İsmail Kara. *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslâm (The Problem of Islam in Republican Turkey)*. Vol. 2. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016. 639 pages.

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İsmail Kara is one of the leading scholars of Islamism and modern Turkish intellectual history. The long-awaited second volume of his *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslâm (The Problem of Islam in Republican Turkey)* reflects his views and studies on the history of the modern Republic of Turkey. Published in 2016, following the appearance of the first volume in 2008, the rich analyses and information in the book will be especially important for those studying the development and evolution of the modern Turkish Republic. One may consider Kara's new book as the embodiment of his saying, "in Turkey, there is nothing unrelated to religion." Thus, it is a work that carefully traces how the Islamic-religious factor has affected the establishment of Turkey's state institutions/bureaucracy and efforts to modernize Turkish society and integrate it with contemporary Western civilization.

Since İsmail Kara came to Istanbul as a student in the 1970s, he has been a participant and a scholar of modern Turkish Islamic thought. He completed his PhD thesis "İslâmcılara Göre Meşrutiyet İdaresi, 1908–1914 (The Constitutional Administration According to Islamists, 1908–1914)" in 1986. He is a prolific writer who has contributed greatly to the academic study of Islamism in Turkey. The following is but a rough list of his more notable contributions to scholarship: *Islamist Thought in Turkey: Texts/People* (3 volumes, 1986, 1987, 1994) [*Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi-Metinler/Kişiler*], *Political Opinions of Islamists* (1994) [*İslâmcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*],

To Establish a Philosophical Language: Introduction of Modern Philosophical and Scientific Terminology into Turkey, (2001) [*Bir Felsefe Dili Kurmak-Modern Felsefe ve Bilim Terimlerinin Türkiye'ye Girişi*], *Continuity and Change in Islamic Political Thought: The Caliphate Epistles* (6 volumes 2002–2014) [*İslâm Siyasî Düşüncesinde Değişme ve Süreklilik-Hilafet Risâleleri*], *Being European, Remaining Muslim: Religion, Politics, History, and Civilization in Modern Turkish Thought* (2017) [*Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak-Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinde Din Siyaset Tarih Medeniyet*].

The second volume of *The Problem of Islam in Republican Turkey* focuses on legal-cultural transformation in the republican era, the transformation which served in its turn to transform Turkey's religious, political, and social institutions. In the first volume, published in 2008, the focus was the transformation of political institutions, such as the caliphate and the Religious Affairs Department, and social institutions, such as Sufi orders (*tariqat*s) and religious communities, in the republican era. This volume starts with (1) debates about laicism or secularism, the separation of the state and religion, and the implications of these for religious life in the public sphere. The volume continues by tracing the influence of these points in the formation or transformation of (2) religious education and (3) religious publications and religious thought.

One may describe *The Problem of Islam in Republican Turkey* as a double-layered book. First, Kara presents the topics he wants to discus and offers his examination or evaluation of the ideas and developments on those topics. This is the first layer of the book. As for the second layer of the book, Kara offers a number of supplements consisting of selections from primary sources that serve as evidence for Kara's discussions. The supplements include records of historically important speeches, official documents, and visual material, like cartoons. The fact that the material includes not only official documents but also unofficial documents, like cartoons, helps the reader to understand how the issues discussed in the book were reflected in different aspects of culture. The existence of this second level, in addition to Kara's discussions in the main text of the book, is important, especially for those who are not historians by profession and who thus do not have easy access to primary sources and evidence.

The first chapter of this volume—the fifth chapter of the book *The Problem of Islam in Republican Turkey*—is "Laicism in a Turkish Way, or Observing One's Limits" (*Türk Usûlü Laiklik Yahut Haddini Bilmek!*). Kara begins by indicating the major periods of the formation and development of the policies of laicism throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. He also discusses the problems resulting from the implementation of a laic/

secular state structure, which may roughly be defined as the separation of religious and state affairs, in a society in which religion and the state were considered to be essentially connected to each other. Kara divides the history of the Turkish Republic into four periods with regard to the development and practice of laicism. He considers the first period, 1919–1924, to be the advancement of the Ottoman modernization movement, and he argues that the conception of the relationship between religion and the state in this period had a religious character rather than a laic/secular one (p. 23). In this period, we see important events indicating the close association of state authority with religion, as exemplified by the Qur'anic justification offered for the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the acceptance of a poem written by Mehmet Akif as the national anthem (*İstiklâl Marşı*).

The second period stretches from 3 March 1924 to the last term of the Republican People's Party's single-party government, i.e., 1946–1950. Major events characterizing this period include the abolition of the caliphate, the passing of the law on the unification of education, the relegation of the office of religious affairs from the level of a ministry to the level of a department, the switch from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet, the adoption of the Civil Code, the acceptance of new dress codes, and the change of the ritual language from Arabic to Turkish. The legal and political steps taken during this period greatly reduced the role of religion in social and cultural life, and the change of the ritual language in particular indicates that the state assumed the authority of determining how the religion was to be conceived during the period.

For Kara, the third period concerning the development of policies of laicism runs from 1946, which indicates the beginning of the transition to multi-party political life, to 1960, when the military seized political authority in a coup d'état. Among the important events in this period, Kara mentions the flourishing of religious publications, the granting of permission for the construction of new places of worship, the resumption of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the establishment of imam-hatip (imam-preacher) schools and the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University. All these may be considered as marking a normalization in religious life after its marginalization during the second period.

Laicism and reactions against it in the fourth period, from the 1960 military coup to the present, exhibit both similarities and differences to those in the previous periods. One of the distinguishing events of this period was a boom in religious publishing brought on by the translation of the work of scholars associated with the Ikhwan al-Muslimin and Jama'at al-Islami and of the work of Iranian intellectuals. Another important event in this

period was the establishment of a new Islamist political party distinct from the conservative political wing. This event caused other parties to revise the place they assigned to Islam in their political programs. Perhaps most importantly, from 24 January 1980, Islamist religious groups were gradually integrated into the political system and began to voice their social and political demands within the confines of that system (pp. 46–47), as exemplified by the political parties led by Necmettin Erbakan.

Kara's account of these four periods of laicism and reactions to it is at the same time a general overview of modern Turkish history. Particularly noteworthy in this account are his explanation of how religious people began to participate in political life and his claim that Islamist political groups were integrated into the laic political system at a specific point. Both points deserve extended treatment. One gets the impression from Kara that some invisible agent, or perhaps the state authority, wanted to suppress the authentic Islamic political opposition by forcing it to acknowledge the secular political structure as the ground of their very existence and functioning. Even though this is not extensively discussed, this way of looking at the inclusion of religious people in the political system may help to interpret the current political situation in Turkey.

One of the important issues discussed in the first chapter of the volume concerns how laicism, as it was established in the Turkish Republic, affected religious thought and transformed the conception of religion and observance of religious rules in practice. According to Kara, the adoption of laicism as the ideological backbone of the new state—separating religion and all stately affairs, including politics and law—had significant results. Religion ceased to be the source and ground of legitimacy in organizing the state structure, politics, and law. In fact, this was not a simple separation of religion and state authority, but rather indicated the oppression of religion and religious life. In the first decades of the republic, laicism was more than just a secular and anti-religious ideology—it was something tantamount to a "religion" in its own right. In order to see how policies based on laicism transformed the conception of religion, Kara calls his readers' attention to the similarities between the positions of the state and Neo-Salafism on the religious status of reciting the "Mawlid" on special occasions and on the need to purify religion from superstitions, arguing that both groups conceived of the true religion in much the same way. For Kara, the emergence of the so-called Mealci movement, which emphasized that one ought to read the Qur'an in translation, reflects how the application of laicism transformed the conception of religion in the eyes of the devout. This approach to the Qur'an reflects a clear-cut divergence from the traditional conception of the essence and function of the sacred text. Simi-

larly, arguments demanding a reform in religion (such as those voiced by Hüseyin Atay and Ercüment Özkan) may be considered as the result of the application of laicism (pp. 62–63).

According to Kara, another sign of the transformation of contemporary Islamic religious thought resulting from the application of laicism concerns practical religious life and morality. Those who defended laicism adamantly reduced religion to passive morality. But they approved of the use of religious elements for the sake of state policies, as the saying "taxed earning is sacred" shows (pp. 63–65). As the devout segments of society grew richer, however, they came to reject this passive morality and the religious virtues traditionally associated with it, including contentment with one's lot (*kanaatkârlık*), resignation to God's plan, and patience in the face of hardship. In place of such virtues, Kara argues, Muslims developed a new moral code that gave rise to such things as globally oriented Muslim capitalist ventures and the organization of fashion shows for hijab-wearing women. For Kara, these indicate how far Muslims have strayed from Islam as the result of their rejection of passive morality.

While Kara's account here is certainly insightful, one wonders whether he perhaps goes too far in using laicism to explain all of these changes in the way religion was conceived and practiced. Other factors, like globalization and changing social conditions, also likely played an important role. Considering the matter in terms of the intellectuals and state officials in the late Ottoman Empire, one may even wonder whether laicism itself might not have been the result of deeper problems facing society in the period rather than the cause of those problems. Such issues would have benefited from deeper discussion.

The third section of the volume's first chapter, "The Mosque, the Barracks, and Politics: Post-Coup Relations between Religion and Politics," focuses on the role of military coups in defining the relationship between religion and the state. In this section, Kara argues that the agents of the military coups pursued two-sided policies in handling issues concerning the functions of religious and educational institutions. On the one hand, certain practices and behaviors related to religion or certain social groups were considered threats to state security and accused of representing "backwardism" (*irtica*). Religious institutions were either heavily controlled and diminished or else rendered obsolete. Certain forms of religious life and thought (traditional practices, veiling, and radical ideas about religion) were treated as crimes. On the other hand, some forms of religious thought and life were supported, and certain religious groups were integrated into the system, with their oppositional character weak-

ened in the process. Religious education was placed under state control and the programs and curricula in imam-hatip high schools and faculties of theology were modified to suit the purposes of the state. Similarly, the activities of the Religious Affairs Department were heavily suppressed. Notwithstanding these anti-religious policies, coup leaders also made use of religion to justify their interference in the political system.

In the second chapter of the volume, Kara asks whether true religious education exists in Turkey. Examining the establishment and curricula of the institutions meant to provide religious education, Kara argues that there is no true religious education in Turkey. After the acceptance of the law on unification of education, all schools and madrasas providing religious education were closed. According to Kara, true religious education—that is, "religious education designed for the sake of religion, with a religious logic, content, and curriculum, carried out with the intention of educating devout religious people, and given by devout religious people with the proper scholarly background"—has not existed and has not been officially recognized since 1924 (p. 208). Instead, religious education has been provided from a laic or secular perspective and under the control of laic institutions. To establish these claims, Kara examines the historical conditions surrounding the abolition of religious educational institutions and the removal of courses related to religion from school curricula (1924–1930). He also surveys the structure, curricula, and content of the material used in the schools that provided religious education, such as religious-knowledge schools (*Din Bilgileri Dershaneleri*), imam-hatip schools, faculties of theology, and Qur'an teaching courses. He argues that the establishment of these educational institutions was motivated not by religious concerns, but by the hope of securing the laic structure of the modern state by transforming the conception of religion. After the 1980 military coup, the authorities imposed compulsory religious education in high schools, ostensibly to prevent the "exploitation and abuse" of religion. Kara argues that the true motive of these authorities was instead their long-term goal of integrating opposition groups "into the system" by reconstructing Turkey's religious communities and Religious Affairs Department (p. 231).

Kara's account certainly reveals how closely tied religious education and political authority were in the history of the modern Turkish Republic. But as informative and well grounded as these discussions are, they seem to be based on an idealized notion of religious education that is historically problematic. To put it differently, is it really fair to assume that state control of religious education in republican Turkey marks such a stark a rupture with the Ottoman period or earlier times, when religious education was totally independent of political authorities?

In discussing religious education, Kara gives detailed information about the establishment and development of imam-hatip schools, faculties of theology, and institutes of higher Islamic studies. Kara focuses on the main purpose of these institutions and the process of their historical development. For Kara, the main purpose of these institutions was to educate students in both the religious sciences and the modern sciences so that the perceived conflict between these two might be eliminated and the religiosity of the conservative groups weakened. He emphasizes that these institutions were established according to the expectation of the laic state. As such, it may not be a good idea to present them as good examples of Islamic-religious education to other Muslim countries. For Kara, this also explains why "people with Islamic-religious concerns"—i.e., devout Muslims—and those associated with different religious groups and Sufi orders kept away from these institutions. Such people considered these institutions to be harmful to the true understanding of Islam and feared that the graduates of these institutions, "the enlightened religious officer" (*aydın din adamı*), would surreptitiously harm the religion.

Another question Kara poses, in this context, is whether the purpose of the faculties of theology is to teach religion or not. Kara states that these institutions were not established to teach the Islamic religion but rather to justify state policies concerning religion. The program of the Darulfünûn Faculty of Theology serves as a case in point. The academic staff of this faculty, Kara reminds us, helped prepare the 1928 "Declaration of the Religious Reform" (*Dini Islah Beyannamesi*), which proposed to introduce pews and music to mosques, to allow worshippers there to enter without removing their shoes, and to change the language of the ritual to Turkish. In the same vein, Kara argues that the Ankara University Faculty of Theology was not established to "provide religious education in the technical sense" (p. 361). Those who argued for the creation of the faculty were quite explicit that it would not be a madrasa; quite the contrary, it would provide a good defense against *irtica* (reactionary attitudes; lit. backwardism) and would fight against the defenders of superstitions. Kara also mentions Ahmet Hamdi Akseki's comments in support of his argument that the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University was neither designed nor suited to educate proper religious scholars or officers of religious affairs.

Kara compares higher religious education in Turkey to that in the West, noting that Turkish faculties of theology were designed in imitation of Western ones. But he notes that in the West, in addition to institutions of religious education that are part of universities, there are also institutions of religious education run by the churches. Institutions of higher religious education in Turkey may correspond to the relevant departments in West-

ern universities, but there is no institution corresponding to the institutions run by the church. He implies that after the closure of madrasas, no true religious education was left. Thus, Kara concludes, there is no true religious education in the technical sense in Turkey; those institutions that ostensibly provide religious education, such as imam-hatip schools and faculties of theology, are in fact the result of modernization efforts that lacked any sincere religious purpose.

On this point, I take issue with Kara's argument. Is it really necessary that institutions of religious education be part of two different larger institutions, that is, the university and the church or some equivalent? Islam has no religious authority comparable to the church in Christianity. The Department of Religious Affairs is not a religious but a bureaucratic body. It has no religious authority. And while faculties of theology and imam-hatip schools may have been established for the purpose of protecting the laic structure of the state, this does not mean that these institutions have never and can never provide an authentic religious education. Again, Kara seems to elevate an idealized notion of the religious education in the madrasa to the only true measure of what constitutes "true" religious education, thereby reducing faculties of theology to "a kind of faculty of sociology." Of course, one may debate the extent to which faculties of theology have been successful in teaching the Islamic religion. However, to say that the education these faculties provide has never been "religious" in any meaningful way is, I believe, to overstate the case.

In the third and final chapter of the volume, Kara focuses on religious publications and traces how they have guided and influenced the development of religious thought since the beginning of the republic. He also examines how different socio-political events, such as the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the transition to multi-party democracy, and military coups influenced the development of religious publications with regard to their quantity, quality, and the sources upon which they drew (domestic versus foreign). Kara's discussions show how the course of religious thought in Turkey paralleled the life of religious publications. To put it in concrete terms, in this chapter Kara discusses (i) characteristics of the religious publications in various periods over the history of the Turkish Republic and the function of the Religious Affairs Department in this process; and (ii) the importance of the translation of religious publications from other languages into Turkish. These translations mainly included the works of Muslim scholars such as members of the Ikhwânu'l-Muslimîn, Iranian scholars, scholars from Pakistan, members of the Jama'atu'l-Islâmi, and Muhammad Hamidullah, who spent a large period of his life in Turkey. Kara divides the history of religious publications into two major

periods. The first period covers the years 1924–1950, and the second period covers the time period from 1950 to the present.

Kara states that it is almost impossible to talk about religious publications, in the proper sense of the term, during the first period (1924–1950). Certainly, important religious works were produced in this period; however, the majority of these were official publications. Following the principle of laicism, state authorities had heavy control over the topics and ideas discussed. In this period, those who represented the republican state ideology tried to reform Islam, cleansing it of what they termed "superstition and nonsense" so that they could control the religion. Kara provides information about Western approaches adopted by the defenders of the state ideology in Turkey that reduced religion to either a sociological or a psychological phenomenon, which Kara describes as a positivistic, scientist approach. In line with this approach, defenders of the state ideology required that in order to be acceptable, religion had to meet the criteria of rationality. Kara points out how this requirement also influenced the position of devout religious people. Those who wanted to defend religion and live their lives in accordance with its dictates expressed their conception of Islam with reference to the same criteria, as exemplified in Ahmet Hamdi Akseki's 1944 *Islam as an Authentic Natural and Universal Religion* (*Islam Fıtrî Tabii ve Umumi Bir Dindir*) (p. 421).

To explain the developments during the second period, Kara provides an explanatory scheme showing that the translation of foreign works shaped religious thought in Turkey. During the 1950s, after the adoption of multiparty democracy, various institutions of religious education were established. This led to an increase in religious publications and created an environment in which people felt comfortable talking about their religious ideas. This is especially evident in the period after 1965, when the number and professional quality of religious publications reached unprecedented levels. Kara notes that the graduates of imam-hatip schools played an important role in this transformation by translating into Turkish the works of scholars from around the Muslim world, including (i) the works of Egyptian and Syrian scholars affiliated with the Ikhwânu'l-Muslimîn; (ii) the works of Indian and Pakistani scholars affiliated with organizations like Nadwatu'l-'Ulama and Jama'atu'l-Islâmi; (iii) the works of Iranian scholars such as Imam Khomeini, Ali Shariati, and Murtaza Mutahhari; and (iv) the works of European scholars who had converted to Islam, such as René Guenon, and the works of Western-educated Muslim scholars such as Muhammad Hamidullah and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Kara complains that the translation of such foreign religious works led Muslims in Turkey to neglect their own intellectual heritage and the wealth of religious works produced under the Seljuq and Ottoman states. Another important factor here, he argues, was the role played by the change of the alphabet in discouraging the use of domestic historical-cultural sources and promoting a turn to external and to some extent foreign sources (p. 481). In the same vein, Kara complains about the integrity of the works of scholars affiliated with Turkish faculties of theology. He states that the works produced by scholars affiliated with faculties of theology are either colored by "stale [*bayatlamış*] Orientalist ideas" or else sound brilliant, such as "Qur'anic Islam" or "true Islam," but do not have much scholarly credibility. He says that this, too, may be explained by the neglect of the scholarly heritage of the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. Since scholars are not able to use native sources, they turn to external, foreign sources; and the result is either a reflection of Orientalist theses or a lack of scholarly credibility.

Kara's point here, that the ideas of scholars affiliated with faculties of theology are heavily colored by Orientalist theses, may be granted without difficulty. The same holds true for his point that part of the reason for this lies in scholars' weak ties to the religious thought of the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. However, once again, Kara's underlying argument here seems to be that the work of these scholars is somehow inauthentic because it fails to live up to an idealized notion of a past in which religious scholarship relied solely on native sources and was entirely free of foreign influences. His emphasis on and criticism of the foreign influence on the ideas of a scholar or a group of scholars brings to mind various similar polemics in Islamic intellectual history, such as those of various Salafi groups who accused followers of new developments in science, philosophy, theology, and other disciplines of being influenced by non-Muslims and non-Islamic sources. The same applies to Kara's critique of the hollowness of modern accounts of "Qur'anic Islam" or "true Islam." The works of medieval Muslim theologians and scholars often claimed to represent "true Islam." The great Muslim thinker al-Ghazali, for example, devoted much of his intellectual life to clarifying and defending "true Islam" against what he viewed as false conceptions of the religion. Clearly, drawing upon various sources and offering accounts of what constitutes "true Islam" are nothing new in Islamic thought. Kara's focus is not, of course, the distant past, and it might be unfair to expect him to address these issues at any length. Perhaps Kara's points here might best be taken as kind of impetus for his readers to do more research on these issues.

One of the important issues discussed in the final chapter concerns the influence of the translations of religious publications and whether they ever integrated into Turkish culture and the Turkish conception of Islam. Thus, in the heading of the second section of the chapter, Kara asks: "Were the Muslim Brothers Translated into Turkish?" That is, were the Turkish translations of their works integrated into religious thought in Turkey, or did they remain as an external element damaging the Turkish culture instead of improving it? The same question may be asked with regard to the translation of the works of Pakistani and Iranian scholars. Kara carefully identifies the connection between certain trends emerging among devout Muslim groups and the ideas expressed in the translations. Kara grants that the translation of scholarship from abroad concerning Islam had a positive function. It spurred Turkish Muslim intellectuals to develop self-confidence as Muslim intellectuals. Translations solidified certain presuppositions, provided emotional support, and introduced discussions about social justice, the Qur'an as a constitution, and the idea of an Islamic state, Islamic regime, Islamic economics, etc. However, Kara also points out the negative effects of the translation of religious publications from abroad, such as in the case of the emergence of the so-called radical Islamist youth movement, which did not have ties to the conception of Islam held by the masses or by religious groups or Sufi orders. Groups like the radical Islamist youth movement considered important elements of traditional conceptions of Islam in Turkish society to be superstition and heresy that ought to be purged. In a sense, they had the concept of an ideal religion that had to be accepted by all without exception. Kara states that radical Islamists considered the interconnection between religion, history, and tradition in an untraditional way. Thus, the radical Islamist movement, as exemplified in their ideal of "universal Islam," represents a kind of departure from Turkey and the Turkish conception of Islam.

Kara's remarks concerning the relationship between the translation movement and changing conceptions of Islam in Turkey offer much food for thought. However, one wonders how the translation of religious publications stood in relation to other factors that helped transform the conception of religion. Significant discussions about and searches for alternative approaches to religion were already underway in the late Ottoman period, and connections between these and later approaches call out for closer scrutiny, especially in terms of how the earlier idea of "the unity of Islam" might relate to the later idea of "universal Islam" and how the earlier ideas of "returning to the essence and the essential sources of Islam," of the "ancient law" (*kanunu kadîm*), or of "receiving one's inspiration directly from

the Qur'an" might relate to the later idea of cleansing the religion from superstition and the accretion of non-Islamic traditions.

Kara's work provides his readers with insightful explanations regarding transformation of the conception of religion and the shape it took in the modern Turkish Republic. For example, he shows how groups with rival ideas of religion's place in individual and social life counterintuitively adopted similar positions in practice. Those who demanded a reform in religion (by nationalizing certain aspects of religion and by changing the ritual language to Turkish) and those religious scholars who sought to reconcile religion and modern life are good examples in this regard. Both argued that religion had to be freed from superstitions, but while the first group did so in an effort to suppress the importance and scope of religion in individual and social life, the second group did so to maintain the viability of Islam in the modern age. Kara carefully traces the evolution of the attitude of devout religious people from their initial rejection of the laic state to their later integration into and defense of it. He highlights various stages in this process of "integration into the system." The transition from the Ottoman state to the Turkish Republic meant, at least formally, a transition from a state structure based on religion to a secular state structure. As a result of this, devout Muslims remained somewhat outside the system and state institution and positioned themselves as an opposition front. Kara says that the state authority carefully pursued policies based on the religious sensitivities of the opposition front in an effort to integrate it into the system from 1950 onward, and especially after the 1980 military coup. Kara thinks that the comparatively recent loss of interest in Turkey in the works of the Muslim Brothers indicates the success of this process of integration. As he puts it, the reason for this loss of interest is that "people with Islamic concerns have increasingly been integrated into the 'unjust infidel' (*taghûtî*) system since the 12 September [1980] military coup, and their tendencies toward adaptation and participation have grown stronger and more prominent, at the expense of their oppositional tendencies" (p. 507). To see this change, Kara invites his reader to compare the "National Outlook" (*Millî Görüş*) to the "Just Order" (*Adil Düzen*) in Necmettin Erbakan's political career, or the evolution of the Gülen community from a small group to a global organization that attempted to carry out a military coup.

Reading İsmail Kara's book, the reader is struck by his informative and orderly discussions, yet the text is at the same time difficult to decipher fully. His discussions are not simply historical discussions; nor are they simply sociological accounts or political-cultural analyses. His discussions certainly have the characteristics of being both historical and social analyses. However, they are more than that. That is, Kara's discussions

have evaluative implications that fall beyond the merely descriptive social-scientific explanations he offers. For example, he provides a survey of different perspectives on the true conception of Islam and its ideal place in social life. His discussions in this regard seem to imply that the positions different groups have developed on these matters during the modern period are a kind of degeneration and moving away from authentic Islam. These groups include those who want strict state control over religion, those advocating a particular claim to authentic Islam, and those who have been influenced by scholars through the translation movement. For Kara, all of them are in the same spot. One gets the feeling that he is comparing their position and the ideas they develop to a hidden concept of ideal Islam or Islamism and that he is judging them accordingly. To put it differently, when Kara relates particular conceptions of Islam and interpretations of certain religious issues developed in the modern period to those in earlier times, he seems to assume that Islam in the past was conceived of and practiced in individual and social life in a way that was entirely independent of the historical, social, and political conditions of the period. Certainly, Kara must have satisfactory explanations in this regard. However, the focus of the book—namely, how the conception and practice of religion have transformed in modern Turkish history—seems to compel him to leave discussion of such issues out.

This work by İsmail Kara is a must for anyone who is interested in understanding modern Turkish history and the change of the conception of religion in this period. Kara carefully traces the place of Islam as a factor affecting the efforts of the state authority in establishing the essential institutions of the Turkish Republic and in integrating Muslim-Turkish society with contemporary Western civilization. As such, the work at hand should be read by anyone who wants to understand the different phases of the transformation of the Turkish Republic or who has questions concerning the orientation of Turkish society and its evolution over the past century. But the book also has a wider audience. It may address the concerns of devout religious people, as well as of those who have some sympathy to Islamism, to a religious community, or to a political party with religious sensitivities. It may also address the concerns of those who are not personally devout but who have an ideal of a Turkish society where laicism is fully and properly implemented.