*Revival of Islam in Turkey in the 1950s through the Reports of American Diplomats.* Rıfat N. Bali, ed. İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2010. p/bk 112 pp. ISBN 978-605-4326-41-9. Price TL 50.00

Rifat N. Bali offers us another book with three important reports of American diplomats stationed in Turkey at the time of their writing. The diplomats express their worries and concerns on the revival of Islam and what they noted as reactionary Islam and opposition to secularism following the Democrat Party (DP) victory, and the relative relaxation of the Kemalist reforms. The present volume handles exactly these concerns as filed in 1951, 1956 and 1958 by the respective American Consuls General stationed in Turkey during the 1950s.

The 1951 report by Charles W. Lewis, Jr., states an urgency "for a clear-cut definition of the nature, purport and scope of the secularist policies advocated and implemented" (12). The conciliatory measures of the DP administration, the diplomat deems, were not enough to stem the repression of religion by past Kemalist administration policies; the stifled sentiments of the faithful emerged "to create a problem with quite weighty political and social implications" (14). Religiosity and the strong loyalty and attachment to it, is noted among the unenlightened people (15) by the statesman, who refers to the illiterate rural population, a view of Turkey's peasant population common to all three reports. The diplomat also advises wariness of the DP administration, which "has never formally pledged preservation of the Kemalist reforms in toto" (16), while the report ends with a number of suggestions, such as the intensification of public education, in order to tame the opposition to secularism and prevent the right of freedom of religion from standing in the way of progress (17).

The second report, dated 27 February 1956, is a commentary by American Consul General Katherine W. Bracken, on a lengthy, unpublished article by Erol Güney, the Turkey correspondent for Agence France-Presse (AFP). According to Güney, the diplomat states, Turkey is not facing a danger from "reactionary religious groups sufficient to cause a change in national policies," although there are issues within the religious realm that "constitute sources of social instability" (22) -- such as, for example, the illegal teaching of religion (58-64). Throughout the article, it becomes apparent that the author maintains that the Kemalist reforms were not

put into effect properly, thus leaving a vacuum. For example, although institutions for training the Muslim religious leaders were dissolved, they were never replaced with anything to fill that gap, while the clergy was, in effect, discredited and underpaid (39-44, 58-61) -- all of which left the doors open to social instability. Religious reaction *(irtica)*, actually, springs from the "low caliber of new recruits" and because of the State's ill-guided training of religious leaders (27). Güney, much like the General Consul reporting back in 1951, puts great emphasis on the country's illiterate peasant population, who visualize religion and the state as one. However, Güney comments that for all their religious devoutness, the people's actions are defined by the reality of their conditions, as defined by economic necessity (87).

The third and final dispatch in the volume accompanies and contests a survey of the religious situation in Turkey (97), that finds "a tendency to relax into provincialism" (104), a view not shared by the Embassy, which reports "a genuine revival of the power of organized religion" (94). Moreover, "the future of Turkey [...] is in danger and most of the blame for this could be attributed to the attitude of the Democrat Party towards this problem" (96, 102). The author of the survey, John Goodyear, concludes by attributing to the intellectuals, such as Mustafa Kemal and his circle (102-3), the heavy burden of the Westernization and enlightenment of the illiterate masses. Since the positive intellectual stimulus has been removed (105), the author concludes, the victory of modernization against social reaction, and the restoration of Turkey's "reliability" from the Western point of view, will be prolonged.

The book suffers for its lack of background information on the reports, although the lack of contextual support is perhaps one way to encourage further research by the reader. Nevertheless, although the high price may deter some potential buyers, I would strongly recommend the book both to specialists on Turkish politics and non-specialists alike, for it documents American diplomats' concerns about opposition to secularism, offers an insight into orientalist attitudes towards religion, which they considered as a barrier to progress.

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