

Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, *The Young Turks and the Boycott Movement: Nationalism, Protest and the Working Classes in the Formation of Modern Turkey*. London, New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014, xi+291 pages

Y. Doğan Çetinkaya's *The Young Turks and the Boycott Movement. Nationalism, Protest and the Working Classes in the Formation of Modern Turkey*, is among the recent studies that address the rise of Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman Empire. The book provides an in-depth analysis of the boycotts and protest movements that emerged after the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, and discusses how such mass actions became "the most typical tools in the repertoire of the early Muslim/Turkish nationalism" (s. 2)

Turkish nationalism has been, without doubt, one of the most popular and studied topics of Ottoman-Turkish historiography. However, Çetinkaya constructs his research agenda quite differently from much of the existing literature on the subject. In fact, he presents his study as a critique of this scholarship with a set of thought-provoking observations provided at the beginning of the book, which is worth quoting in some length:

"... [t]he historiography on Turkey generally depicts Turkish nationalism as an exclusively intellectual current. Studies on nationalism concentrate on the thinking of several political and intellectual figures, or the design of political and civil organizations. However, nationalism is also a social phenomenon. Nationalist movements are also social movements that mobilize a wide range of social groups and deeply influence the daily life of the population. Therefore, one should not be content with research on intellectual history, but also focus both on the official nationalist policies from above and the mobilization of society from below" (s. 5).

Çetinkaya deals with the boycott movements of the second constitutional period – more specifically the period of 1908-1914 – from this perspective. One of the central arguments of his research is that the economic boycotts arose, by and large, as spontaneous mass actions in which the networks of different social classes and segments of society took part. He refers, more specifically, to port workers, merchants, urban notables, low-ranking officers, and various professional classes among the groups contributing to the organization of the economic boycotts. These protests arose in the major urban centers, particularly in the port cities of the Ottoman Empire. According to Çetinkaya, the economic boycotts as well as the demonstrations, protest movements and other sorts of mass actions accompanying them constituted the social aspects of Muslim/Turkish nationalism.

The term Muslim/Turkish nationalism is often preferred to Turkish nationalism in Çetinkaya's work. Based on his study of the boycott movements during the initial decades of the twentieth century, Çetinkaya concludes that Islam and Muslim identity formed the main frame of reference for the Turkish national movement. This is why he defines the nationalism of this particular era as Muslim/Turkish nationalism (s. 5). Çetinkaya elaborates on this argument in the subsequent chapters of his book, examining how the main targets of the economic boycotts gradually shifted from foreign enemies to the Empire's Christian communities, especially the Ottoman Greeks.

The first part of the study is focused on a historiographical discussion about the nineteenth century transformation of the Ottoman state, society, and economy. In this chapter, Çetinkaya provides a critical survey of the scholarship on the integration of the Ottoman economy into the expanding world market. He suggests that historiography on the Ottoman Empire views this process as a major factor bringing about a polarization between the non-Muslim bourgeoisie and the Muslim state elite that aimed to reform and modernize the Empire. Çetinkaya criticizes particularly this dichotomy that underestimates the agency of the Muslim merchant and working classes and their ability to adapt to the socio-economic changes produced by the Ottoman integration into the capitalist world economy.

It is based on this critique that Çetinkaya attempts to re-evaluate the National Economy (*Milli İktisat*) policies from the perspective of history from below. He underlines that the existing literature on the National Economy treats this policy as an invention of nationalist intellectuals, put into practice by the Empire's new modernizing state elites. The leading cadre of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) took the initiative in nationalizing the Ottoman economy under the domination of the Muslim/Turkish element. The CUP carried out this nationalist programme especially after seizing absolute control of political power with a coup d'état in January 1913 and during the First World War.

For Çetinkaya, however, the National Economy was not merely an intellectual invention or a nationalist programme implemented by the CUP. The pattern of the economic boycotts demonstrates that it was also built upon a social movement organized by different social actors, including but not limited to the Muslim merchants and working classes. In this sense, Çetinkaya treats the economic boycotts of the second constitutional period as a case study of how the economic nationalism of the Muslim/Turkish element emerged as a social and popular movement.

The three chapters that follow the historiographical part furnish a well-documented narrative concerning the evolution of the Ottoman boycott movements. Chapter 2 concentrates on the rise of economic boycott as a political weapon, as Çetinkaya puts it, shortly after the 1908 Revolution. The first wave of Ottoman economic boycotts targeted the goods and commercial interests of Austria-Hungary, after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1908. The event also coincided with Bulgaria's unilateral declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire. These early boycotts reflected the Ottomanist context of the Constitutional Revolution. The mass actions and protests that would risk the fraternity of the Empire's diverse ethno-religious communities were deliberately avoided. There were even participations from the local Christian communities in the mass movements against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

However, this Ottomanist spirit did not last long. Chapter 3 discusses how the second wave of boycotts in 1910 and 1911, which targeted Greece due to the ongoing Cretan crisis, affected the Ottoman Greek community as well. Whereas the first boycott movement in 1908 helped strengthen Ottoman patriotism among the Muslim and non-Muslims communities, the second one contributed to the deterioration of relations between them. Chapter 4, on the other hand, examines the culmination of this process in the boycotts and mass movements of 1913-1914, which began directly targeting the economic and commercial interests of the Ottoman Christians in the nationalist context of the post-Balkan-Wars period.

Throughout his narrative, Çetinkaya pays particular attention to the rise of boycott societies in various localities under the initiative of different social actors. He analyzes how the diverse segments of society pursued different and sometimes opposing agendas in the course of the boycotts based on their own economic and political interests. He shows, for example, that the interests of Muslim merchants and port workers in the boycotts were very different from one another although both took an active role in their organization. Çetinkaya analyzes the role of the CUP from this perspective as well. The CUP was only one of the actors seeking to manipulate the boycott movements for its own political interests. Yet it was not able to exert full control over them.

Çetinkaya's well-researched study draws on a wide range of primary sources to construct his arguments. Apart from a great number of documents from the Ottoman, Greek, British and French state archives; he makes use of a rich collection of periodicals and pamphlets in his study.

Çetinkaya provides crucial insights about the historical roots and social foundations of Turkish nationalism in his research. *The Young Turks and the Boycott Movement* is, without doubt, an important contribution to the existing scholarship on the social and political history of the late Ottoman Empire. It is also a must read for scholars working on social movements in the Middle Eastern and Ottoman-Turkish contexts.

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