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# VARIETES

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## MODERN NATIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

**TURKEY**; by Roderic H. Davison, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc. 1968, 181 pages, Suggested Readings, Index, s. 1. 95.

**Reviewed by Ismet GIRITLI**

It is a pleasure to welcome the new book on Turkey in "The Modern Nations in Historical Perspective" series written by a specialist on Turkish History. Roderic H. Davison Professor of History at George Washington University is well known author of several studies on Turkey.

This book consists of nine chapters. Seven of them in a scholarly way are describing historical development of Turkey. As the author puts it; The Turkish Republic growing from the Ottoman Empire. The New Turkey had inherited people, land, religion and many problems from the old. The republic had not only risen out of the failures and collapse of the empire but also out of the empire's experiences and progress.

That the empire itself had a history of six hundred years, It had been built up by the Turks. The heritage of Modern Turkey goes back, then, through Ottoman times to the Turks of pre-Ottoman, and pre-Islamic days. The Ottoman Empire, once the terror of Europe, fell into decline after its Golden Age (1453-1566). Gradually Sultans and Vezirs turned to Westernization of armed forces, administration, education, law and dress. Roderic H. Davison describes the difficulties accompanying the rise of a westernized élite and the turmoil of political crisis. The author's careful analysis and periodization keeps the reader abreast of events at all times.

The chapters "one" and "nine" dealing with the "Contemporary Turkey" and "Turkey since Atatürk" carefully cover the period

since 1960 and thus update this volume on Turkey. Those chapters, beside analysis, contain many useful insights and remarks about a quite new period. In sum, Prof. Davison provides us with a way useful updating of the facts and figures. This book will be indispensable to any study on Turkey. "The Industrial revolution is only now coming to Turkey" states the author. New Turkey has two large iron and steel works at Karabük and Ereqli, the latter opened only in 1965. Electric power is constantly growing and with the laying of the foundation stone for the large Keban dam on the Euphrates in 1966, a significant new increase was in prospect. To manufacturers of textiles, cement, glass and other items, there was added in 1965 the first domestic production of an automobile, the Anadol with a fibre glass body, and over half of its component parts are locally made.

Since 1963 two "five years development plans" have aimed at an annual growth rate of 7 per cent. The visitor to Turkey today finds both scepticism and a mood of cautious optimism. The problems of economic development are many, but the opportunities also are many. Rapid urbanization has recently struck Turkey. Each of Turkey's large cities is rimmed by squatter's settlements (*gecekondu*) made up of recent arrivals from the country side. Roderic H. Davison is right in his statement that "The squatters seem to represent less the despair of rural poverty than an enterprising search for greater opportunity in jobs and in education. Quite a few even have recently moved on to unskilled or semi skilled jobs in Western European Countries (and Australia) particularly in West Germany, returning after a few years with considerable savings. Each year more villages are brought into contact with the outside world through road construction, bus service, and radio. There is no mistaking the gradual awakening of villagers to new desires and new demands. The peasant wants the material advantages that the government can bring; agricultural aid, roads, schools and health services. Politicians make promises to woo the peasant vote. The radio helps. A "Mass Society" is in the process of being created in Turkey.

"Political life in Turkey can be stormy" says Davison, "it looks however" he adds, "as if the Turks were determined to make multi-party democracy work." Meanwille the army has taken itself out

of politics, but remains on the side lines as the guardian of the Republic. The Most important question about the future stability of Turkey rightly posed by Prof. Davison is; Would the Justice Party be able to reach accommodation with those intellectuals who feared it would sacrifice genuine westernizing progress by catering to the material, sometimes obscurantist, desires of the small town and village majority of the Country?

But the principal problem is: how to get the economy moving. The question of political stability, in Turkey, as Prof Davison pointed out in his concluding remarks, is closely tied to economic development. Yet Turkey had solved many of its problems since Atatürk's death: The Republic was a fact. The Turks seemed to be determined to make multi party democracy work. Westernization continued apace. Religion was not dead nor would it become so, but obscurantism had decreased.

Let me finally correct Prof. Davison's minor missapprehension (p. 156-157) and point out that proportional representation is not embodied in the Constitution but in the electoral law, and that the 1961 Constitution is not Turkey's fifth, but fourth written Constitution.