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(Im)possibility of negotiating peace: 2005–2015 peace/reconciliation talks between the Turkish government and Kurdish politicians

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ABSTRACT

The attempt by the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP) to negotiate with the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK) and Kurdish politicians was presented as a resolution process by the government and perceived as a possibility to end violence by the peace-oriented segments of the Turkish and Kurdish populations in Turkey. Robust studies of this period that stretched from clandestine talks to the end of semi-public talks with Öcalan at the İmralı Prison argue that the AKP's goals were disarmament of the PKK and instrumentalizing the process for domestic electoral support and regional power. The same period corresponds to the deterioration and eventual breakdown of the relationship between the AKP and Cemaat, its steadfast ally. Following the conceptualization of claim-making as performance in a contentious politics perspective, this study surveys the looming narrative on Cemaat as the impediment to peace and threat for democracy as it appears in the only available records of the process between 2005 and 2015, to conclude that the possibility of non-violence might have been overshadowed by the ongoing conflict within the religious alliance that had originally carried AKP to power.

Introduction

In August 2017, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP) celebrated its 16 years of rule in Turkey with an exhibit at its Ankara headquarters. Titled 'Love of a Nation: AK Party', the exhibit offered a visual narrative of the party's history, presenting all the trials, tribulations and achievements of being in power for so many years.¹ Yet one immense issue of the party's recent history was conspicuously missing from the exhibit: the 10-year resolution/peace process when the AKP, sometimes publicly, sometimes behind closed doors, negotiated with representatives of Kurdish politics, including the armed Kurdish group Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK).² The same exhibit, however, displayed episodes of clashes with its former political ally Cemaat (Congregation or Community), the movement tied to the religious Gülen group. This exhibit, that selectively narrated AKP's history, was a claim-making of a political actor, and that particular claim, which was

concealing a long-term engagement with the PKK, was a performative act of distancing the ruling party from its former steadfast ally. Similarly, any commentary on Kurdish politics is conspicuously missing in the post-July 2016 assessments of the Gülenist publications.³

The contentious politics perspective, which does not differentiate political actors as legitimate or illegitimate, focuses on the claim-making of states and non-state actors as interactive processes that form the dynamic trajectories of political regimes.⁴ Identifying claim-making as a performance indicates linking different political actors in a shared understanding and practice,⁵ as governments are shaped by their participation in such contentious claims.⁶ The narrative of Cemaat appears frequently in AKP politics, claimed to be a threat for democracy, yet at one point this religious social-solidarity network called Hizmet (the Service) by its supporters, provided major social, political and intellectual support for the rise of the moderate political Islamism that swept the AKP to power. This article surveys the only public records of the negotiations between the AKP regime and the Kurdish politicians and documents the conspicuous narrative of Cemaat, as a performative claim-making, that was almost omnipresent throughout the resolution/peace process.

As this article documents, the resolution/peace process with the Kurds from 2005 to 2015 was tangled with AKP's relationship with its erstwhile ally Cemaat. The AKP effectively concealed its clashes with its ally until December 2013 and only after July 2016 did it label Cemaat as operating a 'parallel state'.⁷ Yet this narrative was prominently heard from its major negotiating partner, A. Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, throughout the talks that were conducted in Imralı Prison between early 2013 and 2015, and often implied as an impediment to peace and a threat to non-violence during the Oslo negotiations between 2005 and 2011.

Drawing on minutes of the negotiations published in Turkish by a pro-PKK publishing house in Europe, we see Öcalan and other Kurdish politicians presenting the Gülenists as an impediment to the resolution/peace process even when it was considered a staunch ally of the AKP.⁸ We cannot establish whether Gülenists operating within the state actually sabotaged the negotiations, but it is significant that this narrative was present so early even as most Turkish media, researchers and experts from credible corners of the world praised the Gülen movement as offering a unique, pluralistic, moderate, enlightened and peaceful Islam.⁹ As recently as 2017, researchers were arguing that the Gülen movement promoted a non-violent Islam based on interfaith communication, and interpreting its global educational activities and institutions as transformative and a negation of jihadist forms of Islamism.¹⁰ While more critically balanced accounts of the movement assess the limits of its adherence to modernity and its ambiguous reliance on market forces,¹¹ until December 2013 it was widely accepted by the public as a government ally.

Cemaat already had a well-established anti-Kurd and anti-PKK attitude from the 1980s.¹² On the other hand, its proponents also argued that Cemaat's policy was to create a civilian response, such as community centres and civic organizations, to the ongoing ethnic and religious conflict in the region.¹³ As revealed in this article, such attempts were seen as competition for the hearts and minds of the Kurdish youth and public in the name of the Turkish state by the Kurdish politicians. The AKP, on the other hand, between 2005 and 2015 was regarded as the, often reluctant, negotiation

partner to end clashes. The records of these negotiations are not fully available; however, the uncontested publications of memorandums and minutes indicate that the Kurdish leadership which was under close surveillance by the intelligence community of the AKP regime, which viewed Cemaat as an impediment to non-violence and a threat to the AKP's democratic rule.

The negotiations between the AKP and the Kurdish political representatives had two distinct stages: the Oslo and the Imralı negotiations. The Oslo negotiations were secret meetings between the Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı (National Intelligence Organization, MİT) and PKK affiliates with international facilitators present between 2005 and 2011. The Imralı negotiations consisted of 22 mostly monthly meetings between 23 February 2013 and 14 March 2015 at the Imralı Prison where PKK leader Öcalan had been imprisoned since his arrest and conviction in 1999. With the advent of the Halkların Demokratik Partisi (People's Democratic Party, HDP), a pro-Kurdish political party, during the June 2015 national elections, the AKP lost its absolute majority in the parliament for the first time and AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan effectively ended the peace/resolution process.¹⁴ The six memoranda of understanding from the Oslo negotiations and minutes of meetings at the Imralı Prison reveal discussions on Cemaat and/or the 'parallel state' that allow us to explore the impact of the clashes between the former allies over any prospect of peace.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, Cemaat was a powerful ally and the PKK was the undisputable enemy of the state. However, as Öcalan's statements during the discussions at Imralı will indicate further in this article, these positions seemed almost reversed as the AKP took it upon itself to end violence with the Kurds and Öcalan sought to assert his importance as the interlocutor. This bizarre re-entrenchment of foes and friends may be consequential for understanding the authoritarian turn of the AKP regime. With Kurdish politics a major security issue for any prospect of democratic governance in Turkey, the question of how the cleavage within the ruling coalition impacted the possibility of a peaceful resolution needs to be investigated. Were disagreements over Kurdish politics a breaking point between the AKP and the Gülenists or were they simply instrumentalized and manipulated during their conflict to increase their shares of power? It is hard to find any evidence to cogently answer these crucial questions. What is clear is that the spectre¹⁵ of Cemaat as a threat to AKP power loomed large throughout the resolution/peace process, as this survey of the only available minutes of the talks indicates.

The AKP, an Islamist conservative party with staunch neoliberal aspirations, was created in 2001, came to power in 2002 and has continually held a majority of the seats in Turkish parliament for more than a decade. The Gülen movement, although formed through different religious affiliations, was a steadfast ally in targeting the 'old guard', both the traditional laicist establishment and the enduring control of the laicism-oriented Turkish military. The alliance sought a re-formation of state power, especially in targeting the military, the guardian of the existing regime since the establishment of a republic in the country in 1923. But as this AKP regime successfully marginalized its common enemies in the old guard through a series of arrests and indictments, its alliance with the Gülenists soon soured and turned into a brutal conflict that led to an abortive coup attempt in July 2016.¹⁶

The conflict between AKP rule and Cemaat was most likely over power and resource sharing. Its first appearance in relation to Kurdish politics is seen in June 2011 when the secret Oslo negotiations between the Turkish government's intelligence arm, namely the MİT, and the Kurdish insurgency were leaked to the media by sources close to Cemaat.¹⁷ Later, when the same prosecutors who were indicting and convicting the old guard summoned the head of the MİT, Hakan Fidan, for an interrogation in 2012, this investigation was understood, although rarely publicly, as a Cemaat attack on AKP. The public in general, but especially the old-guard laicist media, was hardly aware of the deep factionalism and brewing conflict within social and political Sunni Islamism in Turkey.¹⁸ They were not fully informed about the splintering alliance until December 2013, when newspapers received a series of recorded tapes revealing vast corruption and money-laundering activities of AKP cabinet members.¹⁹ It was only then that Prime Minister Erdoğan started publicly denouncing Cemaat as his enemy with his now famous statement, 'We gave you everything you asked for. What else do you want?'²⁰ By early 2014, Erdoğan was publicly referring to Cemaat as forming a 'parallel state', and he began to vilify it as his enemy number one after the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. Curiously, the cleavage between the former political allies was by then already well known to the participants of the peace/resolution process.

The AKP's involvement with Kurdish politics was a forceful attempt aiming at three goals: on the domestic front to undermine the military monopoly over the existential security issues of the country by establishing administrative measures and electoral success among Kurds as Sunni Muslims; regionally, to gain the sympathies of the diverse Kurdish enclaves in Iraq, Syria and Iran to reinforce neo-Ottomanism over the Middle East; and internationally to establish the credibility of stable democratic governance by an AKP regime. During this peace/resolution attempt, the AKP lost its staunch ally, alienated almost all Kurdish enclaves in the region and in the realignment of the state took a monopoly on the existential security issues of the Turkish state.

This process seems to have been an attempt by the AKP to enlist Sunni Kurds into its support base. While political alignments and support for parties can change very fast in Turkey, the AKP regime had gained tacit yet highly significant support from some Kurdish segments of society given its public expressions and actual attempt to broker some sort of resolution that would end the armed conflict which had claimed more than 40,000 lives since the 1980s.²¹ The election data since 2002 clearly indicates that religious, traditional Sunni Kurds were already overwhelmingly supporting the AKP.²² The prospect of any form of official recognition and end to violent clashes could easily win the support of the remaining Kurdish populations, and provide firm regional control of the Kurdish mobilizations in the region across the borders of Iraq, Syria and Iran. Hence, under the disapproving gaze of the nationalist old guard, the AKP set out to broker an end-of-violence state of affairs with the PKK around 2009.

Amidst substantial criticism from left- and right-wing nationalist parties in Turkey, these negotiations between the AKP government and Kurdish politicians were presented and perceived as a fundamental issue of democratization in Turkey and establishing stability in the region.²³ For all parties involved, the Kurdish peace process was not only a domestic endeavour; it had trans-border implications in Iraq, Syria and Iran, where local Kurdish groups were involved in various global collaborations and alliances.²⁴ However, as keenly observed by Çiçek, the AKP regime employed an

opportunistic approach which could best be described as malign. In his meticulously researched and nuanced work on diverse political and ideological orientations among Kurds in Turkey, Çiçek, argues that the AKP abandoned its effort to gain Kurdish support on the basis of the religious affinities of Kurds and Turks due to the success of the Kurdish resistance to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) attacks in Syria in 2014 and as the Kurdish peace party HDP took credit for the peace/reconciliation process while rejecting Erdoğan's presidential bid.²⁵ Similarly, Özpek, in a historically detailed approach to the peace process from the perspective of civil war literature, states that while the AKP government's steps seemed like a deviation from the Turkish state policy towards the Kurds, the regime initiated the process to consolidate its power, and 'used the "peace process" as a bargaining chip to receive the support of the Kurds for the *à la turca* presidential system and as an immunity shield to avert the criticism of the domestic opposition'.²⁶ Neither study discusses the looming presence of the conflict within the power bloc during the peace/reconciliation process, although Kurdish politicians repeatedly discussed it throughout this period.

The narrative of Cemaat as a hindrance to the process increasingly appears in the only available documents surveyed here, indicating that the AKP was using the negotiation not only to target its Kurdish opposition but also its own ally, with which it sought to destroy the nationalist military's power in Turkey. Öcalan and other Kurdish politicians appear in the documents, albeit fully aware of the AKP's opportunism and instrumentalist approach to the process, to be willing and cooperating parties in identifying and targeting Cemaat as an impediment to peace, democracy and AKP rule. While it is close to impossible to elucidate Cemaat's *actual* position regarding the peace/resolution process, as early as 2013 some observers were questioning Cemaat's approach, noting conflictual statements with its AKP allies.²⁷ But the *narrative* of Cemaat as an impediment to the peace process is visible only briefly in the discussion on the memoranda of the Oslo negotiations and then repeatedly throughout the minutes of the İmralı meetings in remarks by Öcalan himself.

Secret yet internationally monitored

The AKP came to power during a unilateral ceasefire declared by the PKK between 1999 and 2004. According to the PKK sources, the AKP did not have any contact with PKK leaders until June 2004, and Erdoğan agreed with Norwegian politicians to initiate a process at a conference in Europe in 2005.²⁸ The Oslo talks were 'backchannel communications'²⁹ involving a series of 11 meetings between Turkish state officials and the PKK facilitated by the Norwegian government and some unnamed European agencies. Following three years of international groundwork, these negotiations, which the Turkish public or parliament did not know about at the time, started in July 2008 in Geneva with the participation of Kurdish politicians in exile, leading officers of the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey, and the representatives of PKK forces stationed in the Qandil region of Iraq. The second meeting took place in Oslo in March 2009, even after the Turkish air force had just undertaken a major attack on Qandil during a visit by the peace negotiators in early December 2008.³⁰

As internationally monitored secret negotiations were going on, the AKP took a series of administrative actions to take over the affairs of the PKK from the Turkish

military. Starting in 2009, government officials announced the ‘National Unity and Brotherhood Project’ to resolve the ethnic strife in the country, with ‘brotherhood’ implying the unity of Muslims.³¹ The following year, parliament passed a law creating an undersecretary of Public Order and Security that reorganized the relationship between the military and civilian administration with respect to terror-related issues.³² In response, the PKK renewed its truce declarations in 2009 and 2011.³³ The government allowed the imprisoned PKK leader A. Öcalan to address Kurds during the 2013, 2014 and 2015 *Newroz* celebrations, a national holiday for Kurds and other cultures that had been criminalized in Turkey for decades. In return, Öcalan reiterated his call to the PKK to leave Turkish territory in 2013. Peace was in the air. Yet the spectre of the AKP’s former Gülenist political ally was already looming over any form of resolution.

Based on the available documents of the Oslo negotiations, it is not clear whether the AKP and Cemaat were simply playing good cop/bad cop or whether there was indeed a crack within their alliance. As reported by Dicle, between 2008 and 2011, while PKK representatives were seeking a political resolution, the Turkish government was steadfastly declaring that its goal was not a political reconciliation with the PKK.³⁴ During those three years, some representatives of the Turkish state were less than willing to engage in the bargaining initiated by the intelligence chief, and PKK representatives were dispirited, as the government and rebels violently clashed in between rounds of negotiations. Notably, Turkish F-16 bombers attacked PKK headquarters on 5 December 2008 in what can only be called an assassination attempt, only the day after the international facilitators visited PKK headquarters in Qandil, in northern Iraq; an attack on innocent civilians in December 2011³⁵ in the mountainous region called Roboski; and particularly the recurrent arrests of civilian Kurdish politicians as PKK collaborators starting April 2009.³⁶ These last targeted Koma Civaken Kurdistan (Union of Communities in Kurdistan, KCK), an umbrella organization formed in 2005 for peaceful activism and local politics.

As early as September 2008, Turkish officials attending the Oslo negotiations made it clear that some factions within the state should not find out about the negotiations between the MİT and the PKK and might be working against them.³⁷ Following the second Oslo negotiation, on 14 April 2009, around 1700 Kurds were arrested, including mayors, NGO activists and local political leaders who were represented in the parliament. Kurdish representatives in Oslo did not hesitate to call these arrests ‘political genocide’, while Turkish officials admitted that these operations were carried out by ‘another faction within the state’ which they did not yet have control over.³⁸ Article five of the memorandum of understanding of the third Oslo meeting stated that the operations against the Kurdish political party DTP ‘should be stopped, those who are arrested should immediately be released and their trials should rapidly start’.³⁹ The same request was repeated in the consecutive memoranda but contrary to the pledges of the Turkish officers attending, the so-called ‘KCK operations’—arrests of Kurdish civilians, community leaders and politicians—continued, so much so that by October 2010 the number of detained Kurdish community leaders and political representatives reached 7748.⁴⁰ The ‘spectre’ of Cemaat was beginning to affect the process, while Turkish public, media or parliament remained unaware of both the negotiations with PKK and any cracks within AKP rule. In September 2011, the internationally monitored yet secret Oslo negotiations came to an abrupt halt when some unknown sources (that were claimed to be Cemaat) revealed recordings of some of them, targeting the director of MİT.

The captive interlocutor

The semi-public centre of the peace/resolution negotiations was İmralı Prison, where Öcalan has been jailed since 1999. As a captive interlocutor, Öcalan was in close contact with the MİT and was allowed to conduct meetings with the leaders of the Kurdish political party Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party, BDP; later became Party of Democratic Regions/Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi, DBP), which eventually established the foundations of the HDP.⁴¹ While we do not have access to Öcalan's negotiations with government officials, the released minutes of his meetings with Kurdish leaders provide very informative documentation of domestic and regional political stakes. During these meetings, evidently more pressing issues, such as legal protection and guarantees for PKK fighters; political dynamics in the Middle East, the Syrian crises, and Rojava; the local/municipal administration of cities in the Kurdish region; and women's emancipation, were thoroughly and strategically discussed, mostly around the musings of Öcalan. The Kurdish leaders repeatedly discussed a 'parallel state' formation, both implying and openly stating that Cemaat was an obstacle to peace and a challenge to the AKP administration, this at a time when the conflict between the former allies was not publicly acknowledged.⁴²

These records show that long before the Turkish public was aware of the conflict within the ruling party, Öcalan was already warning his collaborators about the dangers that Cemaat was posing to the welfare of the Turkish state and a possible peace. Obviously, Cemaat or any parallel state it was creating was not Öcalan's main concern. This was evidently political voice and legal stipulations to secure guarantees for returning PKK fighters. However, as the minutes clearly indicate, the intelligence officers of the Turkish state were urging him to understand and express to his Kurdish bargaining team that a resolution of the armed conflict with Kurds would prevent a possible plot from the 'parallel state' to destroy the Turkish state and the AKP government. During those monthly meetings, Öcalan more than once presented himself as the only hope of the Turkish state and the AKP government (he was always meticulous in differentiating these two) in preventing a possible coup, in addition to his being a designated interlocutor and unquestionable leader of the Kurdish mobilization. To know whether such statements were simply his performance of self-promotion as a bargaining partner or indeed reveal cracks among the regime partners, would require at the least access to records that are not yet available. Performative or not, the narrative of Cemaat, or its spectre, in the İmralı minutes need to be noted for future investigations.

In discussing Cemaat or the 'parallel state', Öcalan acknowledges the network as an autonomous power to reckon with; identifying it as an impediment to peace; and finally recognizing the AKP's inability to overcome its power. By the time Öcalan believed Cemaat might be playing a role in preventing the end of armed conflict, the Turkish (and Kurdish) public was becoming more focused on and invested in the peace/resolution process without yet seeing the tension within the governing power.

Cemaat, ally of or autonomous power within the government

As early as 2010, Öcalan saw Cemaat as a significant force not only in Turkey, but also in the region:

Both they (Cemaat) and we are significant actors in Turkey and in the Middle East. . . . We are two dynamic powers [in Turkish society]. With mutual acknowledgement and solidarity we can solve a number of fundamental problems in Turkey.⁴³

But he later indicated the parallels between his captivity and Gülen's self-exile, suggesting both were equally coerced and even tamed: 'Cemaat's centre is USA and I think Gülen is a fool. As I was put in [prison] here Gülen was placed in the USA'.⁴⁴ Similarly, he said:

I was brought here [to Turkey and in jail] so that Kurds could be captured and tamed. Soon Gülen was taken to Pennsylvania to do the same to the Turk-Islam movement. Consequently, these are two different operations with the same goal.⁴⁵

Such statements indicate that, as early as 2011, Kurdish politics (and maybe Turkish intelligence) established a close (negative) connection between the Cemaat and the peace/reconciliation process. This connection was hard to delineate, yet at a time when Cemaat was regarded as a government ally, identifying himself and Gülen as two actors who were politically consequential is an interesting note. After all, AKP was the governing party and Cemaat was well-known partner in government. Yet he was acknowledging Gülen and Cemaat operating outside the realm of democratic politics, as he had been as the leader of an armed organization. As a prelude to his subsequent remarks on the same topic, Öcalan very early on detached Cemaat from the AKP regime with which he was willing to negotiate. As far as Kurdish politicians were concerned, Cemaat was clearly a separate yet powerful force to reckon with.

Impediment to peace

When Öcalan draws on the narrative of the parallel state in his discussion with Kurdish leaders during the negotiations that started in February 2013, it is not clear what exactly he meant by the term. He referred to a parallel state that had 'penetrated into and taken over all government agencies except the MİT' and warned the BDP officials that a coupist mentality would attempt to sabotage the ongoing peace process.⁴⁶ He was adamant that the coup mentality of yesteryear had changed its quality but was still an ongoing challenge against AKP rule. It is hard to detect Cemaat as the parallel state that was plotting a coup against the AKP from such statements. Sometimes Öcalan uses the same term to identify North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), global imperial forces or other historical dynamics.⁴⁷ What is clear is that Öcalan was indicating early on that there were forces within the Turkish state that were working against the AKP's decision to broker a settlement with the PKK and the Kurdish mobilization.

At the March 2013 meeting, during an exchange with Selahattin Demirtaş who was then the co-chairperson of the BDP, Öcalan said that peace with the Kurds was not desirable to some within the AKP government who were close to the US:

Öcalan: 'The AKP and the inner circle of the prime minister are full of these people. All of them are of that thing in Washington. They want a fake peace by taking us into armed conflict.'

Demirtaş: 'Do you mean they are doing this in collaboration with Cemaat?'

Öcalan: 'Most certainly.'⁴⁸

Öcalan had by then become convinced that the AKP's former political ally, Cemaat, was constantly working against peace with Kurds and was the parallel state:

Within the military there were segments that were seeking to resolve the issue with us. They were liquidated during Ergenekon [arrests and trials of *laicist* old-guard] ... The US did this. Then they did the same thing with the KCK operations. All of these were done by the hands of Cemaat prosecutors and judges.⁴⁹

Öcalan at this point identified Cemaat, with its vast infiltration of the judiciary system, as the sole threat to the AKP's prospects in the peace process. He referred to the Ergenekon Operation and KCK operations as Cemaat's attempt to reorganize state power and hinder the peace process.

Öcalan later identified the competition between the AKP and Cemaat for the hearts and minds of the Kurdish population: 'They have been busy creating AKP-type Kurds, and now they have started creating Cemaat-type Kurds. They want us Kurds to kill, slaughter each other.'⁵⁰ This acknowledgement of diverse political and ideological orientations within the Kurdish community also reveals a political competition between not only AKP and the PKK but also Cemaat, as an entity outside the AKP rule. As one of the major competitors, it is clear that Kurdish politicians had deeper understanding of the crack between the governing allies than the general public. Over time, Öcalan became even less restrained in denouncing Cemaat as the main challenge to the peace negotiations. During the August 2013 meeting he stated:

There are Cemaat people who are effective in Chicago, Utah, and Brussels. They have financial operations. Their financial operations, terror lists, all operate from that same centre. They wanted to obstruct this process the way they did in Oslo. I have been patient all this time ... They are in a race to grab power. They submit this to the Prime Minister [Erdoğan]: when elimination is possible, why do you continue negotiating?⁵¹

He repeatedly suggested that the oppositional powers within the state organizations, i.e. the parallel state, tried to turn Erdoğan into Mursi, the jailed leader of the Muslim Brotherhood who won the first democratic election following the Tahrir uprising in Egypt.⁵² While Öcalan was resolute that '[T]he parallel state intervenes and destroys [all our attempts at peace]',⁵³ he also complained that '[the AKP] is deceived by the parallel state's suggestions to eliminate [the PKK]; they assume that we are helpless'.⁵⁴

He defined the parallel state as the one formation within the state that pushed violence during the negotiations to hollow out the essence of the process. Referring to the false pretences through which KCK and BDP people were arrested by what he saw as Cemaat-led special forces, he warned the government:

If you cannot prevent such tricks/games, you cannot stop the parallel state. Then how shall we continue with this (peace/resolution) process? If Fethullah Hodja has said those things that mean that they have already taken over the state. They can reach all the way here, any

minute now. They have the US, what do we have? End this parallel state and we shall bring down the guerrillas. While they are still there, what can we achieve?⁵⁵

In October 2013, he described Cemaat as a horrifying organization whose actions could be followed by focusing on certain cities,⁵⁶ by reading certain newspapers,⁵⁷ and by observing the actions of some high-level security officials, especially in Kurdish cities.⁵⁸ He stated that the operations against civilian organizations of Kurdish politics, KCKs, were not carried out by the MİT but by the Cemaat. Thus, Öcalan occasionally implied to his BDP/HDP collaborators that the head of the MİT is his negotiating partner in the process.⁵⁹ He pointed to the ‘difference between the parallel state and the official government’, suggesting that many atrocities against Kurdish activists and civilians were actually committed by the Cemaat:

Oh how I wish I could have written a book on this. The parallel state is a secret phenomenon. For example, the killing of Sakine [in Paris], the murder of Savaş Buldan, village evacuations, the market fire at Cizre, these recent operations [against KCKs] ... They might have infiltrated the PKK too, but less and less so over time.⁶⁰

He identified three actors in the negotiation process: the AKP administration, the parallel state, and the civilian Kurdish politicians and leaders, the KCKs, and urged the AKP to be clear in choosing its partner, ‘one seeking violence and the other seeking peace’.⁶¹ According to Öcalan there was a battle between a Fethullah-oriented (Cemaat) coup and a Kemalist-oriented (the ultra-nationalist old guard) coup.⁶²

During an undated meeting between 26 April 2014 and 26 June 2014 (most likely sometime in May of the same year), Öcalan again identifies Cemaat as the promoter of the violence:

Gülen’s Cemaat always wanted to pull us into war. Each KCK arrest was a call for war. These were calls inviting PKK to a horrible war. Emre Uslu [a well-known pro-Cemaat journalist] always did the same. They all did this. If we cannot identify and resolve those who pull both parties blindly into a war, we can never be successful. Now we are witnessing a new parallel formation ... A new parallel formation is being organized.⁶³

Almost 10 days before the Cemaat-AKP tension came out in public, the İmralı negotiators met again on 7 December 2013, when they identified this particular tension as the most important topic of the week. However, it was not addressed by the participants as they were more interested in the possible democratic role the HDP was about to play in the process.

Öcalan affirmed that the AKP and Kurdish politics has to ‘establish a common ground against the parallel state’.⁶⁴ Otherwise no one, including the PKK, can control the ensuing chaos at home and in the region. He reveals that he indicated this prospect to Hakan Fidan, the head of intelligence who had been closely involved in the process of negotiations. Similarly, during their January 2014 meeting, while the media was full of discussions of Cemaat, the team did not include this topic in its agenda. As in the previous meeting, they were mainly concerned with the prospects of the HDP, which was now understood as a legitimate and effective part of the political negotiations.

As the HDP becomes a critical political actor, during the February 2014 meeting they report to Öcalan that the head of the Intelligence Service, Fidan, had told them that assassinations against PKK leadership (in Paris) and Kurdish civilians (in Roboski)

during the negotiations were carried out by Cemaat and the nationalists that had already infiltrated the state structures.⁶⁵ Öcalan referred to the direct involvement of a member of the right wing ultra-nationalist party with the assassinations in Paris, directly implicating Cemaat.⁶⁶ The partnership negotiated between the intelligence service and Kurdish politicians was at this point not a matter of trust, but mutual suspicion.

AKP's incapacity to overcome Cemaat

By August 2013, Öcalan was frustrated with the AKP on domestic and regional fronts. By August 2013, he was beginning to realize that his position was being manipulated or used by the AKP regime. The ruling party was reluctant to deliver the legal guarantees he had been demanding and inclining towards positions that were against the interests of the Kurds in Kobane, Syria.⁶⁷ These two issues are undisputedly the most serious concerns of Kurdish politics. On several occasions, he declares that he was not 'an instrument' in the hands of the government, and that his leadership is supposed to be a strategic one and not to be a matter of manipulation.⁶⁸ He claimed his leadership to key to the only rational, strategic movements to end the armed conflict and create a peaceful resolution affirming the AKP's own power against all other forces challenging this democratically elected party.⁶⁹ He considered his role essential and critical for bringing peace while eliminating the impact of Cemaat infiltration within the government and state structures. According to him, Erdoğan's government was strategically mistaken in its regional and domestic strategies by failing to ally itself with Kurdish politics. Regionally, in Syria, it was supporting Jihadists and not Kurds. And domestically, it was submitting to the violence-seeking demands of Cemaat, rather than fulfilling his demands for reformed legislation to end violence.⁷⁰

Öcalan was manifestly aware that the AKP government's intention was not to share power or reorganize/reform the state as equal partners with the PKK. As he stated his frustration⁷¹ he repeatedly decried a lack of proper legislation and legal guarantees to establish peace.⁷² In March 2014, he resolutely reiterated that Cemaat was the force working against stopping the violence and questioning the AKP's competence in preventing it, saying, 'Cemaat is the one that operates the parallel state; they are forcing [us] towards the inevitability of violence'.⁷³

He thus proclaimed that Kurdish politics had failed to distance Erdoğan from Cemaat:

I told him that there is a dynamic motion towards a coup, use caution, protect yourself, there is a big game here. History has proven me correct. That coup was prevented by this table here. Now, they fully seized the Prime Minister, attaching him [to their own interests]. They most recently wanted the directorship of the intelligence community and the Kurdistan Office. They wanted to fully capture and control the state. They were already controlling the judiciary, police, and soccer clubs. Why and how did this happen? Because the MİT was the team that was carrying on negotiations with us for the last five years. If they [the Cemaat] had been successful, if Hodja [Gülen] landed down in Ankara like Khomeini did, there was going to be a dark fascism just like in Iran, finishing off all the opposition, as in Iran.⁷⁴

In the April 2014 meeting, Öcalan was exasperated over a release of some recordings of conversations he had with other inmates: ‘What is this now? Is this [done by] the Cemaat, or the other deep state? I cannot tell the difference anymore ... I don’t think the Prime Minister [Erdoğan] or Mr. Fidan are capable of protecting themselves either; they are being recorded as well’.⁷⁵ By then, fragmented and competing power blocs within the Turkish state posing challenges to the AKP administration seemed to be established as a common concern of all parties involved in negotiations.

During the last meeting at İmralı Prison on 14 March 2015, Öcalan, in his characteristically self-promoting manner, elucidates his role and the AKP’s close connections with Cemaat:

If we follow the AKP’s lead, the ensuing developments would destroy the AKP. When we started talking about Cemaat here, when Cemaat was counting its days for a coup, I had said that I took them very seriously. When there was no word of things like the parallel formations, I had mentioned it here. Those were the days when Erdoğan was best friends forever with Cemaat ... Those were the days when the AKP was not allowing anyone to speak ill of its ally. That was why I was pushing. Because these were not only organized within the police; they control ten percent of the military ... My guess is that the organized force within the military is covering itself up very well. Such powers are actively operating and they are going to use this force. I made the same point when I was meeting with the government officials here. The AKP was in alliance with them for ten years. They are the ones who did the KCK arrests and other such things.⁷⁶

Here he again positions himself as the AKP’s only hope against a coup and warns others; ‘Selahattin [Demirtaş] and the HDP cannot be instruments of Cemaat. We are not subjective agents or Gülen’s men; we shall not be instrumentalized and manipulated by them’.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The claim that AKP’s former partner Cemaat was a threat to democracy and impediment to non-violence was continuously expressed by the Kurdish politicians, long before it was publicized by the AKP regime, and it proved to be consequential for the polity in Turkey after the July 2016 coup attempt. The only available documents of the 10 years of secret and semi-public peace/resolution negotiations between Kurdish politicians, PKK and the Turkish states reveal the spectre of Cemaat hanging over the peace/resolution process. The actual role of Cemaat or the role of its split from the AKP on the breakdown of the peace/resolution process remains hard to detect with the materials at hand. However, this article establishes that a performative claim-making discourse framing Cemaat as an impediment to peace, a threat to democracy and a promoter of violence was widely used by Kurdish politicians, and most likely Turkish intelligence officers since they were privy to all the Kurdish documents and minutes, long before there was ever any public discussion about the collapse of the power bloc in Turkey. Certainly, it is impossible to know for sure if the concept of Cemaat as an impediment was being deployed as a bargaining chip while disarmament was negotiated or if there truly was a process of re-entrenchment within the power blocs of the Turkish state. What is clear is that long before the public vilification of Cemaat by the AKP administration, the Kurdish leadership and Kurdish publics themselves were fully

aware of the threat it was posing to the peace process. This was most evident in the Roboski attack on innocent civilians in December 2011, in the aftermath of the assassination of the cofounders of the PKK in Paris in January 2013,⁷⁸ and particularly in the recurrent arrests of civilian Kurdish politicians as PKK collaborators. Most certainly, all of these incidents are the direct responsibility of the Turkish state. However, the governing party AKP claimed and continues to claim that these atrocities were committed by a parallel state which had infiltrated government structures and the İmralı minutes attest to that point. Whether or not Cemaat was the stick to the AKP's carrot at the time of the peace negotiations, the spectre of Cemaat pointed to the omnipresence of state violence during peace talks that were seeking a resolution.

The reason why Kurdish politicians were already alert and vigilant about Cemaat's role may also have had to do with the fact that while the rest of Turkish society experienced this Gülenist religious community as a civil society organization and its leaders as legitimate government allies, Kurds were already experiencing its presence within the security forces as a source of violence. This was becoming clearer with the KCK operations since 2009 and the local population's distrust of certain security chiefs in the region. In addition, its attempts to organize civil society groups competing with those sympathetic to the PKK, or at least with Kurdish autonomous politics, was part of a well-known, well-recognized element of the Turkish state's traditional policies in the region. In that sense, it is not surprising that Kurdish politicians were already alert about the Cemaat, long before the Turkish public was.

As became evident to Kurdish politicians a couple of months into the İmralı negotiations, the AKP's goal was not necessarily to achieve a state of peace but merely find a resolution towards the disarmament of the PKK. While insisting on legal reforms, Kurdish politicians were at least trying to establish a state of non-violence. Such negotiations exposed an even greater crack within the Turkish state. In the process, the AKP lost its most reliable ally, and Kurdish and Turkish populations in Turkey missed their opportunity for a peaceful co-existence. Now, in addition to Öcalan, other captive PKK members and KCK civilians, many HDP leaders including Demirtaş are in jail following a putsch that is said to have been organized by the Gülenist former ally and later enemy number one of AKP rule. Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs and were imprisoned for being associates of the Cemaat, in addition to a comparatively small yet vocal group of individuals known as Academics for Peace whose opposition to both the AKP regime and Cemaat is well established. Domestically and regionally violence continues, as any likelihood of peace or at least non-violence has disappeared for the foreseeable future since all armed actors are heavily involved with and invested in the regional wars in Syria and Iraq.

Notes

1. 'Bir Millet Aşkı: AK Parti sergisi açıldı' [Love of a nation: the AKP exhibition is now open], *Anadolu Ajansı*, 14 August 2007 <<http://aa.com.tr/tr/politika/bir-millet-aski-ak-parti-sergisi-acildi/884335>> (accessed 2 February 2018). The original title of the exhibition is translated by the author.
2. While the officers and media outlets of the AKP called these negotiations a 'resolution process', many among the Kurds and progressive sections of the Turks were referring to it

as a ‘peace process’. Clearly, different segments of the state and society had different expectations, as nationalists on both left and right constantly attacked these ongoing negotiations.

3. <https://fgulen.com/images/en-EN/what_went_wrong_with_turkey.pdf> (accessed 9 March 2018).
4. D. McAdam, S. Tarrow and C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
5. C. Tilly and S. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2007, p. 12.
6. D. McAdam, S. Tarrow and C. Tilly, ‘Comparative perspectives on contentious politics’, in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (eds), *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure: Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 260–290.
7. H. Taş, ‘A history of Turkey’s AKP–Gülen conflict’, *Mediterranean Politics*, online 16 May 2017. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2017.1328766>>
8. In the absence of other reliable sources, these volumes are the only available documentation of the peace/resolution process. The minutes of the negotiations were published in Turkish in November 2015, by Mesopotamienverlag und Vertriebs GmbH, entitled ‘Demokratik Kurtuluş ve Özgür Yaşamı İnşa: İmralı Notları’ [Democratic emancipation and construction of freedom: notes from İmralı]. The text also exists online. All discussions in this essay are from the actual volume authored by A. Öcalan. The adopted resolutions of the Oslo negotiations are also published by the same publishing house in August 2017, entitled ‘2005–2015 Türkiye-PKK görüşmeleri’ [2005–2015 Turkey-PKK negotiations] by Ahmed Dicle. Other than some leaked information to the press, the Turkish government does not publicize its own version of events.
9. See H. Yavuz and J. Esposito (eds), *Turkish Islam and the Secular State*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 2003; H. R. Ebyah, *The Gülen Movement: A Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement Rooted in Moderate Islam*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2010; H. Yavuz, *Towards an Islamic Enlightenment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013; D. Tittensor, *The House of Service: The Gülen Movement and Islam’s Third Way*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014; P. Valkenberg, *Renewing Islam by Service*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 2015.
10. S. Cingilloğlu, *The Gülen Movement: Transformative Social Change*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2017.
11. J. D. Hendrick, *Gülen: Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World*, New York University Press, New York, 2014. C. Tee, *The Gülen Movement in Turkey: The Politics of Islam, Science and Modernity*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2016.
12. See R. Çakır and S. Sakallı, *100 Soruda Erdoğan–Gülen Savaşı* [Erdoğan–Gülen conflict in 100 questions], Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014, p. 48.
13. See M. Kalyoncu, *A Civilian Response to Ethno-Religious Conflict: The Gülen Movement in Southeast Turkey*, The Light Publishing, Somerset, NJ, 2008.
14. ‘Buraya Gelip Yaptıklarının Hesabını Verecekler’ [They will return and shall be accountable], *Anadolu Ajansı*, 12 August 2015 <<http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/buraya-gelip-yaptiklarinin-hesabiniverecekler/17220?amp=1>> (accessed 2 February 2018).
15. The *Communist Manifesto* famously opens with the image of communism as a spectre that was haunting Europe and continues, ‘All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre’. While no one could claim any similarity between communism and Cemaat, its shadow/ghost/phansm was hauntingly present during the peace/reconciliation process and at times may have amounted to more than a shadow. This article cannot pinpoint the actual and effective power of that presence, but lays out the omnipresence of the shadow of this former political ally. I use the term ‘spectre’ to also indicate the performative nature of these utterances which refer to acts, groups, networks and relationship that are not easily discernible, politically identifiable and legally established.

16. See G. Yıldız, 'Ergenekon: the court case that changed Turkey', *BBC*, 5 August, 2013 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23581891>>, among other reporting; or an assessment of the trials from humans rights and rule of law perspectives see E. Sinclair-Webb, 'Ergenekon trial', *HRW*, 6 August 2013 <<https://www.hrw.org/tag/ergenekon-trial>>. As the crack between the former allies became antagonistic, all these cases were reversed and formerly convicted people were released: B. Kayaoğlu, 'Turkey's last Ergenekon trial ends as all defendants acquitted', E. Toksabay, G. Jones, 'Turkish 'Coup' convicts freed amid political turmoil', *Reuters*, 10 March 2014 <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ergenekon/turkish-coup-convicts-freed-amid-political-turmoil-idUSBREA291GB20140310>> (accessed 2 August 2018).
17. For leaked newspaper articles see 'PKK İlk Kez Açıkladı: Oslo da Neler Oldu: [PKK declared for the first time: what happened in Oslo?]', *Akşam*, 24 April 2013 <<http://www.aksam.com.tr/siyaset/pkk-ilk-kez-acikladiosloda-neler-odu/haber-199057>> (accessed 2 February 2018), or Y. Oğur, 'Bir Sızıntı Hikayesi [The story of a leak]', *Türkiye*, 2 February 2015 <<http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/yildiray-ogur/584624.aspx>> (accessed 2 February 2017). The term 'leak' here may also be referencing the magazine published by supporters of F. Gülen in early 1980s which was called Sızıntı, because in this article Oğur implies that the negotiations were leaked by the Gülen movement. See C. Kutschera, 'The secret Oslo talks that might have brought peace to Turkey', *Middle East Magazine*, December 2012 <<https://www.chris-kutschera.com/A/Oslo>> (accessed 2 February 2018); J. Hess, 'Turkey's talks with PKK', *Foreign Policy*, 8 January 2013 <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/08/turkeys-pkk-talks/>> (accessed 2 February 2018).
18. There were a number of books written about the danger Cemaat was posing to democratic governance in Turkey, such as by Hanefi Avcı, a former security chief, known for his brutal treatments of left-wing detainees, or by presently imprisoned leftist journalist Ahmet Şık, but none of them at the time identified a crack within the ruling power bloc. Şık was jailed in 2011 by Gülenist prosecutors and in the post-2016 coup attempt he was re-imprisoned by the AKP's emergency rule. Steadfast laicist nationalist media never took up these views as a crack within the ruling bloc in their critique of all forms and versions of political Islam.
19. The corruption revelations were a response to the AKP's attempt to close down private tutoring/prep schools mostly run by Cemaat. The AKP was most likely trying to curb the revenues of Cemaat, which was challenging its policy directions, especially with respect to Kurdish politics. For an account of the conflict around prep schools, see M. J. Thalji, 'Prep schools, elections and AKP-Gülen clashes', *Al-Jazeera Center for Studies*, 17 April 2014 <<http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2014/01/2014130112636877115.html>> (accessed 2 February 2018) or A. Wordsworth, 'Falling out between allies exposes Turkish PM's corruption problem', *National Post*, 17 January 2014 <<http://nationalpost.com/opinion/falling-out-between-allies-exposes-turkish-pms-corruption-problem>> (accessed 2 February 2018). Note that at the time of the reporting there is a brief mentioning of a correlation between the negotiations with the Kurds and the closing of the prep schools. But no analysis of a direct link could be detected.
20. Turkey: The Erdogan-Gülen Showdown', *Financial Times*, 18 March 2014, <<https://www.ft.com/content/1b1d4ea0-ab8e-11e3-8cae-00144feab7de>> (accessed 2 August 2018)
21. C. Güneş and W. Zeydanlıoğlu, 'Introduction', in C. Güneş and W. Zeydanlıoğlu (eds), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation*, Routledge, London, 2014.
22. C. Çiçek, "The pro-Islamic Challenge for the Kurdish Movement." *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2013, pp. 159–163. and 'HDP lost votes following a campaign of fear against Kurdish voters', *Nationalia*, 2 November 2015 <<http://www.nationalia.info/new/10639/hdp-lost-votes-following-a-campaign-of-fear-against-kurdish-voters>> (accessed 2 February 2018).

23. See S. Demirtaş, 'Kurdish peace process, Middle East and radical democracy', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 13(4), 2015, pp. 27–33.
24. E. B. Bezci, 'Turkey's Kurdish peace process and the third eye', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 13(4), 2015, pp. 117–125; B. B. Özpek, *The Peace Process between Turkey and The Kurds*, Routledge, London, 2018.
25. C. Çiçek, *Kurds of Turkey: National, Religious and Economic Identities*, I. B. Taurus, London, 2017.
26. Özpek, op. cit., p. 59.
27. M. Akyol, 'Is Gülen Movement against peace with PKK?', *Al Monitor*, 22 May 2013 <<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/gulen-movement-peace-process-pkk.html>> (accessed 2 February 2018). Because it is effectively impossible to access archives of pro-Cemaat newspapers or pro-Cemaat writers online or find hard copies since the June 2016 coup attempt, a similar survey on the Cemaat's actual position on the peace/reconciliation process cannot be undertaken.
28. Dicle, op. cit., p. 26.
29. A. Kadioğlu, 'The Oslo talks: revealing the Turkish government's secret negotiations with the PKK', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, posted online 24 January 2018. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1430658>>
30. The ensuing negotiations took place in Oslo on 22–24 May, 1–3 July, 13–14 September in 2009; 2–3 May, 19–20 August and again towards the end of August (not dated ibid., p. 142) in 2010; January (not dated ibid., p. 143), 12–13 May and 5 July in 2011. During these negotiations six memoranda of understanding were produced and signed by the parties.
31. 2010, 2/17 law # 5952. The law was later fortified with law # 6551: 'law to end terror and fortify national unity'; amendments to the Criminal Procedures and Penal Code in 2014, and finally legislation amending the law # 6638 'Security Package: Legal Package to Protect Freedoms' in 2015. While the underlying intentions of the law #5952 was clearly establishing a civilian oversight, the later legislations aimed to criminalize all forms of opposition including the ones based on ethnic strife.
32. 2010, 2/17 law # 5952. The law was later fortified with law # 6551: 'law to end terror and fortify national unity'; amendments to the Criminal Procedures and Penal Code in 2014, and finally legislation amending the law # 6638 'Security Package: Legal Package to Protect Freedoms' in 2015. While the underlying intentions of the law #5952 was clearly establishing a civilian oversight, the later legislations aimed to criminalize all forms of opposition including the ones based on ethnic strife.
33. The PKK has declared a series of truces in 1993, 1995, 1998, 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2011. In addition, Öcalan called the PKK fighters outside the borders of Turkey, effectively positioning them in Kandil, Iraq and eventually in Rojava, Syria in 1999.
34. Dicle, op. cit., p. 85. Then MİT Director Emre Taner is known to be the initiator of the negotiations with the Kurds. The leading Turkish negotiator, Afet Güneş, who considered herself his successor, by contrast said: 'Bombs are exploding in Turkey. There is a terror issue here. The goal and priority of Turkey is to end this terror.' Afet Güneş was never promoted and instead replaced by Hakan Fidan who actually participated in and presided over the last few Oslo negotiations and all of the İmralı meetings. Hakan Fidan is known to be very close to Erdoğan and was the first target of Gülenists prosecutors who attempted to build a case against the government in 2011.
35. 'Turkey admits 35 civilian deaths near Kurdish village,' 29 December 2011 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16352388>> (accessed 2 February 2017).
36. Z. Abu-Rish, 'Turkish politics, Kurdish rights, and the KCK operations', *Jadaliyya* 3 November, 2011 <<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3047/turkish-politics-kurdish-rights-and-the-kck-operat>> (accessed 2 February 2017). KCK operations are the occasional yet targeted rounding up and arrests of thousands of civilian Kurdish officials as PKK collaborators since 2009. Turkey's security forces and judicial system often treated them as urban infiltration of the PKK itself.

37. Dicle, op. cit., pp. 81, 87. What those factions might be was not clarified in the documents as of the first Oslo meetings.
38. Ibid., p. 112. Following the July 2016 coup attempt, all the indictments prepared by Gülenist prosecutors were dismissed as they themselves were arrested and imprisoned. However, the same prosecutors' cases against Kurdish civilians in these 'KCK operations' were not closed as they are still going on as open cases. It is Dicle's contention that, based on Erdoğan's speeches around that time, AKP and Gülenist prosecutors were working in cooperation at the time.
39. Democratic Society Party (DTP) converted into Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). BDP eventually became Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in the course of series of party closing cases against Kurdish political parties. See also Demirtaş, 'Kurdish peace process', op. cit.
40. See the 2011 report by the European Commission <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/tr_rapport_2011_en.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2017).
41. The BDP was a party centred on Kurdish interests, which had effective municipal representation in Kurdish towns and cities. It gave birth to the HDP to reach out to a larger Turkish population with a demand of peace enhanced with progressive rights and freedoms for all. The now-jailed co-leader of the HDP, Demirtaş, was originally the leader of the BDP. During the Gezi Protests that shook entire country in the summer of 2013 the BDP's possible collaboration and forging of alliances with the Turkish protestors and progressives became a highly controversial public debate in the Turkish media and during the negotiations in İmralı. Consequently; a new political party, the HDP, which would pursue the parliamentary prerequisites of the Peace Process and embrace the progressive segments of the Turkish population was decided to be formed during the succeeding meetings in İmralı. Almost all of the members of the negotiation team at İmralı, who were members of BDP, became officers of the new party, effectively collaborating with the non-nationalist Turkish left. Most of these BDP/HDP officers are presently imprisoned under the repressive measures of the State of Emergency regime established in the aftermath of the 2016 coup.
42. In the absence of a quantitative analyses of the texts, I can claim that the list follows the list of importance of these topics. Other than these, the parties also discussed, to a lesser extent, the role of Turkish progressives, and the influence of religion, in addition to Öcalan's musings on historical topics.
43. A. Öcalan, 'Hakikat Komisyonu Marta Kadar Kurulmalı' [The Truth Commission has to be created by March], *Bianet*, 6 December 2010.
44. Öcalan, 'Demokratik Kurtuluş', op. cit., p. 20.<Q10/>
45. Ibid., p. 41.
46. Ibid., p. 17.
47. Ibid., p. 107. However, it should be noted that he said 'Let me clarify this parallel state thing: Ever since Turkey has become a NATO member, they have been working across three distinct lobbies'. It seems that, at this point, the parallel state is understood as being infiltrated by Cemaat. Since 15 July 2016, the AKP regime has referred to only Cemaat, as the parallel state.
48. Ibid., p. 90.
49. Ibid., p. 108.
50. Ibid., p. 110.
51. Ibid., p. 123.
52. Ibid., pp. 125–130.
53. Ibid., p. 126.
54. Ibid., p. 127.
55. Ibid., p. 145.
56. Ibid., p. 160. Urfa is identified as one.

57. He singles out *Taraf* (a left-liberal) and *Zaman* (intellectual religious) papers (ibid., p. 154); both of these were banned after 15 July 2016 and it is still not possible to access their digital archives. He also names especially two journalists, Emre Uslu and Mehmet Baransu, who are as of now self-exiled and in jail, respectively.
58. Specifically, Diyarbakır and Siirt and many drug operations carried out by local security forces.
59. Öcalan, 'Demokratik Kurtuluş', op. cit., p. 155.
60. Ibid., p. 153.
61. Ibid., p. 156.
62. Ibid., pp. 177–180.
63. Ibid., p. 305.
64. Ibid., p. 198.
65. Ibid., p. 231.
66. Ibid., p. 233.
67. For the significance of anti-ISIS Kurdish fighters in Syria, see H. Allsopp, *The Kurds of Syria: Political Parties and Identity in the Middle East*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2015.
68. Öcalan, 'Demokratik Kurtuluş', op. cit., pp. 124 and 126, among others.
69. Ibid., p. 127.
70. Ibid., pp. 182–184.
71. Ibid., pp. 139–141.
72. Ibid., p. 143.
73. Ibid., p. 145.
74. Ibid., pp. 264–265.
75. Ibid., p. 274.
76. Ibid., p. 443.
77. Ibid., p. 445.
78. 'Kurdish PKK co-founder Sakine Cansiz shot dead in Paris', *BBC News*, 10 January 2013 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20968375>> (accessed 2 February 2017).
79. H. Pamuk, 'Divided loyalties as Kurds hold key to Turkish election', *Reuters*, 4 June 2015. <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-tribes/divided-loyalties-as-kurds-hold-key-to-turkish-election-idUSKBN0OK1ZW20150604>> (accessed 2 August 2018).
80. G. Akdag, *Ethnicity and Elections in Turkey: Party Politics and Mobilization of Swing Voters*, Routledge, New York, 2015.

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