
America and the Making of Modern Turkey:

Science, Culture and Political Alliances

By Ali Erken

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In the beginning of the 20th century, relations between states began to transform into a global system that included non-state actors. In addition to states as the main actors of international relations, non-state actors have since that time played a crucial role in the international system. Ali Erken's book, *America and the Making of Modern Turkey: Science, Culture and Political Alliances*, explores the activities of American philanthropic organizations in Turkey, such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. This book provides readers with extensive research based on archival records. It consists of four chapters, along with an introduction and conclusion. All four chapters revolve around questions about the investments of American foundations in Turkey after the 1920s.

In the first chapter, Erken explains the activities of the Rockefeller Foundation in the fields of medical and health services in Turkey. Erken examines the leading role of the Foundation in the global field of scientific medicine, and explores why the Foundation staff decided to invest in Turkey and how to formulate its activities there. The Rockefeller Foundation was in favor of working with well-trained local talent (p. 36), because its activities could be more readily achieved with the help of an already educated cultural class that could combine an understanding of the Foundation's spirit and tradition with West-



ern education and training (p. 31). In the late nineteenth century, the students of the School of Medicine (*Tıbbiye*) who founded the Committee of Union and Progress played a central role in Turkey's Western intellectual transformation. Scientific and medical research continued with the efforts of the founding

elites of the Republic such as Refik Saydam, a graduate of the School of Medicine and the first minister of health in the young Turkish Republic. Erken outstandingly explains the efforts of the founding elites in the development of Turkish medicine. For instance, İsmet İnönü asked the Foundation to send a representative to Turkey to help the government with the building of a modern Central Institute of Hygiene in Ankara. Refik Saydam requested Rockefeller aid in the development of the Institute of Hygiene and a Childcare House, and in establishing training fellowships for Turkish doctors and nurses (p. 33). The book particularly succeeds in not only exploring the reports and fellowship programs of the Foundation in Turkey, but also in celebrating contact persons such as İhsan Dogramacı, who later became the founding President of the Council of Higher Education of Turkey (YÖK) and the founder of Bilkent University. Dogramacı helped reduce the high infant mortality rate and introduce the American model of medical education into Turkish hospitals, replacing the traditional German model (p. 45).

The second chapter examines the industrial and economic activities of the Ford Foundation and Robert College in Turkey. In this chapter, the author provides data related to the U.S. visits and experiences of Robert College graduates, and relies on reports and memoirs of the presidents and staff members of Robert College who worked in Turkey. The College provided human capital for the new Republic to train technical experts. As the greatest success of the book, Erken states that American schools in Turkey are seen as an instrument by Americans to promote the interests of the West through changing international conditions. In the 1950s, college heads took advantage of changing geostrategic priorities, describing the school as an ideological frontline against Communism (p. 52). Erken underlines that the fellowship programs aligned with the new Republic's needs in education during those years. Erzurum Atatürk University was established in 1955 to transfer technical know-how to developing countries under the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) Project, and Middle East Technical University (METU) was founded in 1956 to train experts in urbanization and architecture. Erken pays attention to how the projects of the American foundations shifted from state institutions to the private sector as the result of the political change in Turkey in the early 1960s. The Ford Foundation had carried out its operations in partnership with the state institutions and universities thanks to the support of collaborative bureaucrats and scholars before the 1960 coup. However, after the coup, it started to cooperate with the private sector and business elites.

The third chapter covers how Turkish business elites and the private sector spearheaded developments in economics and business administration thanks to projects sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Leading business elites such as Nejat Eczacıbaşı and Vehbi Koç pro-

moted the establishment of the Institute of Business Administration at Istanbul University to provide education in management. The author also underlines that the Rockefeller Foundation played a pioneering role in the establishment of area studies in Turkey. The Foundation supported Professor Hıfzı Timur and Dr. Osman Okyar in visiting Arab countries and preparing a report for the purpose of building a Near Eastern Institute. This coincided with the establishment of the Baghdad Pact which pulled Turkey into regional politics and the Eisenhower Doctrine which aimed to strengthen U.S. presence in the Near East (p. 111).

In the last chapter, the author stresses that the Rockefeller Foundation increased its involvement in global humanistic studies after World War II because of the destruction that followed. The intercultural understanding initiative under the Humanistic Division provided some programs to enhance liberal values in education. For this purpose, John Marshall, who was the first Human Division officer to visit Turkey, prepared a report on Muslim societies. He divided the society into two parts: the great majority composed of uneducated people living in rural areas and deprived of any means of access to the Western lifestyle; and the creative minority, who adopted secular Western values (p.122). Marshall thought that this minority faced the challenge of Westernization. He found that the minority had a different understanding of Westernization than Westerners did. Therefore, he encouraged institutional and individual grants under the heading of intercultural understanding. Erken underlines that thanks to these individual scholarships of the Rockefeller Foundation, researchers such as Halil İnalcık and Kemal Karpat made great contributions to the study of history, particularly political and social changes in the modern Turkey. In

keeping with the Foundation's mission to promote intercultural understanding, Erken also states that the scholarships covered a wide span of fields from literature to the traditional arts. For instance, Füreya Koral in the field of ceramics, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Fahir İz in literature and Nureddin Sevin in theater were granted Rockefeller scholarships to carry out their studies in Western countries.

All in all, while the author focuses primarily on the philanthropic activities of the Rocke-

efeller and Ford Foundations and Robert College in Turkey, the links between the American administrations and these foundations are still left understudied in some points.

To conclude, this book presents detailed information about the activities of certain American foundations from science to traditional arts and is a significant contribution to the literature on the issues of Turkish-U.S. relations. Anyone interested in foreign activities in Turkey will find this book useful.

Rethinking Turkey-Iraq Relations: The Dilemma of Partial Cooperation

By Mehmet Akif Kumral

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In every context, more cooperation rather than less is the best way to arrive at an unparalleled solution. Historically, relations between Turkey and Iraq have been characterized by 'up and down syndrome' through many episodes, especially in the context of cooperation discourse. In *Rethinking Turkey-Iraq Relations*, Kumral explores the Saadabad Pact of 1937, the defense pact of 1955, the fall of the Pro-western Iraqi monarchy in 1958, the Gulf war in 1991 and the Iraq war in 2003, to highlight, explore and recognize the contextual, ontological, rhetorical and political consequences of cooperation and non-cooperation between Turkey and Iraq. Readers who are engaged with the study of Turkey and Iraq's cooperation and non-cooperation-based history will recognize the study's discussions and arguments,



which, at best, emphasize different narratives.

In *Rethinking Turkey-Iraq Relations: The Dilemma of Partial Cooperation*, Kumral explores the dilemma of partial cooperation between Turkey and Iraq. He examines the transformative and intertwined relations based on historical and historiographical evidence, claiming that despite the cooperation between the two countries on the level of politics, trade, oil-water and socio-cultural matters, the reality on the ground has remained contentious because of the wars and areas of non-cooperation, especially the Gulf War and the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Kumral divides the book into seven chapters; four chapters focus in depth on critical periods in Turkey-Iraq relations, such as the inter-