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Towards a Social History of Modern Turkey - Essays in Theory and Practice. Gavin D. Brockett, (ed.) İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2011. p/bk 184 pp. ISBN 978-605-4326-42-6. Price TL 40.

A scholar rightly observed that "most history in the past was written for the glorification of, and perhaps for the practical use of, rulers. Indeed, certain kinds of it still have this function." Turkish history was, and in many respects, still is, a prime example. The present volume is the outcome of a scholarly discussion that started as early as in 2005 in the United States, aiming to challenge the dominant, state-sponsored, "bottom-up" historical narrative of the Turkish Republic. By doing so, the authors chose a relatively new field in Turkish studies, that of social history. All authors of the book base their analysis around the people in order to provide new interpretations and promote new aspects of Turkish history.

Gavin D. Brockett, the editor of the book, presents a lengthy introduction - and the last essay in the volume - observing the field of social history and its status in the wider Middle East, and rightly noting that it remains unexplored in the case of twentieth century Turkey. All contributors explore the social dimension of the establishment of the nation-state, but since they presented their work elsewhere, the focus is on how and what kind of difficulties academics face as they pursue analysis of Turkish social history (32).

For example, the essay by Ryan Gingeras, although focusing on the period of the Turkish War of Independence *(Kurtuluş Savaşı* or *İstiklal Harbi)* and the "South Marmara" region (as the author calls the Ottoman districts of Bursa, Çanakkale, Balıkesir, Kocaeli and Sakarya) does not follow a classic approach. Making use of four archival sources, in the Republic of Turkey, England and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and using the Mexican Revolution for comparative perspective, the author attempts to draw similarities between the two cases, and thus "de-Turkify" Anatolia's past, which generally has been treated by academics as a monolithic whole. In order to do so, Gingeras chooses to focus on how and in what respect paramilitaries, bandits, and other violent elements of the region, mainly from the influential Albanian and Circassian diasporas, influenced Turkish history.

Meltem Türkoz, on the other hand, chooses one of the reforms introduced by Atatürk, and notably, that of the surname legislation in

the Turkish Republic in June 1934. She discusses the ways the law was accepted by the people, and perhaps, more importantly, how the people remember it. The author conducted sixty interviews of elderly men and women, and let history-telling illustrate the processes undergone by the people to show that the application of the law was far from consistent. The examples to which the author refers, based on her interviews, highlight the restrictions imposed by the state upon certain surnames that were not considered to demonstrate Turkishness.

Kathryn Libal deals with the efforts of the state to alter gender and family roles. Drawing upon newspapers and other serial publications, as well as a small number of published memoirs and state archives, the author attempts to demonstrate the "existence of competing visions for promoting population growth and women's reproduction as well as for realizing 'children's rights' and securing child welfare" (87). She uses the material mentioned above to promote and analyze discourses, as does Faith Childress in the subsequent essay, where she stresses the importance of foreign archives as providing extra research resources for an understanding of Turkish history.

In her research, Childress treats mid-level élites as part of Turkish social history. Specifically, the author focuses on school records, and the lives and careers of employees as her main archival material in order to demonstrate how teachers and learners, who were the first recipients of the Kemalist reforms, experienced educational policies. Foreign institutions such as the American Collegiate Institute (ACI), and the material they possess provide invaluable treasure for Turkish social historians. However, as the author mentions, the records are hard to locate and use in the absence of a centralized archive.

The concluding essay by Gavin D. Brockett draws on provincial newspapers as a primary source of social historical material. Such publications after 1945 marked a watershed in Turkish printing culture and played a significant role in incorporating the opinions and concerns of the vast majority of the people who lived in "the periphery." Thus, provincial newspapers acquire great importance as a means to understand the popular identification with "the nation" (125). These publications, Brockett argues, offer unique insight into the life in the hinterland and

demonstrate how and in what respect the people there participated in their own history.

The volume presents a more-than-welcome contribution to the uncharted field of Turkish social history. All essayists present their own personal accounts of the research difficulties they experienced, as well as the fascination of exploring hitherto undiscovered material. However, the merits of social history are, as is made obvious by the findings of the articles, enormous, for they complete the picture of the Turkish Republic, which is often presented as the work of just one man and his inner circle. As the editor of the book rightly observes, social history explores the actual implementation and application of rewforms, and for this purpose, the present study comprises an indispensable tool to researchers who wish to learn the difficulties of pursuing such a task.

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