



Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789-2007

By Carter Vaughn Findley

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Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity reveals the historical dynamics propelling two centuries of Ottoman and Turkish history. As mounting threats to imperial survival necessitated dynamic responses, ethnolinguistic and religious identities inspired alternative strategies for engaging with modernity. A radical, secularizing current of change competed with a conservative, Islamically committed current. Crises sharpened the differentiation of the two currents, forcing choices between them.

The radical current began with the formation of reformist governmental elites and expanded with the advent of “print capitalism,” symbolized by the privately owned, Ottoman-language newspapers. The radicals engineered the 1908 Young Turk revolution, ruled empire and republic until 1950, made secularism a lasting “belief system,” and still retain powerful positions.

The conservative current gained impetus from three history-making Islamic renewal movements, those of Mevlana Halid, Said Nursi, and Fethullah Gülen. Powerful under the empire, Islamic conservatives did not regain control of government until the 1980s. By then they, too, had their own influential media.

Findley's reassessment of political, economic, social, and cultural history reveals the dialectical interaction between radical and conservative currents of change, which alternately clashed and converged to shape late Ottoman and republican Turkish history.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

From a minor piece of the expansive Ottoman Empire to its current state as a fully functioning republic, Turkey's history from 1789 to modern day is one of unwavering progression towards modernism, fueled by the perseverance of its people and marked by admirable firsts, including a written constitution and women's rights. Findley uniquely recounts the past of this diverse country through the synthesizing and splitting of beliefs, ideas, and aspirations, while correcting misinterpretations of former historical texts on Turkey and acknowledging the shortcomings of his own. Even when remaining immersed in the past, references are made to the current conditions in Turkey and the world at large. Sections of each chapter focus on politics, the military, economics, and societal factors like education, religion, and culture, but the most revealing sections delve into the literary, poetic, and ideological movements of each era. Findley's examination of four compelling topics results in a remarkable story of a nation finding its identity-both as a place on the map and in the minds of people the world over.

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Review

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About the Author

Carter Vaughn Findley is a Humanities Distinguished Professor at Ohio State University and an honorary member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences. His book *The Turks in World History* won the 2006 British-Kuwait Friendship Society Prize for Middle Eastern Studies.

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