stanley Cohen. 2001. States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering. Polity.

went to Şemdinli. [...] I prepared this program in Eruh. It was called "Operation Peace." [...] After the state of emergency began, the highest echelons of the state asked TRT, which was the only channel at the time anyway, to prepare a program, a program on the fight against terrorism. So the TRT executives of that time instructed me to make this program, and I started making it. [...] We launched Anadolu'dan Görünüm ("The View from Anatolia") on October 5, 1987, and it continued airing until 2001. (Güntac Aktan)[47]

I decided to make such a program given the situation in my country [...] They said, "this is the voice of the state," "the state is directing it." The Republic of Turkey does not command journalists or publishers like "Do it this way, do it that way". [...] I didn't mince my words. But there are just some things that go untold. The fight against terrorism is quite a different method. And there were some things to this method that the public was not supposed to hear. I will take them to the grave. [...] My program [Perde Arkası] continued [from 1987] until 2002. [...] My friends call me "Pasha" because I lived with the Armed Forces for years. (Ertürk Yöndem)[48]

The broadcasting period of these two programs, which aimed to convey the state's "fight against terrorism" to the public, exactly coincides with the term of office of the Kurdistan State of Emergency Regional Governor.[49] This period, known as the 90s, can be described as a "regime of war" founded upon the "truth of counter-terrorism," produced and circulated by the political and military power which was embodied in the notorious state of emergency practices. Thus, the episode of the Perde Arkası ("Behind the Scenes") program devoted to the promotion of the Seslice battalion on Mount Gabar depicts Turkey's "current war." Accompanied by the folk song Yemen Türküsü,[50] we see corpses of militants, a photograph of Atatürk, a Turkish flag and soldiers reciting the Mehmetçik ("Little Mehmet"; soldier) oath. Ertürk Yondem walks through various compartments of the battalion, chatting with the soldiers, some of whom call him "commander." The "Mehmetçiks" use almost the exact same expressions as they call out to the families of fallen soldiers: "We will continue their struggle until the last drop of our blood."

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47 For the interview with Güntaç Aktan see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z8fv8gXIgg [21.11.2020].

48 https://www.haberturk.com/medya/haber/1378-perde-arkasi-neden-yayindan-kaldırıldı [26.11.2020].

49 The martial law, which was declared throughout the country following the 1980 military coup and gradually lifted until its termination in1984, evolved into a state of emergency in Kurdistan and as such continued withtout interruption until 2002.

50 Yemen Türküsü is a Turkish folk song commemorating Ottoman soldiers who were sent to Yemen during World War I and lost their lives there.

Although not fully overlapping with Perde Arkası and Anadolu'dan Görünüm, a 1994 episode of the program Gezelim Görelim ("Let's Travel"), another TRT broadcast, devoted to the topic of the "fight against terrorism," relies on exactly the same aesthetic choices to introduce the Hakkari mountain and commando brigade under the direction of Osman Pamukoğlu.[51] Escorted by Pamukoğlu, we tour the brigade's "hall of honor and museum" where we find a seized "Map of Sèvres," "bandit" weapons and marijuana packages, as well as pictures of operations and names of fallen soldiers on the walls. Soldiers, again using almost identical expressions, express the "glory" of being a commando and promise revenge saying, "we will finish this job." Another Gezelim Görelim broadcast from 1994 shows the caves used by militants as their hideouts and demonstrates the weapons used by the soldiers, accompanied by interviews with special operations forces in Diyarbakir.[52] During one of the weapon demonstrations we can observe how masculinity, one of the building blocks of the war regime, surfaces: "The gun I carry on me, the 'crazy girl' as we call it, [...] provided it doesn't fall silent, is one of the terrorist group's most pesky weapons right now [...] it's like a prancing horse when you pull the trigger." It is not surprising that the relationship between nationalism, militarism and sexism is manifested in a Turkish soldier's depiction of a weapon; however, this also indicates that the opposition to the war regime and the anti-racist struggle should also include anti-sexist approaches.[53]

The Anadolu'dan Görünüm episode of June 18, 1990, reports about the massacre carried out by the PKK in the village of Çevrimli in the Güçlükonak district of Şırnak.[54] The corpses of Kurdish civilians who were either shot or burned to death in their houses, which were set on fire in the massacre, and the people lamenting over the bodies of the dead are shown in close-up and distant shots, one after the other. Güntaç Aktan interviews "Murat Aydın, codenamed Aziz, who was involved as the leader of the defensive group" in the massacre, in which 27 people, including 12 children, 7 women and 3 elders, were killed. Responding to Aktan's questions Aydın says:

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51 This video is on the Youtube page of Pamukoğlu, who founded and closed the Rights and Equality Party (HEPAR), which was active between 2008-2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2Z42EY5_EU [23.11.2020]. For general information about "Gezelim Görelim" and its producer see: https://www.yenisafak.com/yenisafakpazar/emeklilik-hayalinde-gezmek-yok-2032176 [23.11.2020].

52 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLkGCCV_FnA [23.11.2020].

53 I will touch on the relationship between sexism and racism in the second part in the section "Racist Dreams and Privileges." For the relation-ship between sexism and nationalism and militarism in Turkey, see Çiğdem Akgül. 2011. Militarizmin Cinsiyetçi Suretleri: Devlet, Ordu ve Toplum-sal Cinsiyet. Dipnot; Serpil Sancar. 2017. Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti. Erkekler Devlet, Kadınlar Aile Kurar. İletişim.

54 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgG7Y3FE8C8 [21.11.2020].

Yeah, the entire village. We can even say that the target was to kill 100 people. [...] Not only the families, right, burning the fields, killing the animals, burning down houses, gardens, even cutting down trees where possible. [...] The action was evaluated like this: 'We took our revenge [...] we might not have killed 100 people but at least somewhere around 60.' [...] Well, actually it was a failure. We targeted the entire village but due to the resistance of the village guards, we couldn't achieve our target. If there would be such a resistance in other places too, we wouldn't be able to succeed with our actions.[55]

It seems possible to think that in warning the Kurdish guards via the Kurdish militants, the state is trying to bring the conflict between the guards and the militants to the forefront in order to obfuscate the official violence in the Kurdish issue.

Another Anadolu'dan Görünüm episode, which conveys that 33 people, once again including women and children, were killed in the PKK's attacks on the Daltepe and Kalkancık villages of the Şirvan district of Siirt in October 1993, provides information that might lead us to think that the conflict was not between Kurds, but between Muslims and non-Muslims.[56]

In this program, we first see corpses covered with quilts and blankets, people lamenting over their relatives in Kurdish, dead bodies being carried around and houses on fire. A mother tells that her 1.5-year-old boy was taken from her arms and thrown into the fire. Since the woman does not speak Turkish, this news is conveyed to us through another villager. A village guard, who is stated to have "revealed the true colors and source of

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[55] At the end of this video, there is Aktan's sentence that starts with "How Murat Aydın, code-named Aziz, surrendered..." As stated in the comments that I will include in the next sections, this is probably followed by Aydın's confessions and regrets regarding the orga-nization. In the news titled "Criminal charges against PKK members who killed PKK confessor" published in the newspaper Hürriyet dated 15.02.2017, we learn that Aydın was killed: https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/pkk-itirafcisini-olduren-pkklilar-hakkinda-idd-40367043 [27.11.2020].

[56] I could not determine the exact date of the broadcast; the screen shows October 3; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8evc4OtyDiM [23.11.2020]. The comments below the video are a research topic in itself in terms of the functioning of the truth regime. In summary, we can say that there is a debate – sometimes backed with evidence consisting of video links – between those who curse the PKK, less frequently the Kurds and Armenians on the one and those who curse the state, claiming that these massacres were carried out by JİTEM, on the other hand. I will revisit the debates in these and similar virtual public spaces in the "Post-Truth Era" section.

the terrorist organization," his back turned to the camera and his face turned towards State of Emergency Regional Governor Ünal Erkan, explains:

> "[...] I spoke to the terrorists via walkie-talkie. As we were talking, this is what they said to me: If you remember the year 1919, you'll see that we must take revenge. We are avenging ourselves. No chance any witness to the religion of Islam, the religion of Muhammad would ever do something like this. [...] They are infidels, worshipping who knows what kind of religion. [...] They say that's what you did back on that and that day. Now we'll pay you back. [...] They go on a shooting spree... as long as it is a village protected by village guards."

Subsequently, Erkan gives the following explanation:

> As one of our citizens just said stated, the terrorists, addressing our citizens, sometimes announce things like "we will take revenge on you for what happened around 1915" [...] taken together with similar incidents, it is actually self-explanatory [...] what lies beneath all this. [...] It is a known fact that there are some foreigners in the terrorist organization and that there are Armenians among these foreigners. [...] Of course, here, he also calls our citizens' attention, [...] unfortunately, those who defend human rights act as sympathizers of the organization [...] in the name of humanity, they don't deal with these issues."

Erkan's reproaches against human rights defenders can be read as a reflection of the state's repressions against the Human Rights Association (İHD), which contested the official truth.[57] As a matter of fact, İHD Chairman Nevzat Helvacı, in his speech on October 24, 1992, says:[58]

> Although they did not directly name it, some columnists targeted the association in articles where they referred to "human rights defenders." [...] Recently, TRT television has also joined this chorus. Meanwhile, we were targeted by some official authorities. [...] No matter who is responsible for it, we are against any injustice. But we should not be expected to act like the State Security Court Prosecutor.

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57 For a few sample statements by the IHD about these repressions, see https://www.ihd.org.tr/ihdden-cumhurbaskani-tugut-ozala-tepki/;

https://www.ihd.org.tr/basbakan-suleyman-demirele-acik-mektup/ [01.01.2021].

58 https://www.ihd.org.tr/ihd-genel-baskani-nevzat-helvacinin-4-olagan-genel-kurulu-acilis-konusmasi/ [01.01.2021].

A press release made on August 29, 1992, informs us that "the efforts to protect the right to life of the Kurdish people, who are subject to an attempt of complete eradication," are seen as the "raison d'être" of the association and justify a selective approach towards human rights violations.[59] On the other hand, this justification also reflects a conflict inherent in Turkey's war regime, the conflict between the state's "fight against terrorism" and the PKK's and Kurdish people's "struggle for freedom." Saving a more detailed discussion of this conflict for the last section, I would like to return to Ünal Erkan's press statement at this point.

Weaving things together from the "date of revenge" – stated as 1919 by the village guard but corrected by Erkan as 1915 – and the "known facts" that were emphasized in relation to this date, we understand that the state, along with officially labeling the Kurdish issue as an issue of terrorism, is also trying to use the discourse of the "fight against terrorism" to keep another official truth within the confines of the war regime. This approach of pointing to the existence of Armenians among the "infidel" militants in order to suggest a relationship between ASALA and the PKK, which basically aims to both maintain the strategy of denial employed with respect to the Armenian genocide and to ignore the Kurdish issue by subjugating it to an Islamic discourse and reducing it to an issue of terrorism, is still in fashion today.[60] On the other hand, Erkan's correction might also be seen as eliminating the possibility that the "terrorists" talking to the village guard in fact wanted to remind him of the year 1919, the date of the start of the War of Independence. The fact that the official history of the Republic of Turkey is emphasized as a history to be avenged implies the aim of carrying memories and truths into the official framework.

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59 https://www.ihd.org.tr/insan-haklari-derneginin-49-sube-baskaninin-ankarada-ortaklasa-duzenledikleri-basin-aciklamasi/ [01.01.2021]. This selective attitude is also seen in the wording of the İHD's statements regarding actions of the PKK, which it would seem impossible not to condemn. For example, the call for the release of soldiers captured by the PKK an extra justification is added: "The humanitarian dimension of the problem and international agreements oblige us to take this step." https://www.ihd.org.tr/pkknin-esir-aldigi-turk-askerler/ [01.01.2021]. For similar statements see: https://www.ihd.org.tr/kamu-gorevlilerine-yonelik-silahli-saldirilar/; https://www.ihd.org.tr/pkknin-elinde-bulunan-insanlarin-guvenlik-icinde-ailelerine-kavusmalarini-istiyoruz/; https://www.ihd.org.tr/hicbir-ideolojik-siyasi-mucadele-ve-hicbir-yuksek-amac-otobus-bombalama-eyleminin-gerekcesi-olamaz/ https://www.ihd.org.tr/tgrt-muhabirleri-pkk-gerillalarinca-kacirildi/ [01.01.2021].

60 See Vartan Estukyan's article "Kuzu brings state's back on the agenda" published on 10.09.2015: http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/12718/devletin-sunnet-imtihani-kuzuyla-yeniden-gundemde [01.01.2021]; Statement by Savaş Eğilmez, President of the Association for Combating Baseless Allegations of Genocide (ASIMED), dated 16.05.2020: https://www.haberturk.com/erzurum-haberleri/77973703-asimed-baskani-egilmez-asala-pkk-ittifaki-halen-devam-ediyorsozde-ermeni-meselesi-icin [01.01.2021].

Memories and Traces of Truth

Let us continue with our analysis of the war regime emerging in the TRT programs of the 90s, and especially the manifestations of the "fight against terrorism" of Turkey's truth regime, by looking at some viewer comments regarding these programs and the traces of these manifestations which extend into the present. We can say that the memory and truth of Anadolu'dan Görünüm and Perde Arkası – which are described in a similar manner and are said to have featured images of corpses –, statements by the OHAL regional governors, confessions and expressions of regret by PKK members, and Öcalan's ideas on love, are fragmented.[61] The comments about the programs contain at least three different traces of memory and truth produced by the programs.[62] The first of these is the "critical memory" observed with those who watch and/or remember the program with skepticism. It is combined with an "trace of oppositional truth" that challenges the truth regime. Second is the "nostalgic memory" and "trace of official truth" borne by those who watch and remember the programs affirming the truth regime. The third one, though close to the second, is carried by those who appear to be indifferent to the truth regime. It therefore emerges as an "apolitical memory" and a "trace of semi-official truth" that is attached to personal memory.

In the trace of oppositional truth that is carved into critical memory Anadolu'dan Görünüm, which aired when children were coming home from primary school, just before He-Man, is registered as "one of the complementary elements of the propaganda that remained incomplete at school." Accordingly, this program "brought the nightmare of our state into our homes." For example, "the terrorist corpses piled on top of each other" shown in the program led to questions like "who are these bloody bodies with flies flying around them? Why were they blown up? Why is this on TV?" and "not being

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61 I did not come across any footage of Öcalan's ideas on love in the videos I watched, but I think these statements constitute testimonies. I fixed the typos in the comments. For comments about Anadolu'dan Görünüm see: https://eksisozluk.com/anadoludan-gorunum--1626365; https://forum.donanimhaber.com/anadoludan-gorunum--6312498; https://dunyasozluk.com/baslik/anadolu+dan+g%C3%B6r%C3%BCn%C3%BCm [21.11.2020]. As also mentioned in some of the comments, we should note that not all episodes of Anadolu'dan Görünüm are devoted to the "fight against terrorism." There are also episodes focusing on the development plan known as the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP). For the GAP see: http://www.gap.gov.tr/en/what-s-gap-page-1.html [10.12.2020].

62 I guess that the people who made the quoted comments were generally born in the 1970s and grew up in the 1990s in western Turkey and in homes with televisions. Although I am about the same age and grew up in a similar place as these people, it may be because I did not watch television at that time, I do not remember either of the programs. It should also be noted that the programs may have left different memories and traces of truth with the previous generation.

able to understand what is really going on" was exactly "what made everything perfect." It is remembered that one of the most important parts of the broadcasts was the interviews with the "terribly frightened and battered confessors" and that the accounts of the confessors "unfailingly ended in the phrase 'How Happy is the One Who Says I am a Turk.'" I would like to fully quote one particular comment that summarizes the trace of oppositional truth left by the program in critical memory:

> The heaviest seal of the siege mentality. Architect of distortions hard to delete from memory. The twilight zone of TRT, which copiously reflected the rudeness of the dominant style of government. One of the major examples of symbolic violence in the country. The predicament of the dominant grammar and the state. The program that produced the most fundamental myths about the Kurdish issue which are still in circulation. There are two stable relics from my childhood, one of them this program, the other the hatred in the eyes of the special teams.[63]

The physical source of the symbolic violence perpetrated through corpses, battered confessors and the gazes of the special team, i.e. violence in Kurdistan, reached such large dimensions and covered such a wide repertoire that during the 90s, when it was "impossible to draw a balance sheet," the perception of truth itself was among those crippled.[64] That violence to the measure of destroying the perception of truth served to deny this violence and thus to fortify the truth regime can also be inferred from the comments on Perde Arkası:[65] The name of the PKK immediately evokes "the image of a bullet-riddled baby shown in this program," the images of corpses engender a "nationalist necrophilous youth," the program is permeated by "constant xenophobia, paranoia and warmongering," and "most families in the country were emotionalized to oppose the end of the current war on any condition." Alongside of the concealed state violence and oppositional truths, the official violence and truths and the racist discourses and images, all put in circulation through the statements of political and military officials and through such programs, just as Arendt noted, aimed to recruit subjects to the truth regime by destroying the perception of truth.

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63 https://eksisozluk.com/anadoludan-gorunum--1626365?p=4 [21.11.2020].

64 For the dimensions and repertoire of the violence in Kurdistan in the 90s see Bahar Şahin Fırat. 2014. Türkiye'de 'Doksanlar': Devlet Şiddetinin Özgünlüğü ve Sürekliliği Üzerine Bir Deneme. In Güney Çeğin and İbrahim Şirin (eds.). Türkiye'de Siyasal Şiddetin Boyutları. İletişim: 382-389; Özgür Sevgi Göral, Ayhan Işık and Özlem Kaya. 2013. Konuşulmayan Gerçek: Zorla Kaybetmeler. Hakikat, Adalet ve Hafıza Çalışmaları Derneği Yayınları: 14-20.

65 For comments about Perde Arkası see: https://eksisozluk.com/perde-arkasi--76161?p [21.11.2020].

It is possible to encounter the traces of official and semi-official truth left by the programs in the nostalgic or apolitical memories which are shaped by this destruction. Memories of Anadolu'dan Görünüm are accompanied by the "smell of aniseed crackers and afternoon tea" and the thought that these hours will never again be "as back in those days." It is said that the program, which was "the only television program in which images of Abdullah Öcalan were broadcasted," featured footage in which "Apo, addressing the female guerrillas, who were standing sheepishly in front of him, said stuff like 'who is with me will win.'" While it caused excitement by showing "terrorist corpses which we can now see in video games," there are also memories of this show as upsetting its audience by showing "dead babies in swaddling clothes" and being a format that "can't help but pound the horrors of terror into our heads." Although nothing else from those years is remembered, such images, which "still appear before one's eyes quite vividly," are accompanied by footage containing the "tragedies of the families of the martyrs."

Such romantic-nostalgic comments, which criticize the program's "upsetting" effect rather than its purpose, appear naïve when compared to some more aggressive-nostalgic comments in which the traces of official truth appear more evidently. A viewer who remembers the Anadolu'dan Görünüm as a "program you can't really tell what it is about" is told to "watch his tongue," and when speaking about a "program about our soldiers, who heroically defended the homeland in the East and Southeast [...] about this homeland" is reminded of the following sentiment. In the years when there were no private channels and internet, it was a program that families who could not afford to buy newspapers and whose children served in the military in the East "looked forward to watching [...] If only the Turkish youth, who are deceived by words like democracy or human rights today [...] would watch it [...] everyone would understand what actually happened"[66]

The belief that "what actually happened" could be understood by watching these programs attests to the fact that these "anti-terror" programs are partially successful in confining factual truths to the official truth framework of the war regime. Discussing the reasons why, despite circulating in the public sphere, the photographs of the massacres committed by the Dutch army in Indonesia did not lead to a political and social questioning, Paul Bijl examines the "framing" of these photographs, which makes them a visual text, and argues that they failed to offer any questionable meaning as they had

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[66] https://forum.donanimhaber.com/anadoludan-gorunum--6312498 [21.11.2020].

only conserved society's colonial history and violence within a dominant and triumphant political framework.[67] This political framework that explains how we remember what we remember can be understood as a truth regime or an official truth framework. A television framed by the state should be one of the most appropriate tools to establish the semantic universe required by the war regime which is based on the truth of the fight against terrorism.

In saying that those who choose to abide by the official truth based on the factual truths framed by state television – even though there are certainly many other economic, social and psychological reasons for this – ultimately make a political choice and favor the relevant political parties, we can emphasize the political nature of the concept of truth, as already discussed in the first chapter. Not questioning the official truth, which those in power desire to institute as supra-political, is a political choice, a choice which looks like ignorance and indifference, but is in fact aware of, familiar with and fueled and crippled by state violence. The "terrorist" corpses shown in the programs remind us that the dominant style of administration is shaped by inflicting physical and symbolic violence on those who oppose the truth regime and that this style is too rude to shy away from bluntly projecting itself, and that it relies on a racist grammar and youth to keep the official truth alive.

The contrast between the official funerals of Turks and soldiers with the corpses of Kurds and militants, scattered or piled on top of each other, becomes an image, a concrete data concerning the functioning of racism; displayable corpses are used to mark the bodies that can be killed. Saving a more detailed discussion for the section "Racist Dreams and Privileges" in the second part, we can already mention Foucault here, who noted that racism was vital to authorizing truth regimes to sentence a certain section of the population to death. In addition, as Evren Balta states in her article, in which, referring to Katherine Verdery, she discusses political power's cruelty against dissident corpses and its attacks aimed at erasing these bodies from memory by leaving them without graves and monuments, dead bodies appear before us with a kind of "résumé": "What is done to their bodies is an indication of what might be done to those who shared the same fate with them while they were alive. Their bodies are both dead and alive. Though physically dead, they are politically alive. The dead body and what is done to the dead body are the barest form of politics."[68]

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67 Paul Bijl. 2015. Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance. Amsterdam University Press: 29-37.

68 Evren Balta. 2015. Ölü Bedenlerin Siyasal Yaşamları. Birikim: https://birikimdergisi.com/haftalik/7240/olu-bedenlerin-siyasal-yasamlari

The images circulated by the truth regime through state television burn into our minds what not only "terror," but also state violence is capable of. Balancing the sadness over the undeserved deaths of Kurdish civilians with the joy of "terrorists' deserved deaths" is possible precisely because of the memories and traces of truth constructed by the state, that is, the political meaning and racist framework it imposes on the corpses. The TRT programs, which never ended without a visit to the State of Emergency Regional Governor, displayed and circulated images of the bodies of Kurdish civilians killed by the PKK and PKK militants killed by the state, while concealing factual truths regarding the forcible displacement and disappearance and the killing, either by supposedly unknown assailants or by burning their villages, of Kurdish civilians at the hand of the state in the name of fighting terrorism. The effort to dominate the truth, undergirded by a similar approach to broadcasting and publishing, demonstrates the current functioning and resilience of the war regime, while also revealing the convulsions of sovereignty that accompany today's crisis of truth.

The 2010s: "Be a Witness"

The show Şahit Olun ("Be a Witness"), airing during the "trench operations" of 2015-2016, during another state of emergency and again on TRT, basically epitomizes the effort to construct a war regime, which was to be observed in "anti-terror" programs like those of the 90s and the racist broadcasts on the private channels, which have been appropriated by the government. That said, the following sentences, repeated in each episode of the show, attest to the fact that this effort falls short today:[69]

> Do you want to reach the truth, do you want to find the truth? Then go to the source of the event first. Find the people there, touch them, listen to their story, see things through their eyes and witness what happened. Be a witness so that you feel responsible, both morally and conscientiously. Don't ignore it, turn your back and leave. Be a witness so that the value of truth rises.

This documentary series prepared by "retired major, security expert, and writer Mete Yarar reveals the experiences of the Turkish military and Turkish police in the fight

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[05.03.2021]. Also see Katherine Verdery. 1999. The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change. Columbia University Press: 27-55.

69 For all episodes of the show: https://www.youtube.com/c/trtbelgesel/search?query=%C5%9Fahit%20ol [24.11.2020]. The other three episodes of the show deal with the topic of refugees in Turkey.

against terrorism." Before describing some of the episodes of the program taking place in Silvan, Diyarbakır, Suriçi, Şırnak, Cizre, Nusaybin and Derik, it would seem appropriate to briefly touch on the "trench operations" and the war that took place between July 2015 and March 2016 which are the subject of the program.

The "Islamic solution" of the AKP government, a move to embrace the Kurds, who were caught between the state and the PKK, and basically reduce Kurdishness to a "folkloric color" vis-à-vis Islam, allowed for the satisfaction of the Kurds' demands for cultural rights, while at the same time ratifying violent suppression of their political demands.[70] Constant reminders of this sanctioning throughout the Solution Process created a suitable environment for first, stalling the process and then, legitimizing the episode of state violence known as the "trench operations." Starting with the erection of barricades and trenches, described as an advanced "defense method" against a "political genocide" by PKK leader Murat Karayılan, and "spontaneously evolving towards armament in the process," this war, which the state joined with around 15,000 soldiers, police and special operations forces, caused the death of hundreds of civilians, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, and the destruction of living spaces and historical monuments.[71] I will discuss the devastation caused by this war in terms of truth and peace in the next section, and the Solution Process, which ended just before the war, in the next part in the section "Racist Resistance to Attempts to Resolve the Conflict in Turkey."

In the first episode of Şahit Olun, staged in Silvan, we learn, as we in fact do in all other episodes too, what kind of weapons and vehicles the police use and how they struggle

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[70] For the AKP's integration into the war regime and Kurdish politics, see Cenk Saraçoğlu. 2012. Türkiye Sağı, AKP ve Kürt Meselesi. In İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (eds.). Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri. İletişim: 243-279.

[71] http://www.insanhaber.com/guncel/karayilan-hpg-sehre-inmedi-ama-dahil-olabilir-h53718.html [26.11.2020]. I will address this statement of Karayılan in more detail in the next section. There are different data regarding the war-related figures: http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/cizre-ve-silopide-10-bin-askerle-operasyon-tanklar-ilce-merkezinde-1494018/; https://www.dw.com/tr/aihmde-hendek-operasyonlar%C4%B1-duru%C5%9Fmas%C4%B1/a-46281770; https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39230287; http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/hendegin-bilancosu-nufusun-22si-goc-etti [26.11.2020]. A former member of the Police Special Operations defines this unit as the "Prophet's Hearth" and says "The trench operations were like the Battle of the Dardanelles" to point out the scale of the war and its meaning for the Turkish public, adding: "This cause is not the cause of our Kurdish brothers. It's not them seeking their rights. Çekdar, Hogir […] their code names are always Armenian names […] But of course, our cause is the cause of Islam, the cause of the flag, the cause of honor […] We will wage our jihad physically and you have to fight yours on a spiritual level [he says to his son]": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggxAoxgoR2o [25.11.2020].

with the techniques of the "organization."[72] A voice-over tell us that civilians were "kind of taken hostage" by the organization, but that the local population, who "is aware of the utmost care with which the state pursued the Solution Process," is fleeing the region, and that the PKK, as part of its "psychological warfare," aims to "produce images" of the security forces in order to serve these images to the world. Yarar, whose goal we understand to be reversing the momentum in this psychological war, underlines this issue in every episode:

> Their [the special operations police forces'] concern is this: [...] 'We are dealing with investigations and lawsuits against us due to social media posts or other things. So my only request is that you say it on our behalf. Make them stand behind us.'

The Silvan episode, like all episodes, closes with Yarar asking, "Were you able to see the difference between what you think you know and what is actually happening?"

The fact that what we are asked to bear witness to it is a difference pretty much sums up the psychological purpose of the program. On the other hand, unlike the programs of the 90s, the symbolic violence in these broadcasts does not appear through images of corpses but through images of destruction. Still, the images of dead bodies, which we see on the social media accounts of both security forces and dissident citizens, indicate which citizens the state lets die, makes die and how.[73] These images, circulating via informal or personal news channels, also make it more difficult to reconstruct the official truth regime. In the Şırnak episode of the program, a chief of the anti-terror bureau says: "We ask our people for support in this regard. In other words, we want them to turn the balance on social media in our favor." The same complaint is voiced in the episode on Diyarbakır. When Yarar asks, "Do you think you have problems making yourself understood?" a special forces officer gives the following answer:

> Should I do my job there or [...] should I express myself somehow like a social media consultant? [...] Here, for example, Islam has a great influence on our people. [...] In one of the historical mosques, there has been no call to prayer, no

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72 https://www.youtube.com/c/trtbelgesel/search?query=%C5%9Fahit%20ol [24.11.2020].

73 For example, for information about the death of Taybet Inan, who was shot in the clashes in Silopi and whose body remained on the street for days, and the investigation on this issue, see https://www.evrensel.net/haber/393399/taybet-inanin-olumuyle-ilgili-sorusturmada-4-yilda-iler-leme-yok [03.01.2021]

prayer for three months [...] Who would have known if it wasn't for Anadolu Agency coming here to document and broadcast this?

The special forces officer, who does not see the need to explain himself using social media, wants it to be known that Islam is under attack. As a matter of fact, Erdoğan's reaction to the Kurşunlu Mosque fire shows us that the state reduces the Kurdish issue to a problem of terrorism, while once again taking shelter in Islam: "Those who burned the Fatihpaşa Mosque, those who abused my faithful and believing Kurdish brothers, will pay the price for this."[74] Islam has been one of the main sources used by the state to legitimize colonial rule and violence in Kurdistan. Yet, the AKP has not only engaged in efforts to suppress Kurdish identity by expanding the Islamic Ummah, especially through its network of non-governmental organizations and infrastructure services and by setting up its own cadre in public institutions, but also tried to "beautify" the state's coercive means by employing a jihad rhetoric, thus taking Turkey's religious racism and colonialism to another level.[75]

While we know that we won't be able to learn what our "Kurdish brothers" in the streets of Suriçi think about this and similar issues, a place where we are informed that there may be conflict and that clashes may break out at any moment, a statement made by Yarar reveals another truth to us. "Whoever you hand the microphone to here [...] there is a danger of them being grilled or threatened to death two days later." Since we are asked to think that these people will be questioned by the PKK, we are "witnessing" a crisis of sovereignty of the state in Kurdistan.[76] In Şırnak we encounter a member of the anti-terror forces who confirms this impression:

> [...] There are three elements to the modern state. Sovereignty, population, territory. [...] Our territory is affected by the erection of barricades, trenches, and positions, our sovereignty by the so-called identity controls, and our population by sending people to the ballot box to express their political will under the shadow

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74 https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151217_erdogan_cizre_silopi [01.12.2020]. For conflicting allegation regarding the fire, see: https://bianet.org/bianet/kent/169945-diyarbakir-kursunlu-cami-nde-yangin [01.12.2020].

75 See Mehmet Kurt. 2019. 'My Muslim Kurdish brother': Colonial rule and Islamist governmentality in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Journal of Balkan And Near Eastern Studies. 21(3): 350–365.

76 We see civilians interrogated by the state in a video published with the title "Scenes from the checkpoint of the special operations police in Diyarbakır's Sur district," which shows soldiers' insulting and cursing at women while a number of women and children is being searched – meanwhile lacking any indication that they are not civilians: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fjs5eq1kesE [24.11.2020].

of weapons […] Some of the people are uncomfortable with this but it is one of the tactics of forming a canton, a so-called canton.

As far as we can understand, some of the people are not bothered by the fact that the state's elements are "affected," which allows us to think that this war is precisely a matter of sovereignty, population, and territory, that is, it is not a problem of terrorism but: the Kurdish issue. However, the member of the anti-terror forces tries to discard this possibility, saying that "there is an incredible pressure on everyone who stands by the state" and claiming that this pressure is rendered invisible through perception management:

> […] Saying that there are civilian deaths, that there is no bread, alleging that some children's bodies are supposedly kept waiting in refrigerators[77] […] All of these are tactics implemented to manage public perception by using social media as part of a certain overall tactic. […] The organization especially wants us to harm civilians and we are very careful about this. […] We are also careful with those who are armed, because those children are not aware of what they are doing […] We know that if something happens to one of those children, we will lose the whole neighborhood.

This effort to present the facts and civilian deaths, whose reality is thrown into question by amending them by the adjective 'supposedly,' as nothing more than tools of perception management, must resonate with some parts of the public, just like the traces of official and semi-official truth engraved into the nostalgic and apolitical memories constructed by the television programs of the 90s. Moreover, the following words of the same member of the anti-terror team reflect the counter-perception management efforts of the state:

> I know the local people very well. They have some crucial sensitivities. […] One is religion, the other honor. The organization is currently attacking both. You saw it yourself, our mosques are empty. […] We experience these things directly as we listen to our people who tell us that the people who carry out identity checks at these barricades and trenches and here and there, when we are not in control […] these people furthermore] do not show any sensitivity display offensive behaviors

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77 The body of 10-year-old Cemile Çağırga, who was killed in the clashes, was kept in a refrigerator because she could not be buried due to the curfew. For a related news article see: https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/09/150913_cizre_cemileninolumu_hatice_kamer [03.01.2021].

when interacting with our young girls and our women.

Although it is impossible to believe that the state is helpless in the face of the PKK's perception management, given that all the state's media resources are diverted to the "trench operations," the fact that this helplessness is voiced on state television by the special operations forces indicates that public opinion has not surrendered to the truth regime. The fact that the state thinks that it is failing to manage public perception no matter how much it uses the media and social media to serve its factual truths, lays bare the state's effort to deny the crimes it committed, as well as the crisis of sovereignty and the breaches in the truth regime.

As a matter of fact, in the opening of the next episode staged in Cizre, we see that next to a blurred flag hanging from a pole on a hill, a higher pole has been erected on which a Turkish flag is waving. This image, which could throw the state's "victory" in recapturing its own territory into question, is presented in a frame of truth that makes reference to the 2015 general elections which resulted in the HDP's success and the AKP's defeat: Yarar tells that "very important things have been happening in Cizre since June 7, or actually even earlier," and explains that Cizre's neighbor on the Syrian border is the PYD and that the weapons some were sending to the PYD "in the name of humanitarian aid" have claimed lives in Cizre.

In the Nusaybin episode of the program, he states that the bombs planted in the district amounted to "seven tons minimum" and warns us, again amid clashes: "Believe me, there will be no peace and happiness for us as long as this society does not speak up against those who are trying to turn our homeland into Syria." Judging by the comments below the video, this society does not have one single voice to speak up with.[78] Following a debate between those asking "where the local population was" and those wondering "where the state was" when seven tons of bombs were being planted in Nusaybin, we read that it was not easy to report "those armed folks who planted the bombs," and that even when these activities were reported, the state failed to take a single step "so as not to harm the Solution Process." It was therefore "foolish" to ask "how tons of bombs could have been planted, when not even a bird can fly without the state's knowledge," because "the state has killed its own soldiers when necessary, my good brother, we know the Cem Ersevers."[79]

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78 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC2kpMkNBXs [24.11.2020].

79 Ahmet Cem Ersever was a commander in the Turkish Gendarmerie who was assassinated in 1993.

A PEACEFUL SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN TURKEY: CONFRONTING RACISM

As already mentioned before, the "difficulties" experienced by each party of Turkey's truth regime in accepting another truth and believing in factual truths today, can be considered as a depredation of truth brought about by violence. On the other hand, as discussed in the first section, the doubts about official and oppositional truths articulated on virtual public platforms can also be read as expressions of a valorization of and a search for truth. They can be seen as a starting point for us to try to organize a collective search for truth and to embed the official and oppositional truths of the war regime within the framework of a regime of peace. In this sense, a peaceful search for truth, which arises not only from opposition to the official truth regime but also from the critique of the oppositional truth regime, also coincides with efforts to repair truth.

The Oppositional Regime of Truth

Earlier we noted that Turkey's regime of truth owes its operability and durability to the support of the Turkish public, which has submitted to the "truth of counterterrorism" produced by institutions like the army and the media. On the other hand, we can observe a strong oppositional truth regime contesting the state, which either persistently refuses to grasp the social and political dimension of the "terrorism" that it is fighting, or grasps it very well but tries to erase what it grasps, that is, to reduce the Kurdish issue to a problem of terrorism and to secure its survival in Kurdistan by means of a state of emergency. We can say that the PKK, which is the object of the fight against terrorism, has constructed another truth regime within the framework of its struggle for freedom in which the Kurdish people also participate. Let us remember that the 90s, when an "empire of fear was created for the Kurds," was a period that began to make the oppositional truth visible through 'political languages' that could expose the official truth regime and "give utterance to state violence."[80]

The "truth of counterterrorism" and the truth regime, which the state tried to fortify with the means provided by the state of emergency, was opposed by the "truth of the struggle for freedom" and the oppositional truth regime, which were sustained through armed action, political parties, civil society, media and serhildans ("insurrections"). Of course, it must be admitted that while the official

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[80] Toplum ve Kuram. 2014. "Geçmişin İşlenmesi Ne Demektir?" Toplum ve Kuram. 9: 19.

truth regime had power relations, a systematic and institutional structure, a hegemonic and widespread network of education, law, medicine, media, academia, business and art, and economic and financial power at its disposal, the oppositional truth regime was deprived of these means and that this deprivation consolidated the existing inequalities and the racist and colonial state violence. However, I do not think that these inequalities justify attaching discourses and actions that continue the war to the pursuit of peace, truth and justice. Moreover, I think that the legitimacy created by the inequalities does not suffice to strengthen the instruments to demand justice.

Evidently aware of Foucault's analysis of the relationship between power and truth, Öcalan defined the concept of the regime of truth, which he presented as "his own interpretation" in his 2013 writings, as "the strongest possible ally of the political and exploitative regime," stating that the first thing in terms of method is that "[s]uch a regime of truth should not be tolerated any longer" and that "[w]e need to reject the system's regime of truth on all fronts."[81] His thoughts, condensed in the slogan "Truth is love, and love is life in freedom," were included in the education curriculum in Rojava as a lecture booklet, which contains a section titled "Regime of Truth" with the mentioned slogan and a photo with the caption "In memory of Şehid Malda Kosa" on its cover.[82] While trying to free the truth from the yoke of official sovereignty is a necessary and important struggle, we can say that this struggle has to evolve into a "battle for truth," as I will try to discuss in the last chapter, in order to develop a new and peaceful politics of truth.

In February 2016, I went to Suriçi several times and like everyone else in Sur, I was exposed to a parade of armored vehicles, soldiers and policemen. In addition to allegations regarding a "strategy of making the Kurdish people accept Öcalan's model of self-government/autonomy model brought up during the solution process under armed guardianship and curatorship," it was argued that epics of heroism and resistance written for the dead were not enough to revive

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81 Abdullah Öcalan. 2015. Civilization: The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings: Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume I. New Compass Press: 40.

82 Revolutionary Education Booklet. 2020. Notes from the first term of the Andrea Wolf Institute of Jineolojî in Rojava: https://jineo-loji.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Revolutionary-education-english-1.pdf [12.03.2021].

the serhildan spirit of the 90s.[83] Following regular warnings that "the response to the state's intervention is not sufficient," calls were made on MedNuçe TV every day to stop work between 13.50 and 14.00 and participate in a protest at 18.00, where people made noise and switched their lights on and off. In the Ofis district of the city, which was accused of not responding to this warning and not showing interest in the call, I saw a poster that read "We stand by the people of Sur."

In the same days, I attended the Diyarbakır meeting, which was the last stage of the signature campaign launched by the Women for Peace Initiative with the slogan "We side with life, not death." Women from Diyarbakır welcomed the mothers who stood watch in Sümerpark to obtain the bodies of their children who had died in the clashes in Suriçi, and the women who came from Istanbul and Ankara to support the "peace watch." One of the slogans chanted by the women was "A thousand salutes to the guerrilla/women resisting in Suriçi." Although the salutation of the guerrilla by an initiative that sides with life, not death, could be explained by the conditions of war, this greeting could also be seen as one of the discourses that does not serve peace. The women returned the same day. Although the photos and articles shared on social media tried to convey the opposite, the action had an extremely limited effect. I thought that the only reason for this was not that other women were afraid to come to Sümerpark that day and that the state was harassing these and similar initiatives, but that the truth regimes that sustain the war regime were stronger than the possibility of peace.

The questions of how and when the killed civilians participated in this war and whether they did so voluntarily or by necessity, together with a discussion about what voluntariness and necessity mean under the given circumstances, the PKK's power and oppositional truth, were very important and delivered truths about both the root causes of the war and the Solution Process. One of the explanations that provided a tentative answer to these questions came from Murat Karayılan, who made a statement to the newspaper Yeni Özgür Politika on December 21, 2015:[84]

> The trenches and barricades developed as a reaction to a political genocide. From
> this point of view, the trenches basically were a method of defense. Of course,

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83 See Barış Özkul. 2015. Kürt Meselesinde Yeni Durum. Birikim. https://birikimdergisi.com/haftalik/7384/kurt-meselesinde-yeni-durum [05.01.2021].

84 http://www.insanhaber.com/guncel/karayilan-hpg-sehre-inmedi-ama-dahil-olabilir-h53718.html [03.12.2020].

the fighting in these places was initially done with stones, sticks, molotovs and hunting rifles, but as things went on we saw a tendency towards spontaneous armament. We did not send weapons to the cities for this kind of resistance at any point. However, these people, who initially resisted without arms, had to gradually arm themselves by their own means. Of course, these dynamics were immediately dependent on the nature of the attacks [emphases added].

Karayılan's revelations raised questions that turned denial into confession. How did the people of Sur turn towards self-armament, how was it possible for them to arm themselves by their own means? How could the nature of these weapons, that is, their origin and quality, depend on the nature of the attacks? The HDP's Sur Report, which is one of the documents that can provide an answer to these questions, albeit indirectly, states the following:

> The house raids, detentions, practices of torture, ill-treatment, etc., which the state has been carrying out for a long time in an unlawful and immoral manner, continued with increasing frequency following the June 7, 2015 General Elections and subsequently, trenches were dug and barricades were erected in many places, especially by the youth of the residential area, in order to prevent house raids and the torture and ill-treatment they entail.

Neither the weapons whose existence was conceded by Karayılan nor the crimes committed with these weapons are mentioned in the report. Only page 29, with reference to the "September 6 Diyarbakır Sur Incidents Investigation Report" published by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV), the Diyarbakır Medical Chamber and İHD, reports that "[...] a rocket attack was carried out against the police teams by members of the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDGH) around the Kurşunlu Mosque on September 6, 2015."[85] As correctly stated in the last section of the report, which records the grave violations of all kinds of human rights, especially the right to life of civilians living in Sur, and the efforts made to stop these violations, the report is "an expression of facts that should never be forgotten." However, it should be remembered that these facts are conveyed within the complex framework of a certain political truth. The statements of Diyarbakir İHD Branch President Raci Bilici in the report are descriptive of this framework:

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85 https://www.hdp.org.tr/Images/UserFiles/Documents/Editor/Surraporu.pdf [04.12.2020]. The expression PKK is not contained in the cited

report either: https://www.ihddiyarbakir.org/Content/uploads/8778d5e1-126a-4312-b59b-edea254893e6.pdf [04.12.2020].

In this trench incident, no method of war is right, no method of conflict is right. Nobody embraces such methods. We are making a mistake if we discuss the consequences. We need to get to the root of the war. What are the consequences? This person killed that person, that is a result. But why did s/he kill? That is what we need to discuss. Why are these young people digging trenches? We need to discuss this. [...] it's about resolution, democratic ways, developing relations, dialogue, negotiation. If this does not happen, some will dig a trench, some will fight, some will do a sit-in, I mean, the methods will be discussed, that is a different thing. But if you argue about the result, you are making a mistake. [emphases mine]

Adding that the methods can be discussed, Bilici states that he does not approve of any method of armed conflict and recalls that the conflict can yet be justified. He points out that what needs to be discussed is not the result – "This person killed that person" – but the reasons presented as responses to the question "why did s/he kill?" Since the "person" mentioned here is not a soldier or police officer, we understand and discuss the person's reason for killing the victim. On the other hand, as we have seen in the confessions of the perpetrators of the crimes committed by the state, when we begin to discuss the underlying causes, both the crime and the criminal disappear.

The extrajudicial regime of the state and the extraordinary violence it inflicts upon civilians in Kurdistan cannot be justified. We know that this regime and violence cancel out the political legitimacy of the state in Kurdistan. But while this may serve to justify conflict, it also serves to justify the use of violence. As Arendt puts it, violence can never become legitimate because it is a means, not an end, and destroys the political space, but it can of course always be justified.[86] In other words, no matter how justifiable violence as a means may be, it cannot gain legitimacy and does thus not stop being a crime, which is why the fight against impunity is an integral part of challenging the "legitimacy" of state violence. The very fact that it is a tool indicates that violence is not inevitable, but on the contrary, as Bilici states, it is a constant matter of choice, it is debatable, and it will never gain legitimacy, especially when it comes to civilians and the goal of lasting peace.

Thus, claims that the leaders of the African National Congress's (ANC) seem likely to justify any act of terrorism, determination, even in the face of the unrestrained violence of the Apartheid regime in South Africa and the social polarization between black and

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86 Hannah Arendt. 1972. Crises of the Republic. A Harvest Book: 161.

white. The fact that they took action to avoid causing the deaths of civilians – and in order to remain loyal to the anti-racist ideology they advocated for –, even in the acts of sabotage they committed to render the colonial rule inoperative, prevented a further delay of the peace that was accomplished despite all its shortcomings, seem no less valid than claims that violence is inevitable.[87]

It is obvious that Bilici, in his statements quoted above, with good reason wanted to point out the issue which he thought had given rise to the trenches and deaths, namely the failure of the Solution Process and the state's responsibility in this failure. As a matter of fact, when I interviewed him for as a part of my research, which was also the reason why I was in Diyarbakır during the Trench Incidents, he told me that the state's motivation in the process was not an "idea of peace," that it did not involve the non-governmental organizations who could have facilitated the process, and that for example, it had not considered their application to assume a mediating role.[88] He explained that criticisms they leveled against the PKK or their reports documenting civilian deaths caused by the PKK would appear neither in "media organs close to the PKK" nor in the state media. Also, because they were predominantly caused by the state, drawing attention to civilian deaths was equated with taking sides, Bilici said and added that the state in general approached them with prejudice.

Abdürrahim Ay, Chairperson of the Diyarbakır Branch of The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER), who noted that they had not been able to report the way they had wanted to during the Trench Incidents, emphasized that their reports that indicated that a great number of civilian deaths had occurred in the places under curfew "due to the fact that the security forces recklessly launched random attacks or used the conflict environment for the purpose of intimidation and suppression," would "put the government in a difficult position," adding:[89]

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87 Jeff Goodwin. 2007. "The Struggle Made Me A Nonracialist": Why There Was So Little Terrorism in the Antiapartheid Struggle. Mobilization. 12(2): 193-203; Mac Maharaj. 2008. The ANC and South Africa's Negotiated Transition to Democracy and Peace. Berghof Transitions Series No. 2. Berghof Foundation; For civilian intiatives that convinced the ETA to lay down arms, see Basque Permanent Social Forum. 2017. ETA's disarmament in light of international DDR guidelines: Lessons learnt from an innovative Basque scenario. Berghof Transitions Series No. 12. Berghof Foundation.

88 Interview with Raci Bilici. 12.02.2016. Diyarbakır.

89 Interview with Abdürrahim Ay. 11.02.2015. Diyarbakır.

Our Silvan report was a whole lot better. At least that's what we think. We even received a veiled threat from Karayılan. What we said was this: [...] The PKK should move the conflict away from the civilian sphere. These trenches and barricades and this understanding of self-government are not right. Because in the end, we were saying, this restricts and limits people's daily, civilian lives and summons an intervention by the state [...] and it may lead the state to use violence in order to establish its authority. And this would also imply a responsibility of the organization [...]. Karayılan then said the following: "A delegation from Mazlum-Der went to Silvan and said this about us, we do not accept this, this is the people's own action. Such rhetoric is out of place."

It was impossible to ignore how much force the state exerted in the Solution Process and that the state was acting in an imperious and peremptory manner that precluded any possibility of calling the process a "peace" process – also due to the fact that the state itself wanted to show that it was carrying out the process without compromising its triumphant manner. On the other side, there was neither a group that supported this process without any reservation, nor a notion of peace that would have been agreed upon by the groups and parties, who claimed that they had some reservations, nor a strong civilian political will to defend such a notion. To be sure, rights organizations and non-governmental organizations close to the conflict parties were not the only ones responsible for this lack of will. However, I think that those oppositional actors, who claim to be culturally and intellectually progressive, have a greater potential to create a peaceful civilian will than conservative actors who are generally service-oriented and statist in their attitude.[90]

In general, we can say that there is a tendency among oppositional civilian actors to be more reserved when it comes to problematizing violence used by the PKK, which claims to represent the will of the Kurdish people, and that this tendency (as discussed in the previous section) dates back to the 90s. Abdullah Öcalan's comments in the 32 Gün program broadcast in 1992 give clues about the political and social facts that make the PKK's violence appear inevitable and indisputable:[91]

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90 For an attempt to criticize the intellectual frailty and understanding of civil society of the Turkish right in general, see A. Tarık Çelenk. 2017. Türk Sağının Düşünce Atlası: "İnsanı Yaşat ki Devlet Yaşasın". Mahfil.

91 "Abdullah Öcalan Röportajı" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ91JxQJt44 [23.11.2020]. The program prepared and presented by Mehmet Ali Birand also includes images from the PKK camp in the Bekaa Valley and Öcalan's flat in Damascus.

AÖ: Armed struggle does not just mean gunfire; it is the highest ideological concentration. [...] It is the most realistic understanding of politics [...] this is somewhat the case for the Kurds. It will unite them, this is partly due to the fact that they are not given a development path other than this tool, why don't you understand this? [...]

MB: [...] Among your actions, there are some...

AÖ: I'm thinking about this, you know, how am I able to endure the consequences of those actions?

MB: So, the people, the people you're trying to protect, are you not at some point facing their opposition?

AÖ: Do you know how you do your duties towards the people? You see it as an action, as a reason for immersion [...] so you try to get rid of the heavy burden of conscience. [...] If you remember, I said that you have a leadership crisis, and this crisis is still unresolved [...] I am able to unite the entire PKK. The Kurdish people listen to me to death.

MB: So the entire Kurdish people...

AÖ: The overwhelming majority. [...] We have achieved this unity. They listen to my word. Look, there are no ifs, no buts, no restrictions, no one just easily opposes me.

Despite the fact that rights organizations do not see the armed struggle as the highest ideological concentration or the most realistic understanding of politics, and do not consider the killing of civilians as an act of immersion, there is still hesitation to address such issues. The reluctance of these organizations to make sufficient efforts to bring these massacres to the agenda can be understood as them taking a stand in favor of the will and the struggle for freedom of the Kurdish people embodied in the PKK. On the other hand, it seems that ignoring some factual truths in order to undermine the official truth and make the oppositional truth visible has not worked to prevent the depredation of the perception of truth, the polarization fostered by the war regime and the fading of the peace discourse. Cuma Çiçek writes that the non-governmental organizations, which tried to survive the attacks of the state and to keep track of the rights violations committed by the state in the 90s, were generally not "assuming roles" but rather

"assigned roles" by the political wills they were politically engaging with and that they remained incapable of manufacturing a social consent based on the demand for peace and justice vis-à-vis a public that was supporting the war.[92] Going beyond the choices imposed by the war regime, envisioning a peaceful way of truth-seeking in order to push official and oppositional truths closer to a regime of peace today still is a political choice that comes with a high price.

A Peaceful Search for Truth

It should be added that Turkey's war regime, which was strengthened by the clash of two truth regimes, has involved a constant search for resolution and peace on the part of the conflict parties. Although this search has not come to fruition due to the parties' differing visions regarding resolution and peace, the operability and durability of the war regime so far is partly due to its flexibility, which allows such a search for resolution and peace. Both the PKK, which negotiated with the state and declared ceasefires during the 90s, and the state, which set the table for negotiations with Öcalan on several occasions during the 2000s, always advance the war regime in conjunction with a search for a solution and peace.[93] In summary, although the truth regimes we are trying to address hinge on an understanding of politics that is caught in the pendulum between conflict/resolution or war/peace, we can say that they ultimately operate as a war regime and that the vision of a peaceful search for truth by which this study is guided aims to liberate politics from this pendulum and move the regime of war closer to a regime of peace.

While preparing a "peace chronology" within the scope of the research I mentioned in the previous section, I came across news and videos announcing the establishment of the YDGH on February 23, 2013, immediately after the İmralı delegation's second visit to Öcalan, and watched the oath ceremonies of the YDGH-Asayiş, especially during the PKK's withdrawal from Turkey, in different districts, particularly in Cizre. Contrary to the passage in Karayılan's aforementioned statement, which suggests that "these attacks would have been launched, even if there would not have been any trenches. As a matter of fact, when they broke the truce and started the attacks, there were no trenches," I noted that the trenches dug

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92 See Cuma Çiçek. 2017. 2013-2015 Çözüm Süreci'nde Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları. Barış Vakfı Yayınları: 27-29, 35-37.

93 For a brief history of "Attempts for Reconciliation in the Kurdish Conflict" see Cuma Çiçek. 2018. "Süreç" Kürt Çatışması ve Çözüm Arayışları. İletişim: 143-209.

in Cizre in October 2014 were closed in December of the same year and opened again following the violent interventions of the state.[94] I thought that these kinds of actions during the Solution Process – also taking into account the Kobani protests, the construction of high-tech security military outposts, the desecration and destruction of the graves of HPG members and the fact that fire was opened against those protesting this destruction, the problems regarding the withdrawal of the PKK and other similar issues – were a legitimate sign of distrust.

Ultimately, I see it as one of the conditions of a lasting and dignified peace and one of the essential elements of the search for truth and the struggle to confront the past, in order to see, expose and ensure that the state's crimes against humanity do not go unpunished. However, seeing the objection to the official truth and the truth regime as the right political choice may serve to see the construction of the oppositional official truth and truth regime as secondary and, more importantly, to make peace itself secondary. While envisioning a search for truth that can transform the regime of war into a regime of peace, we can explore whether it is possible to pursue factual truths within a framework that is not subject to truth regimes and analyze the political and social implications of restoring the perception of truth on the way towards developing a peaceful search for truth.

It seems to me that a search for truth which consists of clichés and stereotypes that appeal to our emotions and reinforce contrasting grand narratives, while being shaped by interpretations that are based on opinions and views, tends to select factual truths in such a way as to support its own interpretation, rather than focusing on detailed analysis and information on the causes and consequences of the war. In other words, as far as a peaceful search for truth is concerned, truths told and untold equally require scrutiny. It should be remembered that selective chronologies and incomplete truths built on "being right" are also employed in the existing truth regimes' operating as racist regimes of war, that is, in weaving nationalist narratives. As a matter of fact, as we will discuss later, part of what causes racism to be wrapped in euphemisms and to become blurred is that such cliché and stereotype objections seem to express "supra-political truths," while these kinds of objections that have become slogans actually play a part in pushing matters out of politics.

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94 "The first trenches in Cizre were dug during the Kobani protests on 6-7 October. [...] At the beginning of January, six of the ditches were closed by the Mayor of Cizre, Leyla İmret. Speaking to Al Jazeera, Imret said she thought all of the trenches could only be closed with the consent of those digging them." http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/cizrede-hendekler-kapatildi [04.12.2020].

The proposal for a peaceful search for truth does not imagine that "a peaceful truth" already exists somewhere or that it would wait to be discovered. This, most of all, would be a political fallacy. The idea of a "peaceful" search for truth implies reflecting on a truth-seeking method that will serve peace. It is fueled by a critique of the relationship between truth and power that contributes to the establishment, functioning and resilience of official and oppositional truth regimes, especially from a critique of the methods of seeking an "oppositional truth" against "official truth" as part of the processes of transitional justice and dealing with the past, and from an alert critique of domination. It is not intended to provide normative and moral guidance, but to provoke a descriptive and political discussion. In other words, it is a call to think about methods of making factual truths visible not through the framework of truth imposed by the war regimes, but by transforming them into tools of a social and legal battle that can amplify the demand for peace and advance the search for truth.

Of course, it is possible to say that, not only unlike the political will of the parties involved, but also the existing power relations and geopolitical balances, the peaceful search for truth is not one of the dominant factors that determine the course of resolution and peace initiatives. However, civil actors who cannot focus on directly changing these factors but still want to advocate for peace have both the means and the responsibility to employ a peaceful search for truth to occupy themselves with issues such as structural and systematic racism and racial violence. In turn, this would contribute to both the resolution of these kinds of issues at the root of war and the peace process itself. Criticism of civil actors who tend to reproach the process instead of taking advantage of these opportunities and taking on these responsibilities, also serves as a reminder to these actors of the potential role that society can play in the peace process.

It is more difficult to say how a peaceful search for truth – and similarly, the uncommon and almost incomprehensible style of peace – can be cultivated and made popular than, for example, defining and choosing the style of war. Needless to say, slogans such as "Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood" do not always serve this striving towards truth and peace, not only because they are cliché, but because they do not confess to the truth, in other words, because they cover up the fact that this brotherhood adds up to a racist and colonial hierarchy working against the Kurdish people, do not correspond to the style of peace.

A peaceful search for truth means to take the factual truths that will destabilize the war regime, which feeds on the truth regimes, and anchor justice in a legal, political, and social framework that serves peace. The context of peace needed by factual truths can be a

framework which includes different aspects of these truths and connects these truths to other problems and needs that may also concern other segments of society. The peaceful search for truth can also be thought of as a battle for truth inherent in the effort to spread the opposition to truth regimes and to associate the struggle to confront the past with the anti-racist struggle.

The Battle for Truth

Foucault, who says that the task of the intellectual is to provide instruments of analysis to identify the positions of power, in a ramified manner, has effectively penetrated, assumed and secured, and identified power's strong lines and weak points, has described this task as "a topological and geological survey of the battlefield" where the war over truth is waged.[95] He uses a comparison to portray the intellectual nominee for this survey. He writes that the figure of the universal, classic and political intellectual is one who "utilises his knowledge, his competence and his relation to truth in the field of political struggles." This figure derived from the "man who invoked the universality of a just law, if necessary against the legal professions themselves," also identified as a jurist or writer, while the new and emerging intellectual figure derives its importance and authority from biology and physics, from the spread of technical-scientific structures to the economic and strategic domain, due to which he "has at his disposal, whether in the service of the State or against it, powers which can either benefit or irrevocably destroy life."[96] On the other hand, Foucault notes that the role of this new intellectual will become more important day by day due to the "to the political responsibilities which he is obliged willy-nilly to accept," adding that it is necessary to abandon not the specific intellectual but the nostalgia for the universal intellectual.[97]

Foucault reminds us that the most important element that makes the new intellectual specific is the "politics of truth in our societies," thus drawing attention to the fact that the new intellectual can be part of a struggle that can yield effective results not only at the professional or sectoral level, but also at the level of the regime of truth.[98] It should be noted that a struggle that can yield effective results at the level of the regime of truth should not aim to reveal truths which are waiting to be discovered and accepted, but to

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[95] Michel Foucault. 1980b. Body/Power: 62.

[96] Michel Foucault. 1980a: 128-29.

[97] ibid.: 131.

[98] ibid.: 132.

identify the power relations and rules that determine true and false. What Foucault is referring to is therefore "not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays."[99] I think that the political problem that Foucault describes with respect to the intellectual and the battle he says is fought "around truth" is entirely valid for the search for truth, on the road to understanding and contextualizing the past and is meaningful for anyone who objects to regimes of truth:

> "The essential political problem for the intellectual is [...] that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth [emphasis added]. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses - or what's in their heads - but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power [...] but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time. The political question [...] is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology; it is truth itself."[100]

Saving truth from the systems of power is, of course, a romantic and apolitical vision. However, trying to continue the search for truth without being subject to regimes of truth, struggling to save the power of truth from the dominance of these systems, and making truth itself a political issue, that is, revealing which truth serves what kind of power relations, all can be seen as instances of a battle for truth. In this case, the battle for truth, which is inherent in the struggle to confront the past, will not be confined to excavating the facts that the oppositional truth regime tries to assert as true in contrast to the facts that the existing regime of truth declares true.

If we put it in Foucault's terms, this battle, which will be waged by tracing the geological and topological lines of the war for hegemony over truth, that is, both the different surfaces and power relations of truths, and the layers and shores of indifference to truths, can allow us to look for ways to point out once more that the struggle for hegemony over truth is a part of the physical war between truth regimes and to put the search for truth at the service of peace and not of one of the parties to the war. Considering how truth is utilized and reproduced by the communities who are the prominent parties in the current war, it can moreover explore the conditions for

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99 ibid.: 132.

100 Michel Foucault. 1980a: 133.

involving these communities in the battle for truth and the peaceful search for truth.

We know that the main issue for those who work in the field of confronting the past and seeking truth is not just revealing factual truths. We know that there is not one single truth and that some truths are already in plain view. The issue, then, may be to resist the coarse and simplified manifestation of these truths which only conduces to the current polarization, populism, and emotional and individual appropriation, to establish the collective and political context of truths, and to reflect on ways to share truths in a way that serves not only to claim one's rights but also to advance peace. It can mean to contemplate the political equivalent, the possibility and, most importantly, the possible contribution to building peace of a battle for truth that will valorize the search for truth, restore the perception of truth and unsettle existing regimes of truth.

Foucault discusses the way in which power arranges legal rules and rights while producing discourses of truth and explains that disciplinary forms of power aim to "normalize" society by modeling its mechanisms according to those of the armies.[101] This regime of war operates immanently in politics and creates enemies built on racism, targeting minorities through the law and producing data to reinforce conflict and make these enemies real. Power produces truth while simultaneously weaving power relations that produce races and racism. In this sense, making crimes against humanity committed and justified by the truth regime visible is an innate part of the anti-racist struggle. The relationship between the regime of truth and racism, and therefore between the anti-racist struggle and the struggle to confront the past, is the subject of the second part.

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101 Michel Foucault. 2003; Ferhat Taylan. 2013. Strateji, Norm, Yönetim: Foucault'nun 1978 Collège de France Dersleri. e-skop: https://www-e-skop.com/skopbulten/strateji-norm-yonetim-foucaultnun-1978-coll%C3%A8ge-de-france-dersleri/1701 [01.12.2020].

CONTESTING THE REGIME OF TRUTH: CONFRONTING RACISM

This part, in which I want to address the issue of racism, which lies at the bottom of the regime of truth, in the context of the struggle to come to terms with the past, consists of four sections. In the first section, I tried to discuss the relationship between racism and nationalism and the manifestations and historical trajectory of this relationship in Turkey. The second section, containing theories and evaluations concerning racism and the anti-racist struggle, aims to both complement the discussion on Turkey included in the previous section and shed light on the discussion about confronting the past in the following section. The third section deals with criticisms leveled against the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and examines the problem of ongoing racism in South Africa and the limits of transitional justice in terms of confronting racism. This part ends with the fourth section, which evaluates the racist reactions to attempts to resolve conflict in Turkey and discusses an anti-racist framework for the struggle for peace and confronting the past, which would be required for a potential solution process.

The Pure Form of Nationalism: Racism

The racism inherent in the regime of truth of the State of the Republic of Turkey, just like every thought and action that has become ordinary, bursts into sight more blatantly especially in extraordinary times. The Siyaset Meydanı program of October 15, 1994, in which two women and thirty-two male politicians and writers discussed the topic of "Rising Nationalism" for six hours, was a moment of such a dazzling flare-up.[102] In this show, Turkish nationalism is claimed to have risen in reaction to Kurdish nationalism and virtually portrayed as the way Turkish men "love the Turkish nation." Dominated by a discussion about "how to love the Turkish nation," the show turns into a stage for the articulation and even materialization of violence, sexism, and especially racism.

The ideology of the single-party period, which is embraced by Kemalist nationalists (CHP and DSP representatives) and tolerated by nationalists (MHP and BBP representatives), is described as "nationalism in the form of racism" by Islamists (RP representatives) and Kurds (DEP representatives). On the other hand, the CHP circles, which praise the Republic's policy of "non-exclusion" carried out on the basis

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[102] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDFkUM00nH8 [04.02.2021]. While summarizing the discussion, I used quotation marks to quote the statements of the guests whose names I did not find it necessary to mention.

of "ethnic equality achieved through homogenization," is supported by the MHP milieu, which boasts that Turkish nationalism is not racist, since racism would mean "to oppress other nations." In the background, the nationalists accuse the Islamists of not being nationalist enough, while the Islamists, contending that the founders of Turkey were Islamist as much as Turkist and Pan-Islamist as much as nationalist, accuse the nationalists of not being religious enough. While the Kemalist nationalist, nationalist, and Islamist figures, who squash the "Turkish Kurds" and their Muslim Kurdish brothers by "pressing them to their chest" to win the favor of the Turkish nation, the Kurds are looking for a political interlocutor to solve the Kurdish issue.

If we neglect the exceptions and nuances for a while, we can say that the debate, which evolved into a power struggle and a propaganda contest among the nationalists, culminated in a definition of the Turkish nation, which all nationalists jointly defended, arguing that it was not racist at all: "Anyone whose language is Turkish, whose religion is Islam, who has received Turkish education and culture, and who calls herself or himself Turkish, belongs to the Turkish nation." If the expression "Turkish race" had not featured in the founding documents and speeches, and if racist practices had not played any role in the establishment of the Turkish State - as we will see in the next section, the opposite is the case - the claim, that the word "Turkish" in this definition does not refer to the name of a race, could be convincing. On the other hand, as demonstrated by the racist imaginations discussed in the next sections, the ingenuity of racism lies in its ability to turn any identity into racial raw material, even when there is no such thing as race. In this respect, saying that there are no racial references in the definition of the Turkish nation does not refute the claim that Turkishness was constructed as a racial identity to dominate other "races."

Various definitions and aphorisms invented to imagine Turkish nationalism as a matter of religious integrity and decency or some sort of naive patriotism almost alien to the concept of race, cannot prevent us from seeing the "racism without race" or "racism without racist" idea that permeates laws, institutions, and practices. I think that these concepts, which are used to describe a racial discrimination that does not explicitly resort to racial references, characterize the racism of Kemalist nationalists and nationalists who do their best to stay away from the topic of race and fear being accused of racism, or Islamist nationalists who want to avoid the sin of racism.[103] Both

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103 For the concept of a "racism without race" see Etienne Balibar. 1991a. Is There a 'Neo-Racism'? In Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities. Verso: 21; Albert Memmi. 2000. Racism. University of Minnesota Press; David Theo Goldberg.

concepts are used to examine new racist strategies developed to engage in racist discourse and action without being accused of being "racist" in countries where racism is assumed to have ceased to exist. I will discuss these racist strategies, which are nothing new for Turkey, in greater detail in the second section.

While there are many instances where Turkish racism, which we are tracing here, can be detected – for example, Atatürk's speech Nutuk, the statues all over Turkey, the country's boulevards, "culture and art" centers, daily statements, and sports competitions – we can find it in its clearest form in Article 66 of the Constitution: "Everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk. The child of a Turkish father or a Turkish mother is a Turk."[104] Introducing the idea of a nation based on race, that is, resorting to blood ties and ethnic nationalism, in addition to the idea of making people belong to a race through the bond of citizenship to a state, that is, creating a race through cultural assimilation and "civic duty," can be read as the "Turkish state's" insistence on racism.

The importance of the thesis that the understanding of a "Turkish nation," in which not only those who are racially/ethnically Turkish can become members but also those who accept to be Turkish in cultural terms and as a civic duty, would not be founded upon a nationalism based on race/ethnicity, dwindles in the face of experiences that make us comprehend what non-Turks and those who do not accept being Turkish are exposed to. As Billig has shown, ethnic/racial nationalism and cultural/civic nationalism ultimately operate in a similar fashion, with the same discourses, practices, and means of violence, especially in times of war or crisis.[105] However, it has not been possible until recently to label French "cultural/civic" nationalism, one of the sources of inspiration of Turkish nationalism, as racism especially because the current, decolonized notion of Frenchness works as a shield in this respect. Also, while assimilating individuals from "primitive" and "local" cultures into French culture, portrayed as "progressive" and "universal," French nationalism invites these individuals to partake in progress, emancipation and rights ownership without this invitation containing biological references.[106] I want to touch on the racist nature of French nationalism in more detail in the second section and return to

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2008. Racisms without Racism. PMLA. 123(5): 1712-1716. For the concept of a "racism without racist" see Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2013. Racism without Racist: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: 29.

104 https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf [09.02.2021].

105 See Michael Billig. 1995. Banal Nationalism. Sage: 83.

106 See Etienne Balibar. 1991a: 25.

the 1990s period in Turkey at this point by noting that in 1998, those accusing the Front National of racism were accused of being anti-French racists by the racists.[107] Similarly, the claim that there is anti-Turkish racism in Turkey, that "Turks are despised because they are Turkish and they are ashamed to say I am Turkish," is frequently voiced in the mentioned show by the nationalists who fear a return to the days when Turks were considered "stupid Turks" by the Devshirme Ottomans.

As Balibar puts it, "[r]acist organizations most often refuse to be designated as such, laying claim instead to the title of nationalist and claiming that the two notions cannot be equated," whereas in fact all examples confirm that "[r]acism is constantly emerging out of nationalism [...] [a]nd nationalism emerges out of racism."[108] In this sense, when we refer to the strangeness of the term "national racism" to draw attention to the illusion created by the term "racist nationalism," that is, the impossibility of encountering a non-racist version of nationalism, and also to the peculiar racism of each nationalism -– just like the one harbored in the expression "national socialism" – it may be possible to point out the futility of the efforts to separate nationalism from racism and to designate racism as the pure form of nationalism. In other words, nationalism and racism are so close and equal that they cannot qualify one another.

Proceeding exactly from this nationalism-racism equation, the Kurds participating in the television program I mentioned contend that Turkish nationalism is not a civil movement. By referring to "the soldiers sent to Southeast Anatolia to return with an ear in their pocket," they draw attention to the social manifestations of racism that official Turkish nationalism does not claim responsibility for, i.e., the "racisms without racism." First introduced by Goldberg, who argues that racism has escaped from the state's patronage and started functioning according to the logic of the free market with the arrival of neoliberalism, this concept relays the idea that the state, which has withdrawn from many production and service areas in the wake of globalization, delegates racism to the private sector and even refrains from intervening in the private sector to leave room for racist practices and services.[109] We can say that by the 90s, racism in Turkey began to function as privatized racisms without racism under the auspices of the state without however, cancelling out the racisms without race and

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107 See Ann Laura Stoler. 2016. Duress. Imperial Durabilities in Our Times. Duke University Press: 282.

108 Etienne Balibar. 1991b. Racism and Nationalism. In Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities. Verso: 37, 53.

109 See David Theo Goldberg. 2008.

racist of the Kemalist nationalists and the conservative/religious nationalists. Thus, this expanding repertoire of racism has widened the spectrum of racist discourses and practices in the different layers of state and society.

The prevailing debate on Turkish screens in the 90s concerned the questions surrounding which kind of nationalism had to be in power to eliminate the PKK and Kurdish politics, and whether the Kurds should be assimilated into the Turkish nation or the Islamic Ummah. In the television program mentioned before, Yaşar Erbaz, one of the MHP executives, argues against the perception that sees their brand of Turkish nationalism as racism. He states that they did not carry syringes or rulers in their pockets and did not have "racist" motives such as craniometry or blood sampling, adding that some in his family were married to women of Kurdish origin. While complaining that Turkey's "progress" on racism is not appreciated, it can be said that this view, which has succumbed to racism and involves a certain feeling of inferiority and anger, has extended to the "nation." This refers to the AKP-MHP alliance which has been in power since 2015 and embraces the ideology of the single-party period.

Kentel, Ahıska, and Genç, who examine how nationalism forms alliances between the conflicting ideologies and interests, accounts for a large part of the political field, and acts as "accomplices" in resorting to organized violence to maintain privileges, as well as investigating how it spreads across the nation, conclude that we need "to acknowledge that this strategic concept, the name of a fiction of the last two centuries that renders today's power relations invisible, is hollow, and that there is no such thing as 'nationalism' anymore [emphasis added]."[110] I am aware that stating that there has in fact never been such a thing as nationalism, or to put it more accurately and as I have argued in this study, that the essence of nationalism is racism, and even that nationalism is equivalent to racism, would not lend itself to the purpose behind the authors' suggestion. In other words, using the concept of racism instead of nationalism would not lend itself to a sophisticated analysis that examines the nationalist tactics that reflect the desire to "be appreciated," "stay as oneself" and "maintain self-esteem," which encompasses all of Turkey's different linguistic, religious, racial, sexual and class identities, and "highlights the emotions shared across the country, in the cities or at other scales."

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110 Ferhat Kentel, Meltem Ahıska and Fırat Genç. 2009. "Milletin Bölünmez Bütünlüğü" Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Parçalayan Milliyetçi-lik(ler). TESEV Yayınları: 294.

A PEACEFUL SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN TURKEY: CONFRONTING RACISM

I am also aware that using the concept of racism in place of nationalism on every occasion and at every opportunity entails the danger of turning racism into a similarly hollow concept and moreover comes with analytical difficulties and methodological problems. However, keeping in mind that the concept of race is no less fictional than the concept of the nation, I think that the concept of racism, which represents the purest form of nationalism and depicts its widespread character, can be used to draw attention to the fact that the types of discrimination known and practiced by large sections of the society are being legitimized under the guise of nationalism, as well as to the sources and criminal nature of these types of discrimination. Moreover, taking up the issue of racism to integrate the concept in efforts geared towards facing up with the past seems especially important in the context of violence and crime, as it helps to point out a problem that should be interrogated and resolved. In summary, the notion of racism, which will be discussed in more detail in the second section, opens new fields of study for the struggle for peace and justice and creates new possibilities for challenging truth regimes. In this respect, tracing the manifestations of racism from Turkish Kemalist nationalism to Turkish-Islamic nationalism and from the state to society, I would like to arrive at and enter the doors of objection to the truth regime.

Turkish Style Racism

It seems possible to say that the racist content of Turkish nationalism, which started to become apparent in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, was clarified by the pursuit of the population policy (and communicated through encrypted telegrams) by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which was in power between 1913-1918, with the aim of Turkifying and Islamizing Anatolia.[111] In line with this policy, which Fuat Dündar calls "ethnic engineering," in order to achieve the Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia (discovered through ethnographic research, ethnic statistics and map studies), Bulgarians were expelled from Thrace, and Greeks from the Aegean region, Armenians were exterminated by deportation and genocide, Nestorians and Syriacs were exiled, Jews were intimidated, and Kurds were forcibly resettled. Finally, Turks and Muslims, who were classified according to their ethnic origins, were settled in suitable regions.

Founded in 1912, the so-called Turkish Hearths accompanied this process of demographic engineering and worked for "the maturation of the race and language

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[111] Fuat Dündar. 2019. Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi. İttihat Ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918). İletişim.

of the Turks, who are one of the important pillars of the Islamic tribe." To the extent and as long as the CUP allowed, they engaged in "cultural nationalism" activities and chaperoned the establishment of the Republic, but when they started to hinder the Republican People's Party rule, they were found unnecessary and dangerous and closed in 1931.[112] Mustafa Kemal was actually targeting an oppositional strand of nationalism that had spread in the Turkish Hearths when he said, "I find it appropriate that the Turkish Hearths work in unison [...] with my party which seeks to realize the same principles in politics and practice."[113] However, this statement also allows us to think that racism was being practiced by his own party and the state. At this point, the information that Mustafa Kemal and his friends were targeted by racists on the grounds that they were not pure Turks, did not adequately promote Turkishness and did not sufficiently exclude non-Turks is important in terms of recording the diversity of the strains of racism in Turkey and the conflicts between them.[114]

The "political leadership," which had set out to "explain national identity with racial and race-related linguistic phenomena" at the First Turkish History Congress in 1932, failed to sustain its claim of racial homogeneity, although it conducted the second congress in 1937 with authoritarian "scientism," and had to be content with giving the Turkish nation an "archaeological" official history.[115] Nevertheless, the state did not neglect taking the Türk Antropoloji Mecmuası ("Journal of Turkish Anthropology"), which was published between 1925 and 1939 and included influential academic and political figures among its writers and administrative committee, under its protection so that it could prepare "science-fiction" publications proving the superiority of the Turkish race to people at home and abroad and legitimize the racist measures taken by the state in its Euro-centric modernization project.[116]

In the period following Nazism and the Holocaust, there was a need to replace the German-inspired ethnic racism with its biological-physiological origins by cultural racism. Thus, focus was shifted towards interpreting Turkish nationalism through the

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112 See Füsun Üstel. 2004. İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912-1931. İletişim: 63.

113 ibid.: 374.

114 See Ilker Aytürk. 2011. The Racist Critics of Atatürk and Kemalism, from the 1930s to the 1960s. Journal of Contemporary History. 46(2): 308-335.

115 See Büşra Ersanlı. 2006. İktidar ve Tarih. Türkiye'de "Resmî Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937). İletişim: 187, 225, 234.

116 See Nazan Maksudyan. 2016. Türklüğü Ölçmek. Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Çehresi 1925-1939. Metis. Also see Ilia Xypolia. 2016. Racist Aspects of Modern Turkish Nationalism. Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies. 18(2): 111-124.

lens of French nationalism. I wanted to mention the phenomenon of "ethnic racism" because I thought that it would expose that this term is a pleonasm similar to the one contained in the expression "wet water." Going back to the source of this pleonasm we find that the etymological sources of the word ethnic extend to the Latin words for pagan, barbarian, savage and infidel, that the word ethnic is used to describe small and non-dominant communities such as clans, tribes, castes, and even animal herds, and that one of synonym of the word ethnic is "racial."[117] As he was trying to conceptualize the foundations of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp was aware that the concept of race was not appropriate and convenient due to its biological and zoological references. Abandoning the concept of race, Gökalp was not content with a community construct based on language, religion, upbringing and even culture, but further invoked the concept of the "éthnie" to represent this fictional community.[118] In other words, Gökalp knew that language, religion, upbringing and culture were not enough to base the Turkish nation on the notion of a Turkish race, but that using the word race was not appropriate, and therefore allowed for an inconsistency peculiar to "cultural nationalists." Adopting this inconsistency and reinforcing this brand of nationalism "without race" with secularism, the CHP left religion to "Turkism" and Turkism to conservative nationalists in the 1940s and sought to consolidate the single-party regime by declaring the Turkists racist and reactionary.[119]

The Turkists, who considered pure-blooded Turks superior, were put on trial for racism and Turanism in 1944 but found innocent and acquitted in 1947. The court ruled that the notion that there were different racial origins in the Turkish nation was not unconstitutional according to Article 88 of the Constitution, which defined Turkishness in terms of citizenship, and that there was no provision of law according to which racial discrimination was a crime.[120] One of the defendants, Nihal Atsız, alleged that according to Article 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, to which the proceedings referred, it was not a crime for one race to dominate over other races but for one class to dominate over other classes, thus providing a legal justification for the acquittal of nationalist activities – these activities should accordingly be understood as a necessary reaction against the communist threat.[121] In the person of Alpaslan Türkeş, who was also among

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117 See https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ethnic; https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnic [30.04.2021].

118 See Büşra Ersanlı. 2006: 86-87.

119 See Günay Göksu Özdoğan. 2002. Turan'dan Bozkurt'a. Tek Parti Döneminde Türkçülük (1931-1946). İletişim: 13.

120 ibid.: 113.

121 ibid.: 114-115.

the defendants, tried for violating the ban on political activity by members of the army, Turkism can be traced to the present day. In 1953, Turkism, this time represented by the Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği ("Turkish Nationalists Association"), was once again tried on charges of racism and Turanism and once again acquitted by the court, which concluded that the nationalist discourses of the association figured in the "civics" textbook used in schools and that they would therefore not be racist.[122]

Turkism was prosecuted by both the CHP and the Democrat Party (DP) governments to contain oppositional nationalisms and tamed by the state, which was not yet ready to privatize racism. This racist culture in state and government, which was transferred from the Committee of Union and Progress to the CHP, from there to the DP and succeeding ruling parties, and finally to the AKP,[123] envisages a grading of authoritarianism and violence by appropriating or criminalizing oppositional social demands, or by restraining or stimulating – depending on what is needed – the social delirium created by the state itself. For example, the right-wing governments, who tried to get the approval of the national bourgeoisie, the urban base, the army, and the elites throughout the 1960s, distanced themselves from the conservative nationalist organizations that had helped them join the ranks of the state, but did not abstain from using and controlling these organizations in the fight against communism.

Kept out of power, the nationalists continued their efforts to establish intellectual and cultural hegemony and train cadres who would one day rule the state. Thus, between 1964 and 1980, the Mücadele Birliği ("Union of Struggle"), a temporary station for many personages in today's politics, pioneered initiatives bringing together Turkist, Anatolian and Islamist nationalists, helping conservative nationalism to absorb the Republic and making the state adopt conservative nationalism, while welding together citizenship and community affiliations.[124] In the 1970s, Islamism was expanded by the Turkist organizations, which turned into rival political parties and movements, through the National Salvation Party (MSP) and the Akıncılar ("Raiders"), while nationalism was promoted by the MHP and the ülkücüler ("Idealists"). Following the 1980 military coup, Islam and nationalism were groomed and synthesized and eventually entrusted to the new

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122 Murat Kılıç. 2016. "Allah, Vatan, Soy, Milli Mukaddesat" Türk Milliyetçiler Derneği (1951-1953). İletişim: 236. The association is closed on the grounds that it engaged in political activities, not because of racism and religionism.

123 See Mete Kaan Kaynar. 2020. Türkiye'nin Ellili Yılları Üzerine Bazı Notlar. in Mete Kaan Kaynar (ed.) Türkiye'nin 1950'li Yılları. İletişim: 37-38.

124 See Ekin Kadir Selçuk. 2018. "Mücadeleciler" Mücadele Birliği (1964-1980). İletişim: 13.

centre-right governments and thrown on the market in the wake of neoliberal expansions.[125]

In summary, although the rapprochement between the "secular Islamist" Kemalist branch and the radical Islamist conservative branch of Turkish nationalism, itself a unique blend of biological and cultural racism, caused conflicts from time to time, it updated the state and the army following the 1980 military coup. This rapprochement further intensified as a result of the panic caused by the PKK-led Kurdish rebellion and the appetite created by the Central Asian Turkic republics and the promises of neoliberalism.[126] Finally reconciled, these racisms without race and racist ideas were ready to be employed in the special operations units and to be privatized and handed over to social initiatives as racisms without racism. In the first part, I addressed the role of the media, which produce racist discourses and images, in accomplishing this delivery by discussing different television broadcasts.[127]

This racist agreement, which was partially suspended and brought under control during the first term of the AKP government and the Solution Process, became official again when the AKP, which had to make allowances to the sanctity of Kemalism, resorted to the support of the MHP to expand its conservative base and its shares in the state. During the "trench operations," the agreement was violently consolidated.[128] This reconciliation, which manifests itself especially in hostility towards the Kurds, removed baseless doubts about the racist nature of Turkish nationalism and reinforced the racist regime of truth of the Turkish state.

Aside from the fact that claims stating that Turkey lacks the intellectual resources, organizational skills or international power to operate racism in an institutional and

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125 See Ertuğrul Zengin. 2021. Akıncılar Hareketi. 1970'lerde İslâmcı Gençliğin Oluşumu ve Eylemi. İletişim; Tanıl Bora. 2017. Cereyanlar. 298-337.

126 See Tanıl Bora. 2017. Cereyanlar. 246-268. The slogan "Our martyrs are immortal, our homeland is indivisible," also mentioned by Bora, was adopted from the Nationalist Movement to official nationalism and became the symbol of the reconciliation between conservative and secular nationalisms. An equivalent to the first part of the same slogan can also be found in the Kurdish political movement ("şehîd namirin"). At this point, let us simply keep in mind that this slogan might well be the hardest stone to dislodge for both regimes of truth.

127 For a study of the reception of racist media contents see Hatice Çoban Keneş. 2014. Yeni Irkçılığın "Kirli" Ötekileri. Kürtler, Aleviler, Ermeniler. Dipnot: 59-60.

128 See Onur Atalay. 2018. Türk'e Tapmak. Seküler Din ve İki Savaş Arası Kemalizm. İletişim: 14-15. Hasan Aksay, one of the founders of the National Order Party and a member of parliament for the Justice Party in the 1960s, says in an interview that in the edition of the dictionary of the Turkish Language Institution at that time contained the phrase "The religion of the Turk is Kemalism"; see A. Tarık Çelenk. 2017: 235.

systematic way are invalid, given both the above discussion and the experience of many peoples who have been subjected to racist violence, these claims are not proof that racism does not exist in Turkey, but rather data that forms the basis for an analysis of the emergence of late-racism in Turkey or Turkish-style racism.[129] Besides, we might want to suggest that intellectual resources are necessary not so much in order to "do" acts of racism but rather to hide it. Such resources are sufficiently available both on the right and on the left in Turkey.

If we put it in terms of a phenomenon that is strongly intertwined with racism, namely sexism, we find that women and LGBTI+ individuals who have been subjected to male harassment, rape and murder do not need to demonstrate that the intellectual background and organizational skill required for the institutional and systematic implementation of masculinity is readily available in Turkey in order to prove that there is a problem with masculinity in Turkey. While it certainly is a legitimate academic concern to demand a nuanced analysis of racism and sexism, it is fair to say that the concerns of the respective victims are far more instructive in the fight against racism and sexism.

In 2014, I conducted several interviews with Kurdish people to learn about the idea of and search for justice of the victims of state terrorism in the 90s. Regardless of differences in age, gender, class and victimization, the single most vital question for all of them was "why." Because they already knew the answer to this question in terms of factual truth and since there could not be any other reasonable or genuine answer, this question was somewhat rhetorical. Essentially, however, it reflected a single demand: the official recognition of the injustice and suffering of the Kurds inflicted by the Turkish state and nation.[130] In other words, they demanded that the answer to the question "why," that this "truth" was officially articulated: Injustice was done to the Kurds because they were Kurds, because of their Kurdishness, which was attributed qualities that either had to be ignored or destroyed – and this is the epitome of racism.

Cezmi Bayram, Head of the Istanbul Turkish Hearth Branch, contends that today's negative connotations of the word "race" stemmed from the historical phenomenon of racism, which "inflicted a great disaster on humanity" during the Second World War. In comparison, the phrase, the "Turkish race," used in the early years of the Republic,

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129 See Murat Ergin. 2008. 'Is the Turk a White Man?' Towards a Theoretical Framework for Race in the Making of Turkishness. Middle Eastern Studies. 44(6): 827–850.

130 See Nesrin Uçarlar. 2015. Hiçbir Şey Yerinde Değil. Çatışma Sonrası Süreçte Adalet ve Geçmişle Yüzleşme Talepleri. İletişim.

in fact referred to the Turkish nation. In order to prove this, Bayram explains that the state, which resisted admitting Christian Gagauz Turks into Turkey, as the state did "not accept them as Turks," did not show the same sort of resistance when it came to Muslim Bosnians, Albanians and Arabs.[131] Confirming that the "Muslim Contract," as Barış Ünlü wrote, lies at the heart of the "Turkishness Contract," this statement moreover shows that Bayram's efforts will remain futile when it comes to Arabs or especially Kurds, and that there is an undeniable racist core in the definition of the Turkish nation which Islam cannot outdo. Consequently, Ünlü says that the "Turkishness Contract," which he defines as a "supra-ideological" construct, functions on the basis of "unwritten rules, the structuring of institutions, actual practices, daily habits, and strategies of not being informed and not being affected" and that "it does not operate gently at all at times." Ünlü's concern is with pointing out the racist manifestations of this "Turkishness Contract."[132]

Turkishness and Islam, both legacies of the Ottoman Empire, continue to be blended and used in different scales at different times, as required by the idea of a superior race, which was devised to compensate for a territorial shrinking that trapped today's Turkey in Anatolia, to counter political and social frustration, and to provide momentum and resources for a development and modernization project that was constantly late. An examination of this idea of a superior race, which is not unique to Turkey, and the theoretical and historical development of racist policies, can provide us with important tools to discuss racism in Turkey and to turn the coming to terms with the past into a process of accounting for racism.

Racist Dreams and Privileges

Foucault argues that the war that wages beneath politics which shapes and divides societies, is actually a race war and suggests that the discourse that makes this war possible, that ensures its continuation and development, aims to transform cultural and linguistic differences into power differences and a means of domination and to ensure the conquest and subjugation of one race by another race.[133] He recounts that this discourse, which was embraced by biological racists and eugenicists in the 17th century,

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131 A. Tarık Çelenk. 2017: 286-287.

132 Barış Ünlü. 2018. Türklük Sözleşmesi: Oluşumu, İşleyişi ve Krizi. Dipnot: 167.

133 Michel Foucault. 2003: 59-60.

was hidden behind class wars after being articulated with nationalist movements and colonialism in Europe, and eventually no longer belong to a war waged between different races today, but to a war waged by a group portrayed as the only true race, which holds power and the right to define the norm, and therefore, to "defend society" against those who deviate from this norm.[134] Memmi notes that the concept of race, which was used in the context of animal husbandry until the 17th century, began to be used in human colonialism to legitimize the "civilization missions" of Spain in the Americas and Europe in Africa, stating that racism corresponds to a constant war for the purposes of segregation, valorization and domination.[135]

Foucault argues that racism, besides the power techniques that research, separate, educate, record, surveil and discipline the bodies and lives of individuals, and which reside in the authority to make individuals live or let them die, that is, the anatomy of the human body, also rests on the bio-politics of the human race. Accordingly, racism has entered state mechanisms as a result of the understanding of government which Foucault refers to as bio-power. Hence, the functioning of the modern state cannot be considered apart from racism.[136] The preoccupation of bio-politics is the population, which is a biological, scientific, political, and power issue, and it is thanks to racism that the state in possession of bio-political power is able to render its authority to make permissible the deaths of a targeted population. Meanwhile, this sentencing to death does not only mean direct killing, but includes other forms of violence like abandoning to death, increasing the risk of death, displacement, or political death.[137]

We already mentioned that the population issue during the founding of the Republic of Turkey was "solved" by bio-political means, that is, through a scheme of ethnic engineering that involved all kinds of racist violence. Considering the cruelties against dead bodies, we also indicated that similar solution techniques are used today and that new areas of use have opened for practices of racist violence. Moreover, we pointed out that this violence is executed not only by the state, but also by the society. Those who belong to the "race," which is concocted as a means of sovereignty and domination, are inevitably raised as racists. They do not see those who are sentenced to death, either because they do not belong to or because they refuse to belong to this race, as

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134 ibid.: 61-62.

135 Albert Memmi. 2000: 35, 144, 184-186.

136 Michel Foucault. 2003: 242-243, 254.

137 ibid.: 245, 256.

citizens or even as human beings, taking their deaths as normal and necessary and even considering the cruelties against their dead bodies as justified. We encountered these manifestations of racist citizenship in the traces of official truth that we examined in the first part.

Memmi contends that there is always a racist nucleus to the desire to have rights, privileges, and power because of an innate identity, or a fear that the rights, privileges, and power that one possesses or could potentially possess are under threat. Although this racist nucleus stems from an instinctive fear of and reaction to difference, it will only take the shape of racism in a certain political, economic and social context under certain ideological, systematic and structural conditions.[138] Not accounting for the rights, privileges and power one possesses, evading responsibility for the domination established over others by virtue of these rights, privileges and power, and continuing to be racist in order to put the responsibility for domination on the shoulders of the subaltern become civic duties through which racism becomes systematic.[139]

Ünlü, who addresses "Turkishness not as an ethnicity, citizenship, national identity, or ideological affiliation," but "as forms of seeing, hearing, perceiving, being informed, being interested, being affected, and taking a stand, which can be observed in the vast majority of Turks and show supra-class and supra-ideological commonalities and similarities," lists the articles of the "Turkishness Contract," which opens the door to the "world of privileges" for those who duly perform Turkishness: being Turk and Muslim and approving the persecution of non-Turkish and non-Muslim individuals or groups. Thus, Ünlü also indicates that racism is a civic duty.[140]

Given that racist discourses and practices and the non-objection to racism have become a civic duty, there is a need to reflect more on how to make racism visible today. In fact, considering that not seeing racism is generally the privilege of racists and that this privilege is moreover made invisible when racism is not directly embraced or biological racism even rejected, it first of all needs to be underlined that the concept of race does not have a biological/concrete basis, but a social/abstract basis, and that this social/abstract essence is sufficient to situate racism in a concrete political and economic

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138 Albert Memmi. 2000: 21, 23, 32.

139 ibid.: 139.

140 Barış Ünlü. 2018: 13-15.

reality.[141] In this sense, it should be reminded that not being racist is not primarily a question of opposing discrimination based on the concept of biological race, but of identifying concrete racist practices and taking an anti-racist attitude and of taking the risk of the concrete results of this attitude, namely of losing one's privileges.

One of the most popular explanations for not calling racism against non-Turkish and non-Muslims in Turkey by its name seems to be that racism is seen as a practice against blacks, especially by whites in the United States, and that there is no significant black population in Turkey. Reiterating that racism has nothing to do with skin color, that it is related to the desire to found domination based on the biological and cultural difference attributed to skin color, and that any biological or cultural trait can therefore be a source of racism, it would nonetheless seem appropriate to touch upon racism against black people in Turkey.

The relatives of blacks, known as Afro-Turks, who were brought to Turkey as slaves during the Ottoman Empire and currently reside mainly in the Aegean and Mediterranean Regions, suggest that they do not encounter racism in the places where they live, but are disturbed by the "color-harassment" they are exposed to in "distant places."[142] Unlike the Muslim Afro-Turks, whose numbers have dwindled or who have become "hybridized" over the years, and who usually reside in towns and villages, Christian blacks who have recently come to Istanbul from African countries are less hesitant and less afraid to register, record and recognize racism in Turkey. They recount that they are treated as "second-hand goods," called "monkeys," and not rented apartments on the grounds that they are "dirty," and that they are exacted an additional fee for health services.[143] Another community that can register the racism in Turkey today, without hesitation, must be the Syrian immigrants, and especially the female members of these communities, who are the target of Turkey's historical hatred of Arabs whose violence strikes them with a political and economic face.[144]

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141 Joshua Miller and Susan Donner. 2000. More Than Just Talk: The Use of Racial Dialogues to Combat Racism. Social Work with Groups. 23(1): 31-53.

142 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqlDwM47Mj8 [10.02.2021]. For a study about racism against Afro-Turks brought to Turkey with the scope of slavery practices in the Ottoman period, see Ayşegül Kayagil. 2021. Yok Ama Var: Türkiye'de Irk, Irkçılık, Köleciliğin Hayaletleri. Cogito. 101: 81-92.

143 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy6YduQt1t0 [10.02.2021].

144 For a valuable compilation that deals with the discrimination faced by Alevis, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, refugees, LGBTI+ communities and people with disabilities in Turkey, see Ülkü Doğanay. 2018. See also Bulent Gokay and Darrell Whitman. 2017. No Racism Here: Modern

Ünlü's study, which asserts that the categories of race and ethnicity are neither natural nor real but variations of the same modern phenomenon and therefore not contradictory, hinges on the claim that it is possible to compare the racism of whites against blacks in the United States with the racism of Turks against Kurds and in fact shows that such comparisons are not only possible but also necessary.[145] To remind ourselves that "even" nationalisms in South America can be viable examples for comparison with Turkey, let us be content with mentioning Puerto Rican racism, which keeps manifestations and debates of race and racism off the public radar and relies on the myth of "national unity," and sustains white supremacy by not seeing whiteness as a race and thus allowing it to remain a hidden race.[146]

In his study comparing the immigration policies of France and the US, Green relays that French nationalism, like Turkish nationalism, sees racism as a political model specific to the USA. She even describes it as a warning that "non-racist" France should be wary of racism, and that especially African-American and mostly black intellectuals or artists who came to Paris from the USA also contributed to this story, before moving on to revealing the illusion and blind spots of this view of France.[147] Ann Laura Stoler notes that the ability to name racist and colonial manifestations, somehow omitted from the works, films, conceptual analyses, and analyses of French writers, directors, philosophers, and intellectuals, for what they are, that is, to characterize them as "racist and colonialist," is lacking due to a political and social disorder which she defines as "colonial/cultural aphasia." Stoler argues that we need to examine the political, academic, conceptual, and artistic domains where information about of racist and colonial policies and practices is made inaccessible, knowingly disabled, and facts are renamed.[148]

Employing Stoler's concept of "colonial/cultural aphasia" to explain the prevailing indifference in the west of Turkey, which has become interlaced with the ethno-political unrest and hostilities manufactured around the Kurdish issue for forty years,

Turkey and the question of race and national identity. Links: International Journal of Socialist Renewal: http://links.org.au/no-racism-here-modern-turkey-race-national-identity [06.04.2021]; Fatma Esra Öztürk. 2019. Göçmen Kadınlara Yönelik Üretilen "Yeni Irkçılık" Kavramının Medya Çerçevesinde İncelenmesi. Global Media Journal TR Edition. 9(18): 255-273.

145 Barış Ünlü. 2018: 23.

146 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2013: 182-184.

147 Nancy L. Green. 1999. Le Melting-Pot: Made in America, Produced in France. The Journal of American History. 86(3): 1188-1208.

148 Ann Laura Stoler. 2016: 128, 166-167. According to Stoler, "[i]n aphasia, an occlusion of knowledge is the issue. It is not a matter of ignorance or absence. Aphasia [...] a difficulty in generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts to appropriate things [emphasis in original]."

Göral Birinci claims that this indifference is not due to a lack of knowledge or factual information, but the result of a production of memory which meticulously distorts, manipulates and erases what is happening in Kurdistan.[149] We can say that a similar aphasic disorder can be observed in the inability to name racism as racism in Turkey and that this disorder ultimately depends on the power of regimes of truth to determine what kind of oppression should be given what name.

Noting that Etienne Balibar was expelled from the French Communist Party in 1981 – a time when racism was still practically banned from French dictionaries – after he had drawn attention to an "endemic racism" in the party, Stoler writes that by referring to this "endemic racism," Balibar had in fact called out a racist syndrome tied to the colonial history of France and the nostalgia for a "France for the French."[150] In his article "Is there a 'Neo-Racism'?," published in French in 1988, Balibar places the racist syndrome in France in the context of population movements that were occurring as a result of decolonization and migration and discusses it within the framework of a racism without races that has long been effective especially in Anglo-Saxon countries and "whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences."[151]

Balibar reminds us that culture, like natural characteristics or race, is used "as a way of locking individuals and groups to a genealogy, an immutable and intangible origin," and explains that this "new" racism, which focuses on cultural differences instead of racial codes, naturalizes racist attitudes under the name of protecting cultural differences and might at times even lead to anti-racists who expose racism being accused of racism.[152] In this sense, he states that the "realistic" technicians of social psychology, who appear on the scene to justify the "spontaneous" manifestations of the new racism, including collective violence among others, replaced the ideologues who tried to ground classical racism in "mystical" theories of heredity.[153] We can say that Taguieff, who describes the new or cultural racism in France as a "differentialism" or

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149 Özgür Sevgi Göral Birinci (2017) Enforced Disappearance and Forced Migration in the Context of Kurdish Conflict: Loss, Mourning and Politics at the Margin. École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Histoire et Civilizations [unpublished doctoral thesis], 302-303.

150 Ann Laura Stoler. 2018. Interior Frontiers. Diagnostic and Dispositif. https://www.politicalconcepts.org/interior-frontiers-ann-laura-stoler/ [10.02.2021].

151 Etienne Balibar. 1991a: 21.

152 ibid.: 22.

153 ibid.: 23.

"differentialist racism," which is nurtured by the fear that the dominant culture might disappear as a result of mixing with other cultures, calls attention to a similar racist social psychology.[154]

Miles and Brown note that the anti-racist consensus, which reinforced and disseminated the idea that racism is a moral problem, gained wide currency, even if only at the level of etiquette, following political disasters that revealed the systematic and institutional functioning of racism. This includes, but is not limited to crimes against humanity such as the slave trade, the Nazi Holocaust, and the segregationist and Apartheid regimes in the USA and South Africa. However, this idea began to break down especially as a result of the Policies towards immigrants in Europe in the 1970s. It is reported that political parties – which never called themselves "racist" but always "nationalist" – did not refrain from hunting for votes by employing a fascist rhetoric and that those who did not openly resort to a fascist rhetoric, as in the case of Britain, defended racism by taking refuge in the desire of living together with people of their own culture and in the notion of "human nature."[155] If we remember that at the heart of this argument, just like in biological racism, lie "sensibilities imagined" and "unarticulated desires" tethered to smell, sound, taste, comportment, and lifestyle,[156] and even psychological and physiological reactions that we can characterize as sensory and somatic disgust, it becomes difficult to say that the new racism operates more subtly than the old one, or even to identify the cultural characteristic that distinguishes the new racism from the old one.[157] Be that as it may, it is worth considering racism's new manifestations and strategies of denial in order to keep the anti-racist struggle invigorated.

Anti-Racist Vigor

Bonilla-Silva argues that after the end of official racism, a "color-blind" white vision, a "symbolic" racism, emerged in the US based on the idea that racism is a thing of the past. This "racism without racist," as Bonilla-Silva defines it, rests on claims that blacks' inability to reach the same political and economic status as whites had nothing to do with racist discrimination, but derived from some "natural" characteristics or cultural

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154 Pierre-André Taguieff. 2001. The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles. University of Minnesota Press: 208-212.

155 Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown. 2003. Racism. Routledge: 15, 61. For the example of Britan and the theory of "human nature" referred to

by the authors, see Martin Barker. 1981. The New Racism. Junction Books: 21-22.

156 See Ann Laura Stoler. 2016: 243-245.

157 For a discussion on this topic see Hatice Çoban Keneş. 2014: 19-68.

values, or the fact that they did not work hard enough.[158] The reason why whites, who tend to interpret the end of official racist practices as the end of racism, prefer not to see or deny the ongoing systematic, structural and institutional racism is that they are primarily concerned to protect the affective and financial privileges they would lose if they took an anti-racist stance.[159]

Flynn Jr. uses the term "white fatigue" to describe the tendency among white people, who do not want to be labeled as racists, to express that racism is an individual issue and morally wrong and thus to avoid any critical thinking that would lead them to realize and acknowledge the structural and systematic nature of racism. To them, talking about racism is "no longer" necessary and even tiring. Flynn Jr. underlines that this fatigue is different from "white resistance," which is based on the wholesale denial of racism, and "white guilt" where full acceptance leads to lethargy.[160] In any case, all these active and passive states of whiteness equally allow the privileges to remain with their current owners.

DiAngelo comes up with the concept of "white fragility" to describe the proclivity of whites to show highly emotional responses to all kinds of critical encounters regarding racism, because allegedly they were not racist, had paid the price of not being racist, and their not being racist was not appreciated enough. According to DiAngelo, this "fragility" poses a greater challenge to the struggle to confront racism than the resistance of racists.[161] In this sense, we can say that the new racism manifests itself especially in its denial, that this makes racism more slippery and volatile than before, and that the anti-racist struggle therefore has to develop strategies against this recalcitrance of racism.

It can be said that individual racist expressions and manifestations have decreased today, as openly expressing racism or displaying a racist attitude has not only become morally

158 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2013: 6-8. Mahmood Mamdani, who criticizes the approach of not debating racism in connection with "American" colonialism, stating that a discussing racism with reference to African-American blacks only would not allow for a discussion of the first white settlements and massacres of natives that inspired Nazi Germany and the State of Israel, also reminds us that the native Americans, who were corralled in the reservoirs assigned to them, only gained their civil rights in 1968 – albeit without any constitutional guarantees. See Mahmood Mamdani. 2015. Settler Colonialism: Then and Now. Critical Inquiry. 41(3): 596-614.

159 See Paula Ioanide. 2018. "Why Did the White Woman Cross the Street?": Cultural Countermeasures against Affective Forms of Racism. Souls. 20(2): 198-221.

160 Joseph E. Flynn Jr. 2015. White Fatigue: Naming the Challenge in Moving from an Individual to a Systemic Understanding of Racism. Multicultural Perspectives. 7(3): 115-124.

161 Robin DiAngelo. 2018. White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism. Beacon Press: 1-6.

problematic but might even come at a cost thanks to the struggles of anti-racist movements. However, we should be aware of the fact that racism has not ended, if only for its intimate relationship with the legacy of race-based regimes such as slavery, colonialism, and fascism, forms of discrimination such as nationalism and sexism, and all kinds of religious movements.[162] Therefore, when denouncing singular racist expressions and actions as racist in order to expose racism, attention should be drawn to the fact that racism is essentially a matter of social injustice, i.e. that it is related to the exercise of fundamental freedoms, the distribution of natural resources, and access to education, health, housing, employment, and law.[163]

Since it does not take us beyond isolating individual experiences from historical, systematic, and structural racism when any individual expression or action is nonracist, being nonracist will not amount to much more than being racist unless it turns into an anti-racist stance. In a situation where racisms without race, racist and racism prevail, and it is easier not to appear as racist than to be racist – this we can see in the examples of "racism-free Turkey" and the many countries that have "left racism behind"[164] – it would be good to elucidate both racism and anti-racism. Today, as Bonilla-Silva puts it, it's not about being nonracist, it's about being anti-racist, that is, designing a struggle against racism that exposes the fact that all actors are part of and affected by a racialized social structure, which benefits some while disadvantaging others.[165]

As the state relegates the concept of race to the historical plane, erases it from the social and conceptual lexicon, and removes racism from its monopoly and properties, it not only engages in a racism without race or encourages a racism without racist, but also makes room for the slippery and volatile phenomenon of racisms without racism mentioned above.[166] We might also consider these forms of "new" racism as a type of racism incidental to the era of truthlessness discussed in the first chapter, which add new tools to the repertoire of denial and basically provide immunity to racism by drawing on euphemistic expressions. Discussions of the individual manifestations of

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162 See Tommie Shelby. 2003. Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory. The Philosophical Forum. XXXIV:2. 153-188.

163 Tommie Shelby. 2003.

164 See Dylan Rodríguez. 2014. Goldwater's left hand: Post-raciality and the roots of the post-racial racist state. Cultural Dynamics. 26(1): 29-51; Megan E. Morrissey and Christy-Dale L. Sims. 2015. Playing the Race Card: Antiracial Bordering and Rhetorical Practices of New Racism. Review of Communication. 15(2): 81-101.

165 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2013: 15-16.

166 See David Theo Goldberg. 2008.

these supposedly new racisms based on their "affective dimension" and analyses of these manifestations as internalized prejudices can offer significant contributions to the struggle against racism.[167] That being said, I think we should not lose sight of the power relations that catalyze racist violence and practices, the historical, structural, and systematic sources of racism, and the ideologies that accommodate racism.

Racism can only work together with other dominating doctrines like nationalism, colonialism, speciesism, and sexism. This symbiotic relationship is one of the elements that makes racism systemic.[168] While a man is never killed just because he is a man, a woman is seen as a species that can be killed just because she is a woman, and every femicide is covered with a sexist pretext that will justify this murder. Sexism, like racism, consists of the privilege of committing crimes without the feeling of guilt and of being able to legitimize and sugarcoat the crime that was committed. I cannot possibly include and summarize here all of the feminist literature exhibiting that sexism is the precondition of racism and that both doctrines, even though they certainly existed before, became systemic and institutional following the advent of capitalism. Yet, I do not want to move on without citing bell hooks, who pointed out that calling black women's exposure to racist, sexist, and class discrimination a "triple threat," was but a euphemism trivializing their exposure to blatant exploitation, oppression, and dehumanization. It is therefore sufficient to say that this is equally true for black LGBTI+s.[169]

The fact that the systematic and structural nature of racism, and its relationship with other oppressive doctrines, was not properly addressed, is one of the principal issues that causes even the best examples of processes of coming to terms with the past to fall short in terms of demands for justice and lasting peace. I will discuss this issue in more detail in the next section with respect to the case of South Africa, but I would also like to briefly mention the case of Guatemala here. The 36-year war in Guatemala between the state of Guatemala, which resembles the Turkish state in terms of operating paramilitary structures and resorting to enforced disappearances, displacements and counter-guerrilla tactics, and the guerrilla organizations, who were backed by the Maya communities, ended with the signing of a peace agreement in 1996. Subsequently, two truths commissions were established, which published their final reports in 1998-1999, criminal justice mechanisms were put to use, and – even if he was ultimately not sentenced –ex-president

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167 For such a contribution see Hatice Çoban Keneş. 2015.

168 See Pierre-André Taguieff. 2001: 226.

169 bell hooks. 2010. Teaching critical thinking: practical wisdom. Routledg e: 171.

Ríos Montt was tried in Guatemala for genocide in 2013. Despite all this, people in Guatemala do not really think that the country has come to terms with its past.[170]

Oglesby and Nelson, who note that racism against the natives and especially the Maya people, an integral part of the history of Guatemala's colonization by Spain, constituted the basis for the genocidal counter-guerrilla actions carried out under the Montt administration between 1981 and 1983, relay that following the classification of the Maya-Ixil people as an "rebellious internal enemy" in the military documents of the period, the army's racist genocide was justified as an counterinsurgency action.[171] Moreover, the court's "genocide" verdict in the Montt case drew the reaction of the ruling segments of society, especially the big business circles and the landowners who had cooperated with the army. These actors objected that Guatemala was not Rwanda, that the conflict was not ethnic but political, and that the Maya did not face state violence because they were Maya but because they were rebelling.[172]

If the Maya had been massacred not because they were Maya but because they were rebelling, we should not have been able to identify the massacred rebels as Mayan. Moreover, we know that the state did not neglect to highlight the "racial" characteristics of the Maya in order to legitimize this massacre in the eyes of the rest of the society. The denial of racism that is inherent in these kinds of examples of state violence, which cancel the "political" by covering up racism with a notion of "politics" where the latter is reduced to a legal and institutional mechanism, or by putting racist covers on political and economic issues, can also be encountered in the discourses of the Turkish state on the Kurdish issue. This process of concealing racism through politics or eliminating the political through racism, or in other words, the interchangeable and interlacing use of the political and the "racial" can also be clarified by means of a hypothetical example from Turkey: If the people of Isparta would revolt in relation to any economic or political demand and if they would resort to violence at some point, then the state,

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170 For the lack of engagement with racism in Guatemala, see Elizabeth Oglesby and Diane M. Nelson. 2016. Guatemala's genocide trial and the nexus of racism and counterinsurgency. Journal of Genocide Research. 18(2-3): 133-142. For a review of the Guatemalan peace process, see Kudret Çobanlı. 2020. Zor Olsa da Barış: Guatemala Deneyimi. Disa Yayınları.

171 Elizabeth Oglesby and Diane M. Nelson. 2016.

172 ibid. The authors add that the Montt case reversed the basic claim of colonial history: what is carried from the core to the periphery, to "regions dominated by barbarian violence," through colonialism is not law, human rights, and civilization; on the contrary, as the case of the Maya-Ixil people has shown, the barbarian violence carried from the periphery into their region, which is a center, became the source of the demands for law and rights arising from this center.

when using violence to suppress this demand and uprising, might choose to claim that the rebellious and "treacherous" people of Isparta were of Greek origin and to support political reasons with racist "excuses" in order to legitimize this violence in the eyes of the rest of Turkey. The fact that the people of Isparta are not dark-skinned would probably have been adduced as further evidence that such violence was not racist.[173] However, we already discussed that skin color is nothing more than an opportunity for attaching the physiological and cultural characteristics of a people to a political attitude in order to legitimize domination, enrichment, seizure and subjugation, and that other physiological and cultural characteristics are created by scientific studies procured by the state itself.

In summary, recalling that physiological characteristics such as skin color, as Stoler emphasized, is never the only basis of racism and that any segment of the population can be associated with any identity for any reason and thus become the target of racialized regimes of truth, I think it is unnecessary and in fact misleading to complement the term racism by the adjective "cultural."[174] After all, Hannah Arendt reminds us that the aristocrats who opposed the French Revolution put forward the "race of the aristocracy" against the citizens' "nation" in order to protect their class interests.[175]

Bearing in mind that racism is manufactured not from fixed and finite qualities, but from flexible and substitutable traits of unlimited range, it is to be expected that racism will not become a thing of the past as long as racialized regimes of truth survive, and that these regimes will develop new tools to use the weapon of race as a mobilizable political and social category in order to survive. As long as racism reduces the political cost of war and fosters war-based truth regimes, it will remain in circulation and continue to take on new forms and new names. In this sense, it is a correct starting point for the anti-racist struggle to call attention to the system itself rather than to voice demands within this system. The anti-racist struggle needs to focus on racism's relationship to social and economic interests and on the way it functions together with other doctrines. It needs to undergird this focused vigilance with the political and legal dimensions of facing the past. And finally, it needs to adopt a more inclusive, nuanced, and transformative perspective to organize being anti-racist rather than nonracist. The task of the anti-racists has never been easier than that of the racists – to say otherwise would be to give racism a credit it does not deserve.

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[173] As someone who grew up in Isparta's neighborhoods surrounded by Greek churches and houses, I feel relatively safe in giving this hypothetical but not unfounded example.

[174] Ann Laura Stoler. 2016: 170.

[175] Hannah Arendt. 1976. The Origins of Totalitarianism. A Harvest Book: 161-165.

Racist Remnants: Dealing with the Past in South Africa

The coming to power of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 which officially brought an end to white rule, which had begun under the Dutch and British colonial administrations, continued in the post-independence period in 1931 and was consolidated by the apartheid regime of the National Party, which had come to power after World War II. But although transitional justice mechanisms were established in the country at that time to come to terms with this legacy, white rule still continues in practice today. This shows that coming to terms with racism and colonialism is not a natural result of coming to terms with the past. I would like to discuss the South African experience, which has guided struggles to confront the past, in the light of some criticisms leveled against the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which has played an important role in the history of confronting the past – but not before I have outlined some of the TRC's original and important contributions.

Responding to the criticisms that the TRC's priorities, true to its name, were truth and reconciliation and that it did not satisfy blacks' demands for justice and an accounting for the past, Lenta argues that abandoning punitive justice did not mean that justice was not delivered, and that especially the TRC's focus on the victims' truth accounts ensured that the injustice of apartheid's "regime of truth" was recognized. Lenta emphasizes that, in contrast to the modernist and positivist understanding of justice that lies at the root of colonialism, the understanding of multiple truths made up of victim and perpetrator narratives in itself signaled a process of liberation, transformation and democratization.[176]

The Commission's final report was prepared with the aim of fostering interaction, debate, and dialogue to turn the "personal/narrative truths," which the Commission listened to in relation to the stories of victims and perpetrators that helped to uncover the "factual/forensic truths," into a "social truth" and thus into a "healing/restorative truth" that could contribute to confronting the past and building a better future. It is

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176 Patrick Lenta. 2000. Transitional Justice and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Theora: A Journal of Social and Political Theory. 96: 52-73.

seen as evidence of the TRC's success that its report drew the criticism of both the apartheid administration and the ANC.[177] The ANC criticized that the report presented apartheid actors and the freedom fighters who fought against apartheid as equally guilty and morally equal in terms of the human rights violations they committed.[178]

The results of the report, which then-ANC president Thabo Mbeki viewed as "wrong and misguided… in its scurrilous attempts to criminalise the heroic struggles of the people of South Africa," ignored the two main claims of the ANC: Firstly, while armed struggle was part of the tradition of just war, the same did not hold for apartheid violence. Secondly, while apartheid actors committed crimes against humanity within the framework of rules and orders of the state security system, the cases of torture and maltreatment in the ANC camps had not been instructed by the leadership but occurred as a result of individuals "acting on a frolic of their own."[179] While I think that these criticisms, as previously discussed, are debatable in terms of legitimizing violence, I believe that they should be read as a justified objection to the fact that state violence, impunity, colonialism and racism remained unaccounted for. I would like to return to such objections to the TRC later and continue with the assessment of the Commission's function at this point.

Van Zyl interprets the Commission, whose mission of restorative justice, notwithstanding its criticism, was acknowledged by the ANC, as the only more or less powerful tool in the hands of a political power that was deprived of the opportunity to prosecute the perpetrators.[180] He sees it as a necessary and inevitable move for the ANC, which guaranteed that the perpetrators would not be prosecuted so that democratic elections, from which it would clearly emerge as the winner, could be held and the apartheid regime terminated, to try to gain social support and political legitimacy through this concession, and to equip the TRC with a mechanism that provided amnesty in exchange for truth. Moreover, Van Zyl suggests that it was a smart and strategic move for a government representing blacks to prefer using a mandate to issue amnesties that was based on a set of objective criteria and conditions, over losing time, money, and

177 See Paul van Zyl. 1999. Dilemmas of Transitional Justice: The Case of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Journal of International Affairs. 52(2): 647-667.

178 See N. Barney Pityana. 2018. The truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa: perspectives and prospects. Journal of Global Ethics. 14(2): 194-207.

179 ibid.: 201

180 Paul van Zyl. 1999.

reputation in a judicial process that could result in the bankruptcy of the country's already dysfunctional criminal justice system.

Van Zyl claims that the new administration, which would not have been able to punish the high-ranking perpetrators, skilled as they were in hiding evidence, silencing witnesses, and especially in legalizing the crimes they had committed under laws resembling a state of emergency, for crimes committed decades ago within the period and scope expected, would have lost the cause it had just recently won, if it had insisted on criminal justice, which would have meant that it would not have been able to address the acute societal problems.[181] In addition, he contends that through the testimonies of the victims, the TRC, originally established as a moral balance to the amnesty process, questioned the criminal offenses committed not only by the perpetrators, but also by professional groups such as academia, media, medicine and law, as well as by institutions and large companies, and thus revealed different truths concerning racism's systematic structure. In doing so, Van Zyl suggests, it identified the apartheid regime as a crime against humanity, leaving it indefensible and unrecoverable for the future.[182] He conveys that the TRC, which had a healing and empowering psychological effect for the victims who were not compelled to prove the injustices they had suffered, provided many of them with the right to financial compensation, albeit limited, by means of the compensation measures it communicated to the government. In summary, he argues that it is important not to consider criminal justice as the most important element of the process of coming to terms with the past, recalling that the gains and savings earned by forgoing the prosecution of perpetrators is vital when considering the economic resources that would otherwise be wasted, for example, when considering the possibility that the money that could be spent on the future of the victims will be spent on proving the perpetrators' guilt.

Mamdani, who states that the mandate given to the TRC to grant amnesty in return for truth was a duty rather than a mandate and that it constituted the most fundamental issue of the bargaining that enabled but also limited the TRC, lists the TRC's shortcomings with respect to the way it addressed the past.[183] First of all, he points

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181 Paul van Zyl. 1999.

182 *For a study that draws attention to racism in the media by examining the criticisms and the strategies to deny racism that the media employed in the face of the results of a study that identified racism in the post-apartheid South African mainstream newspapers. Kevin Durrheim, Michael Quayle, Kevin Whitehead and Anita Kriel. 2005. Denying racism: Discursive strategies used by the South African media. Critical Arts. 19(1-2): 167-186.*

183 Mahmood Mamdani. 2002. Amnesty or Impunity? A Preliminary Critique of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC). Diacritics. 32(3-4): 32-59.

out that the report, which was content with "acknowledging" apartheid as a crime against humanity, individualized the damage done by the regime and the remedy for this harm and reduced the victims of apartheid to political activists, thus narrowing down the social reconciliation which was expected to take place between the state and communities to a negotiation between actors affiliated with the state and actors opposed to the state. He also claims that given the many apartheid perpetrators who could not be brought before the TRC, the arrangement offering individual amnesty in exchange for truth gave rise to a form of collective impunity.

Investigating the violations between 1960 and 1994, the Commission determined the period when the bans on political parties were lifted and the apartheid regime was terminated as the most intense period of violations. It listed the Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP) and the South African Police (SAP) as the main perpetrator organizations and the ANC and IFP as the main victim organizations, with the SAP ranking seventh. In this way, Mamdani claims, the mass and structural violations experienced during the peak of the apartheid regime were rendered invisible, drawing a picture of apartheid, in which it was essentially blacks killing blacks, and thus purging apartheid from its historical and contextual characteristics. However, he reminds us, the victims of racist state violence inherited from the colonial administration were not political and oppositional activists, but the communities subjected to the regime's systematic violence.[184]

Criticizing the criteria limiting the Commission's mandate to deal only with "gross human rights violations" committed in the past and with a political motive, Mamdani helps us to understand that for several pragmatic and political reasons, the Commission attempted to make the multi-layered crimes against humanity committed by the apartheid regime against blacks fit the lists of those entitled to amnesty and reparations. Aside from the fact that reparations were not paid as expected, the Commission abstained from addressing violations such as the forced removal and displacement of blacks, the pass laws used to monitor blacks and political opponents, the subjection of pass law offenders to coerced labor, detention without trial, and ill-treatment in prison. Thus, it was not possible to confront the apartheid regime and the racist and colonial past underlying it. In summary, Mamdani argues that the two approaches dominating the TRC, that is, the religious discourse imposing reconciliation with its model of confession, repentance and forgiveness, and the human rights approach that limited the positions of perpetrators/victims to individual positions,

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184 Mahmood Mamdani. 2002.

eliminated the possibility of confronting the racist and colonial history and the apartheid regime.[185]

Leebaw maintains that restorative justice mechanisms would only serve processes of facing the past in small, traditional, and relatively homogeneous communities, whereas a coming to terms with the apartheid regime, which consisted of two communities separated by modern political and legal structures and was founded upon the exploitation and exposure to crimes against humanity of one of these communities at the hands of the state and the other community, would have required punitive justice mechanisms. Thus, the aim of the TRC should not have been to restore a community that never existed, but to end the very historical and structural impunity that had prevented the formation of this community in the first place.[186]

Seeing the TRC as an extension of the mechanisms known as "chief's justice" or "people's courts" in the tradition of the South African judicial system, Leebaw argues that it would have been necessary to punish the agents of the apartheid regime in order to establish the modern and official justice system that was needed in the new South Africa. She writes that the fact that the leaders of the ANC themselves chose to follow the example of the Truth Commission in Chile, rather than the Nuremberg Trials in Germany, resulted in turning the past into a topic of social trauma and therapy rather than of political confrontation. While it separated the organized, systematic, and politically motivated brutality from ordinary acts of violence and defined it as a crime against humanity, the TRC made a great political compromise in terms of awarding impunity to the perpetrators of this crime. Leebaw adds that history was recorded incompletely because the militants, political activists and especially the ANC members who had fought against the regime refused to be referred to as victims and therefore did not consider the Commission as their interlocutor.

Criticisms concerning the role allotted to "ordinary" women, who were the "daily" victims of the racist and sexist practices of the apartheid regime, in the TRC, limited as it was to witnessing the "political" victimization of their male relatives or to recount experiences incidents like rape and sexual assault, point to the deficiencies in recording the systematic and collective violations of the past.[187] The flawed and

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185 ibid.

186 Bronwyn Leebaw. 2003. Legitimation or Judgment? South Africa's Restorative Approach to Transitional Justice. Polity. 36(1): 23-51.

187 See LaKeasha G. Sullivan and Garth Stevens. 2010. Through her eyes: relational references in black women's narratives of Apartheid

incomplete recording of the past has vital consequences in terms of preventing political and economic measures required for effectively confronting the past from being taken.

The eclipse of the apartheid regime's collective and economic violence effectuated by the TRC's focus on individual and physical violence today benefits whites who want to oppose affirmative action directed at blacks and structural fiscal solutions. Since whites do not acknowledge their role as active acolytes of systematic racism, they have no difficulty in rejecting their responsibility with respect to achieving economic justice and remedying the economic inequalities caused by ongoing racism. This has undermined the value of the reparations, which many blacks viewed with skepticism as they thought they had been offered to close the "justice gap" and alleviate the economic problems that persisted in the post-apartheid era, and had in fact not been paid properly –thus also undermining the legitimacy of the TRC process as a whole.[188] The ANC garnered the support of the whites in return for assurances that the latter would not lose the privileges they enjoyed during apartheid and that they would not be avenged, while also relying on the loyalty of the blacks, who it had liberated. The ANC later shifted its focus towards "development projects," which might be seen as a form of collective compensation, instead of paying the individual compensations recommended by the TRC. These projects are seen as economic concessions complementing the political concessions made by the ANC.[189]

The Khulumani Support Group, one of the most important initiatives of the apartheid victims who are dissatisfied with the TRC process, engages in different litigation processes. It takes the amnesty practices through which victims are deprived of the right to bring criminal proceedings against the perpetrators to the South African Constitutional Court and brings complaints against the companies that formed the bread cartel to the Western Cape Supreme Court. Besides, it files lawsuits regarding the debt owed to victims by US-based companies that supported the apartheid regime with US courts. Kesselring sees the Group as

racism. South African Journal of Psychology. 40(4): 414-431.

[188] Nevin T. Aiken. 2016. The distributive dimension in transitional justice: reassessing the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ability to advance interracial reconciliation in South Africa. Journal of Contemporary African Studies. 34(2): 190-202.

[189] Aurélien Pradier, Maxine Rubin and Hugo van der Merwe. 2018. Between transitional justice and politics: Reparations in South Africa. South African Journal of International Affairs. 25(3): 301-321.

an opportunity for a social opposition that can complete the process of coming to terms with the past, which was left unfinished by the TRC. Kesselring claims that these individual and collective legal processes, which enabled the victims of apartheid to become political subjects and keep the injustices inherited by the post-apartheid era on the agenda, empowered them "to become emancipated from embodied memories of harm" and allowed them to continue the legal reckoning left incomplete by political reconciliation.[190] This claim seems important in that it shows that the past cannot be fully accounted for with mechanisms that leave racism unpunished, and reminds us that – regardless of the outcome – even those layers of racism which criminal justice mechanisms cannot get through to can be made visible through legal struggle, and that the systematic dimension of racism can thus be recorded.

The Layers of Racism

Adam Sitze defines the TRC as a miracle-making "impossible machine" designed to accomplish the impossible. Sitze claims that this impossibility was contained in the very motives inherent in the establishment of the TRC.[191] Seen as a third path between the Nuremberg Trials' emphasis on legal reckoning and criminal justice and the Latin American truth commissions' focus on general amnesty and restorative justice for social reconciliation, the TRC's approach centered on the victims, on individual amnesties that were conditional on truth-telling and on reparations. Sitze objects to the general view that does not consider the Nuremberg Trials, which remained confined to proceedings against a few high-ranking Nazi officers, as a de facto general amnesty and impunity. On the other hand, he does not distinguish the TRC from the truth commissions in Latin America, seeing it as an extension of the commissions of inquiry, which is one of the central institutions of colonial administrations. Explaining that the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 (PNR Act) of 1995, which established the TRC, could only be passed after members of the South African Defense Forces had been guaranteed impunity, which thus left no need for the TRC to declare a general amnesty, Sitze reminds us that the apartheid parliaments issued impunity laws to protect the security forces and state officials who played an active part in the 1960

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190 Rita Kesselring. 2017. Bodies of Truth Law, Memory, and Emancipation in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Stanford University Press: 23-48, 198-199.

191 Adam Sitze. 2013. The Impossible Machine A Genealogy of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The University of Michigan Press: 1-20.

Sharpeville Massacre and the suppression of the 1976 Soweto Uprising.[192] He explains that the TRC's peculiar approach of "forgiveness" seemed unrelated to the case law of impunity because the pardon granted by the PNR Act was of such scale and nature that it could impossibly be seen as a variant of impunity. Thus, Sitze claims, the apartheid state itself was brought under the protection of impunity.[193] On the other hand, he reminds us that the negotiations between the last apartheid government and the ANC resulted in a law on impunity for crimes committed by members of the ANC and other freedom movements, which was passed in parliament in 1990.[194]

Sitze contends that the TRC did not operate differently from the commissions of inquiry established in the former colonies and that it did not only serve to collect information but also as a tool for securing and normalizing colonial conquest, i.e., as a technique of modern governmentality. Accordingly, such commissions, set up by the British Empire to investigate "racial strife" in South Africa and allow the colonial governments to make decisions about unrepresented natives, addressed crimes against humanity committed in order to contain the "tumult" caused by native peoples who could not get along with each other. In doing so, these commissions employed a register of "tragedy" and resorted to similar methods of impunity. Sitze argues that these commissions essentially provided the raw material required to establish bio-power in the Foucauldian sense.[195]

Sitze refuses to view the impunity established by the truth commission, which translated the "incomprehensible" testimonies of witnesses that colonial anthropology would regard as irrational natives into painful, mournful, and therefore "controversial" expressions of what trauma studies defines as victims. He argues that the mechanisms of national catharsis and amnesty are simply the price of peace and reconciliation, and that the literature on transitional justice precludes a more critical approach.[196] According to Sitze, truth commissions attempt to forgive those who should be punished and heal those who should be politically empowered by offering a new and acceptable

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192 Adam Sitze. 2013: 25.

193 ibid.: 126.

194 ibid.: 26. Sitze adds that, as far as researchers have been able to determine, between 13,000 and 21,000 criminals were exempted from trial as a result of the impunity laws enacted between 1990 and 1994, and that this number does not include those who benefited from the protection laws of 1957, 1961 and 1977.

195 ibid.: 159-170.

196 ibid.: 192.

translation of the colonial and racist understanding of domination and rule and isolating the past to be accounted for from the colonial and racist history.

Radical approaches that deal with the struggle to come to terms with the past by maintaining a certain distance from the literature on transitional justice and especially from the concept of reconciliation, point out that in order to come to terms with historical, structural and systematic crimes such as racism and colonialism, the aim should be not to heal and satisfy the victims, but to involve them in change and reckoning as active political subjects. Claiming that the ANC, through the agency of the TRC, sedated the social opposition, suppressed autonomous political initiatives of the peoples, reduced political subjects to victims and, instead of giving power to the people, confined it to power relations inherited from the apartheid regime and substituted the idea of freedom with survival skills endowed by the state, Neocosmos argues that the transition was not only an unsuccessful attempt to come to terms with the past, but evolved into a nationalism fueled by xenophobia and an apolitical social structure.[197] He considers today's political and social structure as the inevitable outcome of the ANC's anti-apartheid struggle, dealing with the past, and post-apartheid rule – noting that the ANC was leading in these processes due to its centralized organization, hierarchical structure, state-oriented politics and use of "revolutionary violence" to seize power. Neocosmos portrays this structure as a South Africa shaped under the hegemony of human rights and civil society discourses, which bears the traces of colonial rule and prioritizes neoliberal economic development. In today's South Africa, it is the power of the state, not the people, that reigns supreme.

Neocosmos reminds us that the struggle led by the United Democratic Front (UDF) especially during the ANC's exile in the 1980s, represented another facet of the anti-apartheid struggle. It prioritized grassroots organization and political subjectivization rather than party-based, questioned the cult of leadership, racial nation-building and struggle for freedom, and was shaped by popularly-initiated nonviolent actions.[198] After the lifting of the political bans in 1990, the ANC, initially finding its way into the apartheid administration before attaining political power in 1994, started to implement its concept of the "rainbow nation," which was based on tolerating differences, and its model of multi-racial organization, which it pursued with the approval of the whites. Neocosmos states that these models ruled out the UDF's model of non-racial

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197 Michael Neocosmos. 2016. Thinking Freedom in Africa: Toward A Theory of Emancipatory Politics. Witts University Press: 163-169, 181.

198 Michael Neocosmos. 2016: 135-152.

organization which it had adopted based on its notion of "black consciousness."[199] He claims that ANC rule and especially the TRC helped a model of reconciliation shaped by Christian-liberal discourses and an apolitical, victim-oriented, and individual approach to rights to become dominant, ended the process of black political subjectivation and initiated the transition to a state-democracy.

Stating that the first period of the ANC government under Nelson Mandela was built around the discourses of state nationalism, economic neoliberalism, civil society, human rights and multiculturalism, Neocosmos argues that the new South African, adorning itself with having achieved the miracle of a transition to democracy and portrayed as distinct from and superior to other countries in the African continent, did not attempt to eliminate the racial boundaries inherited from the colonial mentality.[200] He describes the period of Thabo Mbeki between 1996-2008 as a period in which the approach and problems of the previous period were reinforced as a result of technocratic policies, and the state was caught between the dilemma of gaining legitimacy in the West and meeting the needs of private enterprise on the one, and resolving the suffering and demands of the people who supported it (especially the need for work, shelter, and land) on the other hand.[201] In contrast, Neocosmos presents the period of Jacob Zuma between 2008 and 2013 as a period of official xenophobia, fraught with systematic violence and social lynching, culminating in the Marikana massacre in 2012, which resulted in the killing of 34 miners by the police, and an incident in 2013, when Mozambican taxi driver Mido Macia was dragged behind a police car.[202] To him, the nativist policies, which sought to protect the economic and political opportunities catered for by the South African miracle against African "foreigners" and was pursued through the violent methods inherited from colonialism, were a result of the inability to break free from the racial and violent state power of the apartheid regime, and the inability to establish a popular power backed by political subjects.

Cejas writes that especially since the 1990s, xenophobia has been reported in South African media contained in expressions such as "Africa flooding our borders." While recounting two incidents in which South Africans set fire to an Ethiopian woman's hair

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199 ibid.: 159-161.

200 ibid.: 168-169.

201 ibid.: 171.

202 ibid.: 176-181. Zuma's presidency continued until 2018. For footage of Macia remonstrating with the police and being dragged behind the police car, see: https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/mar/01/south-african-police-drags-man-fresh-video-footage [20.02.2021].

and to a Malian man in 2007, Cejas notes that xenophobia targeted the "criminal, dirty, and ignorant" blacks from the "rest" of Africa, as well as South African blacks. She states that racism is still alive and vibrant in South Africa as the disadvantages inherited from the apartheid economy have been amplified due to the immigration policy, which was not changed until 2003, and new economic crises.[203] Analyzing the xenophobia in the African continent, Kersting notes that the old nationalism, which guided the independence struggles, regarded the colonial powers as enemies and claimed to include different social and ethnic groups and to prevent tribalism, has left its place to a banal national flag and anthem today, and that South Africa's motto of an "Africa for All" has meanwhile been updated in the form of an "Africa for the native Africans."[204]

I agree with Spiegel, who says that the racism of blacks should also be watched with caution, as they compared whites, who were still controlling the country's major economic and academic institutions thanks to the material and social capital they had derived from the apartheid era, and who protested against laws passed to change this situation, to male baboons who become depressed and quarrelsome when they lose their power.[205] On the other hand, this caution should always retain its focus on systematic racism and object and challenge definitions of racism offered by racists themselves. More importantly, I think that the theoretical and political source of this objection can be found neither in philosophical concepts such as "black consciousness," which I think have racist cores, nor in romantic views on tradition, like Ubuntu.

The philosophy of black consciousness was developed by Steve Biko, who also described it as an "anti-racist racism." Biko maintained that it was necessary for blacks to organize separately from whites in order to strengthen their solidarity and question the colonial identity imposed on them. Like Lamola, who draws attention to the misconception in the belief that this philosophy could be used as a stop on the journey towards ending racism, I think that this philosophy is ultimately not targeting racist thought.[206] In my eyes, there is a similar illusion of authenticity in the claim which,

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203 Mónica Inés Cejas. 2007. Racial Discrimination in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A New Irreducible "Other"?. Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies. 8(4): 473-487.

204 Norbert Kersting. 2009. New Nationalism and Xenophobia in Africa: A New Inclination? Africa Spectrum. 44(1): 7-18.

205 Andrew Spiegel. 2008. Racism as epithet in the context of postapartheid's demographic parity goals. Anthropology Southern Africa. 31(3-4): 103-113.

206 See M. John Lamola. 2016. Biko, Hegel and the End of Black Consciousness: A Historico-Philosophical Discourse on South African Racism. Journal of Southern African Studies. 42(2): 183-194.

pointing out that white colonialism in South Africa is ultimately an "epistemicide," that is, an attempt to eradicate blacks' original ways of knowing and producing knowledge, defends that real liberation from the colony can only be possible by remembering the collectivist and peaceful tradition of the Ubuntu philosophy.[207] Imagining the repercussions similar illusions might have in Turkey, I would like to say that racist practices and discourses operate in concert with similar doctrines all over the world, creating similar structures and systematic outcomes. Likewise, I would suggest that the fight against racism should be carried out in solidarity with other struggles, peoples, and philosophies around the world, and should not only attend to official racism, but also to the different layers of racism.

The Limits to Transitional Justice: Racism

I would like to start by underlining a point which above title and this study more generally leave out. Of course, racism is not the only limit to transitional justice; it has another and perhaps more critical limit: colonialism. Before I continue, I would like to admit that in my attempts to address racism as a discourse and practice that legitimizes colonialism and similar systems of domination, I have not been able to go beyond mentioning colonialism or characterizing the state's means of administration and violence as colonial. In this section, I would like to touch upon the relationship between racism and impunity, and the possibilities for transitional justice to make racism visible and accountable for.

There are claims that the mechanisms of transitional justice, for practical and pragmatic reasons limit the issue of confronting the past to a specific historical period, render ongoing racist violence that extends from the past to the present invisible, disregard gender inequality and collective violations, obscure the political and military interventions of sovereign states, and rely on a state-centered understanding of international law, in fact preserve and expand the already existing landscape of impunity. Such claims are not new, but they remain valid.[208] Countering claims hold that the financial resources, which would need to be spent on judicial mechanisms to end impunity, should rather be used to end the cultural and structural violence that has served to legitimize physical violence in the past and today legitimizes socioeconomic

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207 See C. W. Maris. 2020. Philosophical racism and ubuntu: In dialogue with Mogobe Ramose. South African Journal of Philosophy. 39(3): 308-326.

208 See Rosemary Nagy. 2008. Transitional Justice as Global Project: Critical reflections. Third World Quarterly. 29(2): 275-289.

and political inequalities. They even postulate that only preventing existing inequalities and violations would make it possible to operate the judicial mechanisms and secure a transition. These kinds of claims overlook that racism, violence and inequality will continue as long as impunity prevails.[209]

While criminal justice is not the solution to socio-economic inequalities, it can serve to cut off the political source of these inequalities, which cannot possibly be resolved with the resources spent on criminal justice, especially racism. As a matter of fact, we see that truth commissions, which are resorted to in order to calm the military, legal, economic and political elites who do not want to leave power during and after the transition period or because of inactive, inefficient or expensive judicial systems, are mostly used to compensate for impunity, and that a "fictional consensus," which establishes a linear relationship between truth and reconciliation instead of justice and peace, is developing.[210] On the other hand, we also know that "successful" reparation mechanisms that are not accompanied by a political and legal transformation, fail to exhaust the agenda of justice, or that a fragile social consensus confined to revealing the factual truths about violations. Covering up historical and contemporary realities such as racism and colonialism diverges from a permanent and lasting political consensus.[211] Likewise, the claim that social catharsis and consensus were achieved by virtue of the truths testified to by the victims in truth commissions, generally does not go beyond what benefits the privileged groups, while the economic needs of the victims, their emotional and psychological concerns, and their expectations for justice and political equality remain unattended to. Seeing victims' testimony in commissions as political participation or interpreting it as a victim-centered understanding of justice equally serves to reinforce the perception of the privileged that the past is accounted for or that racism is over.[212]

Bearing in mind that certain patterns of power and impunity persist in the post-conflict and transitional period, it is important to focus on the sources – such as racism and

209 See Matthew Mullen. 2015. Reassessing the focus of transitional justice: the need to move structural and cultural violence to the centre. Cambridge Review of International Affairs. 28(3): 462-479.

210 Anne K. Krüger. 2012. From Truth to Reconciliation: The Global Diffusion of Truth Commissions. In Birgit Schwelling (ed.). Reconciliation, Civil Society, and the Politics of Memory Transnational Initiatives in the 20th and 21st Century. Transcript Verlag: 339-367.

211 See Pablo de Grieff. 2012. Theorizing Transitional Justice. Nomos. 51: 31-77.

212 Brandon Hamber ve Patricia Lundy. 2020. Lessons from Transitional Justice? Toward a New Framing of a Victim-Centered Approach in the Case of Historical Institutional Abuse. Victims & Offenders. 15(6): 744-770.

colonialism – and hence the continuity of structural violence, which manifests itself in state-based or institutional crimes, to direct transitional justice to the mechanisms that birth crime and to see the post-conflict period as a "crime scene."[213] As the racist mechanisms, systemic elements and relationships at the source of crime often work in interconnected, locally compatible, intricate and slippery ways, there is a need to conduct research into the past to identify the specific modus operandi of such sources and to ensure that future measures are taken to intervene in their ways of functioning. In this context, for example, it is recommended that compensations be planned not only in the form of cash payments, but also in a way that will allow victims, especially women, to change the existing power relations through education, health, job opportunities, and that criminal law should be restructured so that it can regulate such compensations.[214]

A field of study that adds new dimensions to transitional justice by drawing attention to the systematic character of racism from a different perspective is the power of disposal of racist regimes regarding vital resources. This is exemplified by Ruiters' examination of the racist aspect of environmental policies from the apartheid era in South Africa to the present. Ruiters argues that whites occupy living spaces in the areas least affected by industrial wastes, while blacks cannot meet their basic needs such as clean water or adequate and healthy shelter. Ruiters further identifies that blacks incur financial losses due to sick days and money spent on transportation, and that they are exposed to immeasurable injustices like the dangers of using kerosene and coal for cheap heating and lighting, long-term health problems and short lifespans, remarking: "water is distributed more unequally than income."[215] Ruiters reminds us that this spatio-economic order, which naturalizes racial segregation and which apartheid's opponents regard as the "geographical expressions of colonialism," did not end with the disappearance of the racist superstructure. He refers that this order, in which labor's options are severely curtailed by "capital's superior command of space," increases the gap between the "culture" of black workers and the "society" of the white middle classes.[216]

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213 See Jennifer Balint, Kristian Lasslett ve Kate Macdonald. 2017. "Post-Conflict" Reconstruction, the Crimes of the Powerful and Transitional Justice. State Crime Journal. 6(1): 4-12.

214 See Eric T. Hoddy and Paul Gready. 2020. From agency to root causes: addressing structural barriers to transformative justice in transitional and post-conflict settings. Contemporary Social Science [Online].

215 Greg Ruiters. 2001. Environmental racism and justice in South Africa's transition. Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies. 28:1. 95-103.

216 ibid.

While criticisms of transitional justice mechanisms are generally directed at states, it should be noted that there also is a significant literature containing proposals for the work of civil actors, assisting the latter in exposing systematic racism. On the other hand, it is worth noting the caveats that civil actors may also be in the throes of existing societal symptoms, and should therefore be seen as sources of enduring activism, pointing to disagreements that will never be fully resolved and the demand for everlasting justice and equality, rather than accelerating radical transformations.[217] In this sense, I would like to briefly touch upon some insightful discussions on new knowledge and research methods, archival and memory work, possibilities of artistic and economic production, and the search for alternative education.[218]

Since facing the past is a struggle that will last for generations, I think that studies that deal with educational institutions, methods, educators and curricula are of particular importance. Drawing on truth commission reports from twenty countries to highlight both the responsibility of education for past violations and its potential to confront the past, one study shows that truth commissions often focus on uncovering how curricula and educational conditions contribute to conflict. Furthermore, it addresses how education is affected by conflict, and that institution are willing to adjust curricula based on recommendations.[219] Another study, recording that a project for curriculum renewal study, which addressed the general and abstract results of the TRC's report, failed to address the apartheid regime and the continuity of racist and colonial structures, criticizes that educators were not specifically equipped in this regard, for example, that the task of conveying a reasonable version of the truths told in the Commission was left to the sense of justice of textbook authors and educators.[220] In this respect, the Sierra Leone Truth Commission is cited as a positive example, since it conducted special work for children and youth, and published a "child-friendly" version of its final report with the assistance of UNICEF.[221]

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217 Birgit Bräuchler. 2019. From transitional to performative justice: Peace activism in the aftermath of communal violence. Global Change, Peace & Security. 31(2): 201-220.

218 See Paul Gready and Simon Robins. 2017.

219 Julia Paulson and Michelle J. Bellino. 2017. Truth commissions, education, and positive peace: an analysis of truth commission final reports (1980-2015). Comparative Education. 53(3): 351-378.

220 Felisa L. Tibbitts and Gail Weldon. 2017. History curriculum and teacher training: shaping a democratic future in post-apartheid South Africa?. Comparative Education. 53(3): 442-461.

221 Julia Paulson and Michelle J. Bellino. 2017.

Rather than giving advice to the state on education and leaving these recommendations to the discretion of the schools, it is important to try to find modest ways of working with trainers in formal and non-formal education institutions. This encompasses all kinds of vocational training, proposing and implementing an education about dealing with the past that includes not only children and youth but also adults, and especially important, ways to relate past conflict to present violations and systematic structures such as racism. Including not only the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and the victims of these crimes, but also those who, in an act of humanity, "rescued" the victims and the victims who were "rescued" to such a peace curriculum, can help to sever the relationship of crimes against humanity with their "legal chain of command" or their "natural racial character," allowing us to remember that the perpetrator made a political choice and action, and to review the "plausible" explanations for staying silent in the face of crimes against humanity, thus politicizing denial, excuses, lethargy and irresponsibility.[222]

Another field that is not focused on power and the state, and which continues the confrontation left incomplete by truth commissions, is critical art. We can say that the incomplete "record of the past" created by mainstream artistic works, which tends to present the systematic nature of apartheid as a background, recounting the sexist and racist attacks against women as individual experiences and utilizing the marks left by these attacks on women's bodies as evidence and visual effects, ultimately aiming to balance blacks' mourning with whites' guilt,[223] is completed by critical artistic works. We should acknowledge the importance of performing arts, which find aesthetic ways of relaying the truths told – and especially those untold – in the commissions, or contemporary works of art, which are based on the daily lives, problems and needs of the victims, especially in terms of memorialization and making oppositional truths visible.[224]

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222 Ron Dudai. 2012. "Rescues for Humanity": Rescuers, Mass Atrocities, and Transitional Justice. Human Rights Quarterly. 34(1): 1-38.

223 See Shakti Jaising. 2014. Reconstructing Apartheid, Redefining Racism. Interventions. 16(1): 117-134.

224 See Geoffrey V. Davis. 1999. Addressing the Silences of the Past: Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid Theatre. South African Theatre Journal. 13(1): 59-72; Paul Gready. 2008. Culture, Testimony, and the Toolbox of Transitional Justice. Peace Review. 20(1): 41-48; Rosemarie Buikema. 2012. Performing dialogical truth and transitional justice: The role of art in the becoming post-apartheid of South Africa. Memory Studies. 5(3): 282-292; Tine Destrooper. 2018. Performative justice? The role of theatre and performance in facilitating transitional justice. South African Theatre Journal [Online]; Khalid Amine. 2018. Decolonizing Theatre History in the Arab World - The case of the Maghreb. Horizons/Théâtre [Online]. 12. 10-25.

When we consider the concept of aesthetics in terms of its relationship not only with "beauty," but also with sensory, lived, and felt experience, it is possible to think of the aesthetic expression of truths as both an artistic production and as a political action dependent on the faculty of judgment. Starting off from the concept of "aesthetic acts," used by Rancière to describe "configurations of experience that create new modes of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity," Clarkson looks at works of art, novels and poems, legal texts, school assignments, philosophical texts, speeches of public actors and daily encounters of ordinary people produced in the post-apartheid period to discuss aesthetic acts that have the potential to renew one's relationship with another, with an idea, or with an event, as political acts that contribute to expanding the boundaries of transitional justice.[225] We can also think of such aesthetic political acts as opportunities to systematize efforts to confront the past and the anti-racist struggle.

The effort, based on "archivalization," to both find the soft spots of classical and official archives, and to archive materials that "record racism" but are thought to have no archival value or seem unarchivable can have many functions, from constituting forensic evidence to creating a collective memory.[226] I think that the most important of these functions is aestheticizing political acts that narrow racism's repertoire of denial, shed light on its systematic aspect, and penetrate the layers of indifference. Tracing such acts in Turkey can be the subject of another study, which would be useful in terms of designing Turkey's process of coming to terms with the past within the framework of the anti-racist struggle. This study, on the other hand, concludes with tracing the racist interventions that hindered past attempts for resolution. Drawing on the case of South Africa, I will address a number of aspects which should not be neglected in a process of coming to terms with the past in Turkey so as to make sure that racism will not prevail.

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225 Carrol Clarkson. 2014. Drawing the Line: Toward an Aesthetics of Transitional Justice. Fordham University Press; Jacques Rancière. 2004. The Politics of Aesthetics. Continuum.

226 Julia Viebach. 2020. Transitional archives: towards a conceptualisation of archives in transitional justice. The International Journal of Human Rights [Online]. Referring to Ketelaar, who claims that archives resemble two opposite sides of power, both a temple and a prison, and that the power of the archive could therefore also correspond to the power of the people, and Derrida, who says that we cannot imagine a political power that does not control the archives, Viebach emphasizes that archivalization is inherently political. See Eric Ketelaar. 2002. Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection. Archival Science. 2: 221–38; Jacques Derrida. 1996. Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression. Chicago University Press.

Racist Resistance to Attempts to Resolve the Conflict in Turkey

While criticizing the political parties that claimed to represent and carry into parliament the political will of a significant part of the Kurdish people of being "Kurdist" and doing "identity politics," Turkish political parties, which preferred to reduce the Kurdish issue to an issue of terror and delegate it to the army, had the peace of mind to pursue an "identity politics" based on "Turkism." Meanwhile, they were not engaging in any political activity other than ensuring the functioning of the Turkish state's regime of truth, which includes all kinds of racist desires. Although Turkey's regime of truth came into question for the first time in the Solution Process, during the "negotiations between the Kurdish movement and the AKP government, which could have potentially resulted in a change in the state's structure or even its name,"[227] the government was not ready for the structural transformations and relationship modalities this questioning required. During the period of war that followed the Solution Process, other political actors and the society rallied behind the government. As I tried to argue before, we can say that a similar lack of readiness was also the case for the PKK and Kurdish political parties, as well as civilian actors who wanted to support peace. This section, however, deals with the manifestations of Turkish racism's resistance to the solution processes.

In 2008, the so-called Oslo talks between the state and the PKK began with the mediation of third parties. Because the government, which decided to take this inevitable step for the solution of the Kurdish issue, reckoned that the Turkish society was not yet ready for such an act, the talks were conducted in private.[228] The lack of readiness of the Turkish society is in fact an example of the white resistance discussed above, that is, it stemmed from the fact that the Kurdish issue was either ignored or seen as an issue of terrorism. The "Turkish resistance," led by the CHP (Kemalist nationalist) and MHP (nationalist), declaring that the "Democratic Opening" announced by Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2009 was actually a "Kurdish Opening," was so strong that the AKP renamed the Opening to "National Unity and Fraternity Project." It would not be wrong to say that

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227 Barış Ünlü. 2018: 302.

228 Galip Dalay. 2015. Çözümü Kolaylaştırıcı Toplumsal Faktörler. In Necmiye Alpay and Hakan Tahmaz (eds.). Barış Açısını Savunmak. Çözüm Süreci'nde Ne Oldu?. Metis Yayınları: 277.

what was at the root of this reaction was a racism which quite correctly perceived the Kurdish discourse of peace as a demand for equality with the Turks and did not consent to equality because it did not want to give up existing privileges.

The MHP saw the Democratic Initiative as betrayal of the country and nation, as the state's surrender to the PKK and a threat to the reputation and integrity of the Turkish state, while the CHP complained of not being able to take part in the process due to the lack of transparency. The CHP opposed that the Kurdish issue, which it understood as a problem of poverty and lack of education, was resolved on an ethnic basis and in a discriminatory manner, "in line with the instructions of certain powers," and therefore practically backed the AKP's claim that it was the only actor to solve the Kurdish issue and it was a deliberate choice not to include the PKK and DTP in the process.[229] The AKP's relapse into racism in the face of criticisms of the Opening and the Solution Process voiced by MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli and CHP chairman Deniz Baykal, though not morally legitimate, was not incomprehensible from a political point of view: the "so-called opening," "secret in content" but was "clear in intention," considering the government's call to "leave the mountains, lay down arms, come to the table, and do politics," gave rise to "hopes for a politicization of ethnic separatism." While the opening "should target our citizens of Kurdish origin living in the region and not the PKK," Erdoğan's "PKK opening, carried out in full cooperation with the Peshmerga, İmralı [Öcalan] and Qandil" alongside the USA and the EU, aimed "to endanger the continuation of the national existence, to pave the way for a destruction of the national identity, to incite conflict and division, and to effect the dissolution of the state and the nation." In other words, by saying "Look, your language is different, your culture is different," "let's open other channels for you," the opening would "start to separate education and law in Turkey on the basis of ethnicity, thus leading Turkey into a dead end."[230] In response to these criticisms, the AKP, which sought to equate the Kurdish demands with demands for individual rights, embraced Kurdishness with a paternalistic attitude by turning Kurdishness into a branch of the superior identities of Turkishness and especially Islam, was thus in the position of a state that did not leave racism to anyone else.[231]

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229 For the aforementioned inferences based on an analysis of the speeches made at the MHP and CHP group meetings, see İsmet Parlak and Armağan Öztürk. 2015. 2009-2015 Aralığında "Açılım" Süreçlerine Yönelik Siyasi Parti Söylemleri Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz. EUL Journal of Social Sciences. VI(II): 87-114.

230 ibid.

231 See ibid.

The racist resistance in Turkey resulted the AKP to exclude the PKK, which represented the will of a significant share of the Kurdish people in the peace initiatives and was the AKP's interlocutor at the peace table, to separate the issue from its ethno-political context and to transmute steps towards a solution into war maneuvers against the Kurdish political parties. Likewise, the lawsuits filed against BDP members and their supporters for aiding and abetting the PKK between 2009 and 2011, while meeting with racist reactions in the society, reinforced the Kurdish side's concerns about the Opening. The "democratic autonomy" declared by the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), a pro-PKK platform, on July 14, 2011 to remind its claim to sovereignty in the Kurdish provinces, turned these concerns into concrete objections and served as the pretext for terminating the already frail Oslo Talks and Democratic Opening.[232]

Despite the objections of the MHP and CHP, which, though different in tone, were based on a racist register, the AKP remained intent on meeting the demand for a solution upheld and supported by its own Kurdish base, the Kurdish camp it was trying to win over, and the democratic segments of Turkish society. Taking into account the common objection to the Oslo Talks and the Democratic Opening, namely the claim that these processes had been carried out by undemocratic methods want of transparency and participation, the AKP went for a more radical initiative. In 2013, it decided to meet directly with Öcalan and to establish a relationship between Öcalan and the PKK under its own supervision, and to take various initiatives to garner social support for these talks.[233] As I said before, instead of discussing the mechanisms established to conduct these talks and foster support for the process, and the Solution Process in general,

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232 Güneş Murat Tezcür. 2014. Türkiye'de Silahlı Çatışmanın Med-Cezirleri ve Zor Bir Barış. In Murat Aktaş (ed.) Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış. İletişim: 166.

233 For a review of the mechanisms established to conduct and garner community support for the talks, see Yasin Sunca. 2016. Infrastructures for Peace in Turkey. A Mapping Study. Berghof Foundation. The Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security (KDGM) was the most important of these public mechanisms and was ultimately tasked with representing the interests of the state. The KDGM occupied a central position with respect to continuing the talks with Öcalan and the HDP's İmralı Delegation on behalf of the state and coordinating the work of the Wise People Committee and the Parliamentary Resolution Commission. However, its role was limited to communicating and implementing the government's preferences and decisions. The HDP İmralı Delegation, which was the KDGM's official interlocutor and equivalent due to its key position, undertook a task whose responsibilities in terms of both meeting the expectations of the state and the PKK and maintaing its reputation in the eyes of the Turkish and Kurdish public, exceeded its capacities. Represented by those names approved by the state, the delegation was able to meet with Öcalan as long as the state allowed, took initiative to the extent permitted by the PKK and was kept involved in the process as long as the Turkish public opinion respected it.

I would like to draw attention to some of the racist resistances that hindered the process.[234]

The Parliamentary Resolution Commission, which was established in 2013, had to be composed of 10 AKP and 1 BDP deputies after the other parties in the parliament, under the influence of racist reactions, had refused to participate. Izmir Deputy Oktay Vural criticized the government, saying, "The PKK is now your friend and the MHP your enemy, your friends are the separatists, your enemies the nationalists," and "left the General Assembly Hall together with the other MHP deputies, remarking, 'We'll leave you alone with the PKK.' The MHP was later joined by the CHP."[235] To be sure, this changed as a result of the failure of the Solution Process – "nationalists" became friends and "separatists" enemies again. But it should nonetheless be mentioned that the academics and activists, whose opinions were taken at the Commission, expressed the Kurdish people's demands for justice and peace, and that the report prepared by the Commission mentioned the CUP as having "afflicted this country with a racism based on Turkification" and with the opinion that "in particular racist emphases should be removed from the Constitution."[236] On the other hand, it should be added that the report, which BDP representative Bitlis Deputy Hüsamettin Zenderlioğlu criticized as "unacceptable in terms of both its language and content, and the way it was submitted to the Speaker of the Assembly," saying that "it reflects the reflex and official view of the state and is written according to a militaristic logic and style," which did not satisfy the Kurdish side.[237]

The process was continued despite Kurdish objections that the government was conducting it with a one-sided, arbitrary, and frivolous attitude, and the reactions of the racist public. It reached its peak – also in terms of its fragility – in the Dolmabahçe Accord of February 28, 2015, in which Öcalan's evaluations and suggestions were announced on television in the presence of government representatives. While the "Nationalist Movement, in its determination to protect Turkey," saw the accord as

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234 For a detailed study of the Solution Process see Cuma Çiçek. 2018. "Süreç" Kürt Çatışması ve Çözüm Arayışları. İletişim: 181-208.

235 https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/cozum-sureci-komisyonu-kuruldu,XTr1FxcPx0GuTHl-8Z4mlg [24.04.2021].

236 The statements I have mentioned are included in pages 200 and 272 of the report as the findings of Prof. Dr. Ahmet Özer. For the "Report of the Parliamentary Research Commission Established for the Investigation of Opportunities for Social Peace and Evaluation of the Solution Process" see: https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/cozum_sureci/docs/cozum_kom_raporu.pdf [24.04.2021]. For an analysis of the report see Cengiz Aktar. 2014. Barışı Kurmak. In Murat Aktaş (ed.) Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış. İletişim 205-207.

237 https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/tbmm-cozum-komisyonundan-catisma-cikti/1800296.html [24.04.2021].

the ambition of the government, which it declared as a "hostage of the baby killer," "to de-Turkify Anatolia" and equated it with the Treaty of Sèvres, the CHP did not generally disapprove of it, but asked: "What is behind this cryptic text? Does anyone know?" The CHP itself answered this question as follows: "Translated to Turkish it means this: AKP and HDP cooperate for the elections."[238] If we recall the reasons why the CHP did not participate in the Parliamentary Resolution Commission, we can assume that the CHP's objection to this "cryptic text" did not arise from a simple struggle for political power.

Eventually, as a result of the PKK's reservations about disarmament, the HDP's vow not to make Erdoğan president, and of course, Erdogan's flat-out denial of the Accord and the process, the part of the process that involved negotiations with Öcalan was terminated on April 5, 2015.[239] The racist reactions which the government re-embraced and relied on during and after the elections were an excuse for the PKK to end the ceasefire on July 11, 2015, to call the people for revolutionary war in the cities, where it declared autonomy, and to accelerate the establishment of trenches and barricades with the support of the YDGH. These forays of the PKK served as a justification for the state to declare a state of emergency and curfews in the autonomous cities, and to deploy its troops in Kurdistan and launch the "trench operations." Civil actors, who tried to make sure that the process led by two rivaling political parties would withstand the tension created by two general elections and the enthusiasm and anxiety caused by the PKK's ascendancy in Syria, lacked the independence and strength to cope with all these structural and hegemonic forces and, of course, the racist resistances.[240]

The Wise People Committees, which consisted of academics, activists, artists, intellectuals and journalists and were divided into seven groups in line with the seven geographical regions of Turkey, were tasked with conducting visits and meetings in the relevant regions in the spring of 2013 in order to garner public support for the process and to prepare reports for the Prime Minister.[241] The Committees, which had the important function of conveying the

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238 İsmet Parlak and Armağan Öztürk. 2015.

239 For the repercussions of the Accord see Ali Bayramoğlu. 2015. The Process of Resolution: From Politics to Arms. Democratic Progress Institute: 7-12.

240 Abdullah Kıran. 2014. Suriye, Kürtler ve Barış. In Murat Aktaş (ed.) Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış. İletişim: 122.

241 A fair and useful assessment of the Wise People Committees was presented by the Academics for Peace: https://t24.com.tr/haber/iste-305-akademisyen-akil-insanlar-heyeti-raporu,230998 [28.02.2021]. See also Ayşe Betül Çelik and Nil Mutluer. 2015. Toplumsal Barış ve Barış Sürecinin Toplumsallaşması. In Ayşe Betül Çelik, Murat Çelikkan, Evren Balta, Nil Mutluer and Levent Korkut. Çözüme Doğru: Olasılıklar, İmkânlar ve Sorunlar Üzerine Değerlendirme. Türkiye Barış Meclisi: 21-30. The full report can be accessed via the following link: https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/4 [28.02.2021].

concerns of the Turkish community to the Kurdish community and the expectations of the Kurdish community to the Turkish community, as well as iniating discussions on the causes and consequences of the Kurdish issue in the public sphere, had to put up with attempts from both sides to discredit their duties and themselves personally.[242] It should also be noted that these attempts sometimes, "though not commonly, turned into organized, aggressive and violent" reactions during the visits of the committees.[243] In addition, Baskin Oran, who was part of the Aegean Region Committee, gave examples of how some of his colleagues in the delegation tried to reinforced the concerns of the "nationalism-ridden" people to the detriment of peace instead of alleviating them to the advantage of peace.[244] Setting off from similar examples, the Academics for Peace advised the Committees, who emphasized "the language used" was the most critical issue for persuading those who are skeptical of the process and for society to internalize the idea of peace, that it should not for instance use the word "terrorist" – "because it offends certain people, contradicts the process of reconciliation and the resolution of the Kurdish problem, and reinforces the negative language of those who disapprove of the process – in order to increase the support for the process.[245]

In practice, many groups apart from the delegations, especially the AKP, acted contrary to this recommendation. It was also due to their contribution that we witnessed the end of the Solution Process before it could even reach the most vital social and political goals in terms of peace, such as confronting the past and providing justice, recognizing the truth and, of course, coming to terms with racism. The AKP, which stigmatized the opposition parties and the PKK as "representatives of archaic ideologies" during the Solution Process[246] and became more and more isolated as a result of its desire to be the sole protagonist of the solution, tried to ward off even reasonable objections to the process with scenarios of a possible war. Encountering political and social crises that emerged throughout the process, such as the Gezi Resistance, with the mindset that categorized these crises as provocations, conspiracies, and complots, the AKP erased any traces

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242 See Baskın Oran. 2014. Kürt Barışında Batı Cephesi "Ben Ege'de Akilken..." İletişim; Fuat Keyman. 2014. Çözüm Süreci, Müzakere, Güven ve Demokrasi. In Murat Aktaş (ed.) Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış. İletişim: 22-23.

243 https://t24.com.tr/haber/iste-305-akademisyen-akil-insanlar-heyeti-raporu,230998 [28.02.2021].

244 Baskın Oran. 2014: 47, 217, 231, 250, 251, 316.

245 https://t24.com.tr/haber/iste-305-akademisyen-akil-insanlar-heyeti-raporu,230998 [28.02.2021]. At the same time, the Academics for Peace pointed out that "expressions like Sayın Öcalan ("Mr. Öcalan") or önderlik ("leadership"), though they do not directly offend anyone," should not be used because "they create a backlash and discord in certain regions."

246 İsmet Parlak and Armağan Öztürk. 2015.

of its progress in terms of democratization. Meanwhile, Vahap Coşkun points out that as opposed to the state's demand for the PKK to disarm in parallel with democratization, the PKK prioritized employing the means of self-defense and self-government to preserve its hegemony in Kurdistan. Coşkun's claim that no progress could be made in the process due to the state's stubbornness and refusal to take one step forward and the PKK's refusal to take one step back, is congruent with Öcalan's double-sided criticism against "the AKP's peace and the PKK's war."[247]

We know that the hegemony that the PKK is trying to preserve is exactly the hegemony that the state is trying to dismantle. Hence, the solution process has become a part of this war for hegemony, and even, as discussed in the first chapter, an extension of the war for hegemony over truth. In this context, we should certainly continue to criticize the AKP-led state, whose role in preventing the resurgence of hope for resolution and peace is more than evident, given the "trench operations" and the state's subsequent attempts to break the political will of a significant part of the Kurdish people by means of imprisonment and trusteeship, as well as the PKK for its responsibilities regarding the way it conducted the process. Yet in terms of contributing to another "process" that will definitely start anew one day, it also seems important not to overlook the operation and function of regimes of truth and civil actors who do not problematize these regimes. Calling to mind that this was the purpose behind the discussion in the first part of the study and supposing that learning from the processes of coming to terms with the past around the world can enable us to make similar contributions, I would like to continue with a few lessons that can be drawn from the transitional justice process in South African.

An Anti-Racist Pursuit of Coming to Terms with the Past and Building Peace

In light of both the racist reactions to the Solution Process and the example of South Africa, it is possible to say that the Kurdish issue cannot be resolved without revealing the racism that lies at its root and confronting racist violence. Some might argue that the racist and colonial apartheid regime against the blacks in South Africa cannot be compared with the practices of racist and colonialist violence and policy against the Kurds in Turkey, and that South Africa's process of coming to terms with the past therefore cannot shed light on the process of coming to terms with the past in Turkey. While conceding that this claim is not completely without merit, it should perhaps be said that the aim of this study is not

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247 Interview with Vahap Coşkun, 14 February 2016. Unless otherwise stated, all references to Coşkun are from this interview. See also Abdullah Öcalan. 2015. Demokratik Kurtuluş ve Özgür Yaşamı İnşa İmralı Notları. Weşanen Mezopotamya: 198.

a comparative analysis of the two cases. And while continuing the pursuit to find an example closer to Turkey suited for a comparative analysis of processes of coming to terms with past, we might want to underline that it is important and necessary to try to benefit from all kinds of experiences that can be instructive for Turkey's future process of confronting its past.

Based on the South African experience we can, for example, say that separating the crimes committed by the Kurdish village guards from the crimes committed by the armed forces and prioritizing the former over the latter, or using the crimes committed by the PKK to justify the crimes committed by the armed forces, are possible mistakes that might cause the process of coming to terms with the past to fail. Such a danger is similarly posed by the possibility that the process addresses a community of victims made up only of dissident Kurdish civilians, thereby rendering the systematic racism and colonial violence against the Kurdish people and the Kurdish people's demand for equality and justice invisible.

The possibility of neglecting the collective framework by focusing on individual pursuit of justice and compensation, and on individual violations or losses within the framework of human rights also comes with drawbacks or obstacles to the establishment of a lasting and dignified peace. Likewise, restorative justice mechanisms that rely on religious and traditional approaches should not be used to create an alternative to criminal justice mechanisms, but can be used to support and complement these mechanisms in specific cases, regions and crimes. Moreover, prudence must be exercised against attempts to use traditional restorative mechanisms in a way that ignores the social hierarchies fueling the war, that is, to bring these mechanisms into play without paying regard to differences in gender, class, age, religion and language.

We should have a keen eye on the fact that an incomplete and incorrect recording of the past harbors the possibility of discrediting the process of coming to terms with the past in the eyes of victims, perpetrators and communities, putting additional measures in jeopardy, and thus depriving the process of a genuine settlement and sharing of responsibilities. In fact, the Solution Process has shown us that these are real possibilities. While I think that it is necessary to be wary of "impossible machines" promising miracles that are too good to be true, I believe that it is necessary to stand clear of both miraculous expectations and destructive criticism, which render such mechanisms impossible, and to escort each of the steps taken towards facing the past with demanding support.

While not completely disregarding social and financial choices such as general amnesty and forgiveness, we should certainly keep in mind that these choices should not turn into political and legal tendencies that will foster a culture of impunity.[248] In this sense, it will be necessary to struggle to ensure that every stage, from legal departments to truth commissions, to truth-seeking, through to truth-telling is inclusive and pluralistic, to avoid making exclusion an excuse for destructive criticism, and to turn the very attempt to get involved into a form of political activism that can make a critical contribution.

Ultimately, I think that reconsidering the discussion of regimes of truth that I conducted at the beginning of this study in the context of coming to terms with the past and confronting racism is also possible in the context of the South African example. Knowing that the struggle against official regimes of truth, which wage a racial war by means of politics, entails the danger of constructing oppositional truth regimes, and more importantly, that it may be heedless of different manifestations of racism, may help develop a perceptive view of the process of confronting the past. While I think that the ethical and political significance and achievements of the multi-racial struggle against racism, which the ANC pursued together with the whites, should not be overshadowed by the criticisms of the pragmatic and political concessions it made in return for reconciliation and power, I also believe that what

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248 In one part of the study I conducted in 2014 to learn about the ideas of and search for justice of the victims of the state terrorism of the 90s, I tried to understand what the victims thought about forgiving the perpetrators and those responsible, based on the case of South Africa and the concept of helâlleşme ("forgiveness"; the act of forgiving each other any injury or hurt done knowingly or unknowingly, making amends for all that's past) mentioned by Öcalan in his 2013 Newroz speech. During the Solution Process, Öcalan choose to refer to the Islamic equivalent of forgiveness to imply that criminals might not be punished in return for achievements such as peace and political equality. By making forgiveness a subject of social and political bargaining he also alleviated the psychological and moral burden of the victims. In this sense, most of the people I interviewed quite rightly interpreted and endorsed forgiveness as a political gesture. On the other hand, I noticed that almost all of these people were unwilling to personally forgive offenders, and even felt discomfort talking about forgiveness. Therefore, I thought that either I had not asked the question in the right way and at the right time or that the victims should have never been asked this question. Upon further inspection, it became evident that the latter was true, and Arendt was right: people cannot forgive what they cannot punish and cannot punish what they cannot forgive. Yet, Derrida, too was right when he said that only the unforgivable can be forgiven, while criticizing the instances of forgiveness in the TRC: Forgiveness belongs to the private sphere; it disappears the moment it enters the public sphere. In this sense, the concept of political forgiveness, which is included in the transitional justice literature and which I personally also use, does not go beyond expressing the impossible coexistence of opposites. Thus, I am of the opinion that Öcalan's call for helâlleşme will serve as a political gesture covering up impunity for the sake of political reconciliation but will not satisfy the struggle for confronting the past, for revealing the truth, and for social peace and justice. For the mentioned study see Nesrin Uçarlar. 2015.

lies behind the fact that the struggle against white domination has not been strong and comprehensive enough to combat racist violence and discrimination against "Africans," is the familiar tendency to take shelter in the dominant truth-power matrix.

Structural and systematic issues like racism, which cannot possibly form the main agenda of processes of confronting the past, peace and transition to democracy, are circulating as a specter of truth that the state does not want to address in any way, and advocates of peace avoid or do at least not prioritize, but that haunts and threatens the possible peace regime by resuscitating the old war regime. I do not think that the only reason why peace advocates refrain from addressing the issue of racism is the state's reluctance to discuss it.

As we have seen in the relationship between racism and the regime of truth, the regime of truth determines and constructs the discourses of all groups subject to it; due to the underlying racist war regime, it polarizes the society and imposes the choice of bending the truth according to political interests on all parties. In this sense, it is not enough to be nonracist in order to challenge the racist regime of truth and war, it is necessary to be anti-racist. Anti-racism, on the other hand, is not limited to simply discussing the racism of the dominant truth regime. It requires finding a style and method that will transform regimes of war into regimes of peace. The style, lexicon and methods, which war and violence have polarized, emotionalized, and coarsened, need to be countered with refined, developed and adept styles, lexicons and methods.

Trying to get Turkey out of the "present geography of impunity" is not only a way of confronting the past, but also of problematizing the racist violence and injustices that are happening today and in the future. In this sense, it is important not to settle for a kind of political confrontation that can benefit the ruling elites on both sides, and to expand the "crime scene" rather than the description of the criminal, which is another way to make sure that the economic injustice suffered by the victims does not disappear from the agenda. Identifying the situations in which "water is distributed more unequally than income" in Turkey can create the opportunity to make the wider public more receptive to a process of coming to terms with the past.

Demonstrating the multidimensionality of the violations with the aim of strengthening efforts to search for truth that focus on the factual truths about the violations, particularly of the right to life, might help to make the systematic aspect and therefore

the racist character of any single violation less debatable. In my opinion, such initiatives, especially a remarkable archive and memory work, and a network of political and legal struggles that is closely intertwined with art, already exist in Turkey, and the invaluable products of these works are capable of countering many of the concerns I have listed above. I imagine the possible gains of taking more "aesthetic acts" to expand, multiply, and strengthen such initiatives and of trying to move the peaceful search for truth beyond existing political spaces and regimes of truth.

When first approached with the offer to do a study on how the concept of the post-truth era and the anti-racist struggle might relate to the work of confronting the past, I had not thought that these axes would intersect so neatly. However, while examining the concept of the post-truth age, I started to think that it might be possible to get to the relationship between truth and politics, and from there to the concept of the regime of truth, and ultimately arrive at the relationship between regimes of truth and racism, if I followed a certain line of thought inspired by Arendt and Foucault. Moreover, the task of revealing the relationship of this line of thought with the work of confronting the past opened up before me as a path I simply had to walk down anew.

The issue that had me thinking the most has been connecting the search for truth, which is the most basic political activity in the field of confronting the past and which I have linked to the regime of truth and the anti-racist struggle, with peace efforts. While I thought that the effort to confront the past and the search for truth ultimately served the purpose of peace, I believed it was possible and necessary to reason about the possibilities of embracing a more inclusive and multi-layered approach to both undermine the indifference to past injustices and popularize the demand for a lasting and dignified peace in the future. On the other hand, I hoped that this reasoning would materialize in a discussion containing fair criticisms rather than an assessment offering concrete measures and recommendations. Now, I would like to conclude this study with a summary that avoids repetition and the wish that this study will lead to new discussions.

First of all, starting from the example of South Africa, I think we should always keep in mind the impossibility of foreseeing a government and system change which would ensure that the past is properly and duly accounted for, and the fact that even a government that is willing to confront the past cannot handle this issue in all of its dimensions and complexities. Therefore, the right thing to do is to try to articulate every step of coming to terms with the past, no matter how small, no matter where and from whom, into a long-term struggle and turn it into a true act of justice and peace.

I believe that it is possible to see the search for justice and truth not as a struggle that will result in absolute satisfaction and victory, but as a constant pursuit embraced by all victims of war to create a demand for peace. Bearing in mind that such a pursuit cannot be limited to a person's lifetime, in other words, that it is an effort to create a political, legal, and cultural tradition that can be passed down from generation to generation, I believe that giving priority to enhancing this tradition and enabling its collective use will empower the search for a peaceful truth and open a wider political space for the struggle

for justice and confronting the past. Regardless of how much wars and conflicts cut into it, I think it is possible to create a tradition of peace that always keeps on being passed on. Talking about the effort to create and pass on a tradition of peace, I would like to briefly mention the etiquette of forgetting in the context of ways of remembering.

It seems that a peaceful effort must include an etiquette of forgetting that will purify remembering from resentment and violence. We can say that giving victims the opportunity to forget and to continue their lives by creating moments and spaces of "return" for them to revisit the past in the company of witnesses, so as to take the burden of remembering off the victims, or more precisely, to share the political and social weight of this burden, creates an etiquette of forgetting that serves peace. I think it is possible to see memorialization works as a part of this etiquette – and also of efforts to keep truths from being forgotten and to make them visible and accounted for.

Based on the manifestation of the "return," which Marc Augé considers one particular form of forgetting, we can describe it as an etiquette to securely forget and simultaneously share the experience. This can be achieved by establishing a public, political and social time frame that prevents the past from constantly isolating and taking hold of the victims in a way that does not involve forgetting, that is, to allow the victims to "forget" the violence of the past by remembering the past together with others.[249]

We can say that remembering and forgetting ultimately means traversing time. When the eventful journey between these two interdependent moments comes to an end, remembering will correspond to forgetting and forgetting to remembering. Thus, it is possible to point out situations where the duty of remembering imposed by official commemorations covers up a forgetting, or where a strong resolve to forget, fueled by the wish for personal deliverance, turns into a cruelty of remembering. In this sense, it appears not to be simply a matter of remembering or forgetting. Commenting that one must forget in order to be in the present, not to die, and to remain faithful, Augé points out that "[t]o praise oblivion is not to revile memory, even less is it to neglect remembrance," that is, to ignore what simply cannot be forgotten, "but rather to recognize the work of oblivion in the first one and to spot it in the second."[250]

Trying not to forget a violence which is unbearable to remember, as in the Kurdistan of the 90s, by keeping its memory, can have the side effect of accumulating violence and

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249 See Marc Augé. 2019. Oblivion. Translated by Marjolijn de Jager. University of Minnesota Press: 55-84.

250 ibid.: 14.

keeping alive violence's desire for legitimacy. What should be remembered within the framework of the etiquette of forgetting, is the policy behind the Turkish State's strategy of denying this violence: a policy of legitimizing violence, of effacing its memory and of not allowing it to be spoken about. Every instance of state violence is unique, not only in terms of its conditions, "justifications" and means, but also in terms of its victims that beg to be remembered. Yet the perpetrators' tactics of deliberately concealing, distorting, destroying, and denying factual truths are so general that these singularities acquire a collective and political character.[251]

I believe that it is necessary not to leave the victims' moments of return to the memories of violence, but to surround these moments with collective and political practices of remembering and to expose violence itself to an etiquette of forgetting. In my opinion, a struggle to confront the past that focuses on the political sources and consequences of state violence and bases itself not only on the memories of the victims but also on a social etiquette of forgetting, also suits the purpose of pursuing a politics of peace that will break the spiral of violence and war.

A struggle to confront the past that involves an etiquette of forgetting, can of course not be considered apart from insisting on the demand for criminal justice and on legal struggle, no matter how incomplete or inconclusive, and working for the inclusion of racist discourses and actions in the scope of criminal acts. However, I think that we can also conceive of an anti-racist and peaceful search for truth that opposes regimes of truth as an effort that tries to get through to the layers of truth concerning different injustices, the strata of indifference towards oppositional truths and the remnants of racism, and as attempts to come up with political programs that will find favor with the wider public.

It is important to think about ways to make visible not only those aspects of manifestations of racism that spread to the discourses and actions in the field of official politics, but also those that penetrate informal political spheres, social and economic relations, and even the protection and use of cultural and artistic works and natural resources. Drawing on modes of thinking motivated by political philosophy debates, artistic productions, and technological possibilities, as well as the experiences of other countries, turns the work of combating racism into an intricate and inspiring political pursuit. With respect to taking an active anti-racist stance and at the same time raising

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251 See René Lemarchand (ed.). 2011. Forgotten Genocides Oblivion, Denial, and Memory. University of Pennsylvania Press.

awareness about racism, it seems inevitable and valuable for public actors, who have the potential and responsibility to inspire and encourage individuals and institutions, to benefit from philosophy, art, and technology, as well as from examples of anti-racist struggle from around the world.

The founding pillars of an anti-racist, peaceful search for truth may include the following: not ignoring factual truths about atrocities by non-state actors, while trying to achieve visibility and accountability regarding factual truths concerning injustices against victims of racism caused by state actors; challenging the prestige and the seemingly supra-political and "conventional" position of the civilian perpetrators of racist discourses and actions; and exhibiting not only the victimizations experienced by groups or individuals but also their political, cultural and economic production and the achievements and transformative power of their struggles.

In short, this study, which is based on the idea that it is possible, necessary, and useful to define racism as the phenomenon in which the establishment, functioning, resilience, and flexibility of Turkey's regime of truth has its source, begins with both the relationship between truth and politics, as occasioned by the debate on the post-truth era, and reflections on an anti-racist struggle to confront the past and search for truth. Its purpose is to rethink the struggle for a coming to terms with the past, truth, and peace which the Kurdish people, as one of the targets of racism in Turkey, have sustained in order both to achieve visibility and accountability regarding the injustices and state violence which they have been subjected to in the past and present, and to voice their objections to the official regime of truth. Without ignoring its force, maturity and achievements, this report aims to ponder the question whether this struggle could possibly be carried on in such a way as to also include the violence committed by the state and the PKK against other peoples, communities, and the seemingly dominant segments of society and to support the ongoing search for truth, that is to say, carried on together with larger sections of society who can act as witnesses to the fact that the regimes of truth create a regime of war.

While I am sure that the study set out for the purposes I have listed, I am not sure whether it adequately fulfills them. So, in closing, let me reiterate: tracing the relationship between regimes of truth and racism, I have come to the conclusion that the effort to confront the past and search for truth is part of the anti-racist struggle.

In my eyes, the anti-racist struggle is not about simply objecting to the official truth regime and taking the oppositional truth regime at face value, but also about a peaceful search for truth and a demand for the past to be accounted for. The latter are pitted against the regime of war that is fueled by the truth regimes. Finally, I think it is possible, useful, and necessary to get through to different layers of victimization in order to overcome the layers of indifference, while moving forward towards building a lasting and dignified peace. Although I know the drawbacks and limitations of thinking and writing in the imperative mood, I have not yet found a way to free myself from this mood. I hope that this does not mean that this study will lose any of its purpose to be an invitation to think.

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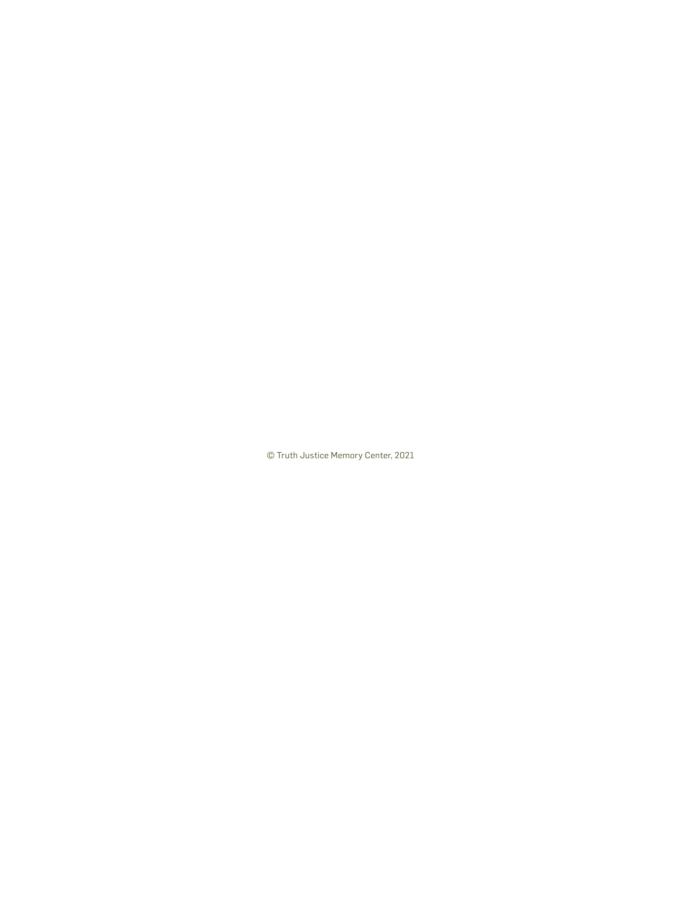
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This study examines how the concept
of the "post-truth era" and the struggle
against racism relate to truth-seeking
and dealing with the past. It builds upon
Arendt's analysis of the relationship
between politics and truth, Foucalt's
concept of the "regime of truth" and
the link between regimes of truth and
racism in order to invite us to think
about an anti-racist and "peaceful
method of truth-seeking" that criticizes
official and oppositional regimes of
truth and the regime of war which both
types of truth regimes essentially foster.
Arguing that it is relevant to consider
racism as a main source for the
establishment, functioning, resilience
and flexibility of Turkey's regime of
truth, this study analyzes the TV shows
of the 1990s and the 2010s, especially
the manifestations of the "war on terror"
that appeared on state channels, and
the different traces of memory and truth
related to these manifestations. The
report also addresses the criticisms
against the South African Truth and
Reconciliation Commission, drawing
attention to a number of aspects that
could prove to be critical for anchoring
Turkey's dealing with the past and
peace processes in an anti-racist
framework.