

## PAPER DETAILS

TITLE: The Turkish Republic at 75 Years. Progress - Development - Change

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by Kevin Reinhart. Tayob manages to draw in various contemporary scholarly viewpoints alongside citations from the early works of the Muslim thinkers to try and balance different approaches to the religious issue in question. However, the difficulty he faces is fundamentally doing justice to the details of any one particular intellectual discipline. In an introductory work such as this, he merits praise for his attempts to portray the variety of interpretation on specific issues both within the ideological and historical context. However, in trying to say too much, certain statements present a gloss over the actual complexities of a subject matter. For example, he quotes the Qur'an 9:28, 'polytheists are impure,' as the reason why the Sunnis consider non-Muslims to be spiritually impure (p. 43). He does not add that this verse relates specifically to the bar on non-Muslims from entering the sacred mosque of Mecca, nor does he explain that in actual fact, the majority of legal texts go to some lengths in claiming that non-Muslims are not biologically impure. Tayob does not explain that the texts distinguish between biological impurity as opposed to spiritual impurity even though he concedes that regarding non-Muslims, there is no notion of requiring ritual purification.

In the final chapter, Tayob looks at the impact of globalisation and its effects on Muslims carving out new meanings and identities for themselves. Tayob's thesis is fundamentally that despite scientific advancement and increasing secularization, religion did not die out. Infact as he puts it, 'freedom has produced brilliant creativity, but also left a trail of corruption, greed and depravity not unlike that exhibited in the name of gods and kings.' (141). It is in this world that religion has begun to reassert itself. Tayob explores the ideas of three prominent Muslim thinkers, Fazlur Rahman, Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi and Seyyid Hossein Nasr who have all put forward views on how Islam should approach the challenges of modern society. His own conclusion seems to be that Islam has become a highly symbolised religion, but it must be cognisant of realising itself in the global village and take some heed of the attitudes of the early Sufi masters.

This is by all accounts an interesting and eloquent introductory work on Islam. It is both informative and accessible to the student as well as the general reader and definitely deserves a place on undergraduate reading lists.

Mona Siddiqui

### **The Turkish Republic at 75 Years. Progress-Development-Change**

David Shankland (ed.)

The Eothen Press, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire 1999, pp. 248.

Leading Turkish and British experts and a distinguished audience met in London in 1999 to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic. The former correspondent of the Financial Times in Ankara David Barchard, the Chief

Executive of the Garanti Bankasi Akin Öngör, Atatürk's biographer Andrew Mango, Professor Sina Akşin, University of Ankara, Professor Clement Dodd and Professor William Hale, both School of Oriental and African Studies in London and Professor Norman Stone, Bilkent University, Ankara were invited to give papers and comments on economic, social and cultural transformations in Turkey since 1923. His Excellency Mr. Özdem Sanberk, then Turkish Ambassador in London and David Shankland, Social Anthropologist invited the speakers and Sir Michael Quinlan, Ministry of Defence, gave the opening address.

I mention them all because it seems that it was as important who was giving a talk there as on what they were actually talking. Anthropologists, political scientists, historians, bankers and journalists guaranteed a multi-disciplinary but not too academic approach, an atmosphere rather celebratory than critical.

Almost every contributor emphasizes economic growth as well as enormous social and cultural changes, which undoubtedly have taken place during the last 75 years in Turkey. David Barchard talks about the new role of satellite TV, mobile phones, the Internet or the megalopolis Istanbul to describe Turkey's successful process of modernization. Mango, Akşin and Öngür celebrate Atatürk's legacy as the foundation stone of political, social and economic success. Shankland dedicates his presentation to the memory of his friend and teacher Paul Stirling taking up Stirling's anthropological work on rural change and labor migration. Clement Dodd offers a historical perspective on the Cyprus issue including British involvement and possible strategies for the future. William Hale concentrates on one of the least studied aspects of Turkey's modern history, the domestic formation of foreign policy. The book raises interesting questions about Turkey's position in the new global scene, about the popularity of Japan among Islamists in Turkey, about the Turkish "civilizational project" in the 1930s and about the role of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for the European Union.

The conference, of course, was Turkey's birthday party in the UK, and the talks had to be diplomatic and supportive. But these conference proceedings of very important (male) persons reveal several doubtful aspects. Referring to the population growth, Mango speaks of 63 million "Muslim Turks", as if there was no single other religious or ethnic group in this country. He, like Akşin and Barchard, stresses Atatürk's ability to pursue the objective defined as "peace at home and peace in the world", as if there was no domestic conflicts. Turkish nationalism was characterized as religious in its beginning and as ethnic in its second wave during the last decades, but it was not, as classified by Mango, an example of a nationalism without destructive force. It seems that knowledge about British theory on nationalism got caught up in politeness during this conference.

However successful Turkey has been within the past 75 years and whatever the agenda of this meeting was (to support Turkey on its way to the European Union, to improve Turkey's image within Britain, to attract international investment) many

contributions are missing a distinct claim for further change in Turkey. Though every village has a school, every household has a television set and every large city has a university, access to and success through higher education depend to a great extent on financial background. Though there is an enormous economic growth, inflation rates and IMF's policy are a threat to certain social strata. And, last but not least, the conference did not focus on Turkey's human and minority rights issues. But who if not these distinguished intellectuals should address questions of human rights and domestic conflicts?

Sabine Strasser

### **Rise of the Young Turks: Politics, The Military and Ottoman Collapse**

Naim Turfan

I. B. Tauris, London 2000, pp. xx+490.

In recent years there has been a growing interest among Middle Eastern historians and social scientists to understand the role of the young Turks in the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a modern state. This trend is partly perpetuated by the fact that the Young Turks dominated politics in the final years of the Empire. One of the most important elements in their supremacy was the Party's hold over the country. The book under review is a welcome addition to the ever-increasing number of studies on late-Ottoman history as well as a tribute to a lifetime's efforts by the late M. Naim Turfan.

The strength of the study lies not only in its deep analysis and illuminating evaluation but also in the variety of sources in many languages and archives. Dr. Turfan uses sources from different countries which are mostly inaccessible to other researchers. The book starts with a prologue and consists of four chapters and an epilogue. Part One, entitled "On military politics", which includes Chapter One, offers a theoretical framework discussing in depth the nature of power politics and the military as a key political institution. Concerning the role of the military, the author rightly says that "there is no escaping the admission that the political resources available to the military are the sources of its power" (p. 5). Moreover, he argues that the military is an influential institution which may ultimately determine the distribution of political power.

The degree to which the Ottoman army fits into this evaluation is the subject of Chapter Two, where the rise of the military as an organised force in the formative period of the Ottoman state is analysed. Here Dr. Turfan informs his readers of the military tradition in the Ottoman Empire and assesses its role in the state apparatus as well as in shaping Ottoman society. The army, according to Dr. Turfan, had always been one of the chief actors in Ottoman history and initiated all innovations. He argues that "there has always been a military compound in every significant historical