

The Political Ecology of Kemalism

Abstract:

The period of secular modernization and nation-building between 1923 and 1950 is referred to as the Kemalist period. The bureaucratic cadre that gathered around President Mustafa Kemal (and later İsmet İnönü) shaped the young nation according to Kemalist principles. During this period, the Kemalist regime had a vision of nature and a clear project for transforming the Anatolian socio-nature. Kemalist elites believed that conquering, harnessing, and taming the Anatolian nature would help them overcome misery and contribute to prosperity and growth. They attached meaning and value to the infrastructures and technologies that served this purpose. In this lecture, I will discuss the political ecology of Kemalism - the practices and narratives through which the Kemalist regime produced a new socio-nature. By focusing on the different areas in which Kemalist political ecology manifested itself, such as water resources, minerals, forests, and food staples, I will show how the instrumental ideas and material uses of nature enabled the Kemalist regime to further its political agenda and achieve its goals.

Bio:

Onur İnal (Ph.D., University of Arizona, 2015) is an environmental historian based at the Near Eastern Studies Department of the University of Vienna. He is the regional representative for Turkey at the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) and the founder of the Network for the Study of Environmental History of Turkey (NEHT). He co-edited *Seeds of Power: Explorations in Ottoman Environmental History* (White Horse Press, 2019) and *Transforming Socio-Natures in Turkey: Landscapes, State and Environmental Movements* (Routledge, 2019). His scholarly work has appeared in edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of World History*, the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, the *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, *Diyâr—Journal of Ottoman, Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies*, the *Journal of Urban History*, *Environmental History*, *Environment and History*.