

contribution to scholarship on the late phase of the Ottoman state and her policy toward Armenians. The authors should be especially commended for attempting to clear this scholarly discourse from many of the emotional and political overtones that have characterized it in the past. The authors present a documented account that displays both historical accuracy and compassion regarding the tragic history of both the Christian and Muslim populations of Van.

In addition to highlighting the unfortunate fate of the inhabitants of the province, this work is also a further contribution towards a richer understanding of the complex nature of revolutions, especially the lost ones. In light of the massive historiography on WWI, it is quite an achievement in itself to document a largely forgotten episode of this huge conflict.

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Blood, Beliefs and Ballots: The Management of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey, 2007-2009

By *Robert Olson*

Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2009, 249 pp., ISBN 9781568592756.

Robert Olson has been a pioneering and prolific scholar of Kurdish nationalism. In *Blood, Beliefs and Ballots*, he analyzes Kurdish political activism and the Turkish state's attempts to manage this activism between the July 2007 parliamentary and 2009 local elections in Turkey. Olson extensively documents political developments during this period on the basis of interviews he personally conducted, news sources in Turkish, and secondary literature. The fact that Olson gives voice to a variety of actors ranging from the Turkish political elite to Kurdish nationalists to liberals substantially enriches the book. He convincingly demonstrates how increasing political pluralism and competition in Turkey makes the Turkish political elite and Kurdish nationalists develop new positions. Interestingly, these actors may adopt more moderate and radical stances depending on the nature of

criticisms and political competition they are faced with.

His main arguments can be summarized in four points. First, the language issue has become central to the Kurdish question in Turkey (pp. 12, 41-44, 227). While Kurdish nationalists occasionally put forward territorially oriented demands such as the proposal of dividing Turkey into autonomous regions (p. 99), their most consistent demand has been the allocation of public resources to Kurdish education. At minimum, they have demanded that Kurdish be taught as an optional language in public education. The Turkish political elite appear to be unwilling to meet this demand, and have instead opted for policies to erode popular support for Kurdish nationalists. Second, the Turkish political elite have aimed to counter the challenge of Kurdish nationalisms mainly through economic and religious appeals,

military operations, and improved relations with the Iraqi Kurds. In this regard, the priorities and policy preferences of the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) government and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have been very similar (pp.22-23, 68). They have been unwilling to recognize Kurdish political rights and address widespread human rights violations. Additionally, the TAF has appeared to be content with the AKP and the Gülen movement's appeal among the Kurds, and has perceived organized Islam as an antidote against the Kurdish nationalist movement. Olson also argues that the Turkish state decided to develop close relations with the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) in Iraq, especially after a PKK cross-border incursion resulted in the deaths of 17 Turkish soldiers on October 3, 2007 (pp. 114-117).

Third, Olson's narrative also makes it clear that the AKP has failed to capitalize on its success in the 2007 parliamentary elections and to develop a consistent policy that expands the scope of political rights and civil liberties. The AKP hoped that its populist policies, including distribution of cash and white goods, and its reliance on Islamic networks would be sufficient for victory in the 2009 local elections (p. 193). The Kurdish nationalist party, the DTP (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*), responded to the AKP by pursuing a campaign centered on Kurdish identity and portraying the local elections as a referendum on the fate of the Kurdish nationalist movement (pp. 192-193). This strategy was partially successful and the DTP managed to win in more municipalities in 2009 than in the 2004 local elections. Consequently, the growing influence of more liberal Turkish and Kurdish voices neither

resulted in democratic changes in the state's Kurdish policy nor lead to the widespread Kurdish condemnation of PKK violence. Nonetheless, the judicial case against the "Ergenekon conspiracy" has demonstrated the limits to military's political autonomy. It is an important step in ending the culture of impunity that pervaded the security forces during their fight against Kurdish nationalists (pp. 123-136). Finally, Olson's analysis is informative in outlining how the Kurdish question in Turkey is closely linked with regional developments and changes in international affairs. In particular, the evolution of relations among Turkey, the US, and the KRG greatly affects the strategies of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey (pp. 232-234).

The book would benefit from two additions. First, a section comparing the recent events with the period between the capture of Öcalan in February 1999 and the 2007 elections would be helpful to develop a comparative perspective and directly address several significant questions. What have been the continuities and changes in the Turkish political elite's attempt to counter the challenge of Kurdish nationalism? How have Kurdish nationalists responded to Turkey's diminishing prospects for membership in the EU and the consolidation of an embryonic Kurdish state in Iraq? How do interactions between Turkish and Kurdish nationalists affect each other's platforms? Second, Kurdish Islamists deserve a more comprehensive treatment. They are the only force other than the secular Kurdish nationalist movement with mass mobilizing capacity in the Kurdish regions of eastern Turkey. They are not just pawns in the Turkish political elites' project of man-

aging Kurdish nationalism and are highly critical of Turkish Islamic movements for being insensitive to the Kurdish suffering. The Kurdish Islamists have autonomous organizational bases with substantial grassroots support and pursue their own ideological goals. For instance, they organized a huge rally in Diyarbakır in support of Hamas on January 4, 2009. Not surprisingly, the PKK and its ancillary organizations are greatly concerned with the Kurdish Islamists' influence and the competition between two forces has occasionally turned violent. In this context, it is important to analyze the broader implications of the competition between Kurdish secular and Islamist nationalists.

The real value of *Blood, Beliefs and Bal-lots* lies in its successful portrayal of the diversity of the positions participating in the extensive public debate about the Kurdish question in Turkey. This book makes it clear that neither the Turkish state nor the Kurdish nationalist movement is a homogenous entity pursuing well-defined and rigid political agendas. The interaction among the Turkish and Kurdish political actors and their attempts to influence public opinion in Turkey and international actors remains central to any scholarly understanding of the contemporary evolution of the Kurdish question.

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Turkish Politics in a Changing World, Global Dynamics and Domestic Transformations

By E. Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş

Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2007, 342 pp., ISBN 9786053990055.

Turkish Politics in a Changing World, consisting of articles written by Keyman and Öniş discusses Turkey's political process without ignoring the significance of external dynamics. It therefore examines the changes and transformations brought about by Turkey's modernization and democratization processes under the influence of regional and global developments by paying particular attention to the interactions of local, regional, global agents and dynamics.

Keyman and Öniş put forward the argument that Turkey constitutes an important case for studying alternative modernization

paths in the post-9/11 period in which the discourse of "clash of civilizations" – regarding Islam as an antithesis of modernity and liberal democracy – is determinant. On the one hand, they consider Turkey to be successful in establishing an infrastructure of modernity. On the other hand, they emphasize Turkey's failure in making modernity democracy-oriented and multicultural with a stable and sustainable economy. Yet, in spite of this weakness, Keyman and Öniş assert that Turkey has become an important actor in the post-9/11 world.

Inserting Turkey-European Union relations into their framework, the authors